

LINKS Institute Student Practicum Package

Dear potential practicum site:

Thank you for considering a student practicum placement with LINKS Institute. This student has completed a minimum of 9 courses to prepare them with theory and skills for entry level roles in Community and Social services. LINKS institute is grateful to partner with your organization on a practicum experience for this student.

The practicum experience is designed to last for a 6-week period, and consists of 120 hours. Depending on the level of flexibility of your organization, and the student interest, the hours may be completed sooner. This can be discussed with all parties prior to the start of the practicum.

The purpose of the practicum is to provide students with a real-life opportunity to apply the theory and skills they have learned over the course of their studies. We are enclosing a copy of our digital course catalogue which will describe the courses and competencies that the student has covered in their program. You will simply refer to the course description that the student has taken (e.g., Mental Wellness & Harm Reduction Diploma, Child & Youth Care Worker Diploma, Intensive Applied Counselling Diploma).

Steps in coordinating a practicum placement

Practicum placement agreement. The very first step would be for LINKS Institute to provide the practicum placement with information explaining the students name, which program they have taken, and the dates of the practicum. Prior to commencing a student practicum, LINKS Institute and the practicum placement must sign a practicum agreement. A blank copy of the practicum agreement, which calls for the details of the practicum site (contact details and signed by a person with authority to bind the organization) will be sent to the practicum site contact.

Vaccination. We ask the practicum site to inform LINKS Institute about their covid-19 vaccination policy, or alternative regular testing policy. The student will consent to releasing their personal health information to both LINKS Institute and the practicum site for the purpose of coordinating this information. Students must familiarize themselves with, and abide by the practicum sites covid-19 protocols.

Security checks. We ask the practicum site to inform LINKS Institute about their requirements for a criminal record check, or child abuse registry check for students. The originals will be

provided by the student to LINKS Institute for verification, with the details of a satisfactory criminal record check provided to the practicum site by LINKS Institute.

Practicum site supervisor. (employee of practicum site who will act as supervisor and support person for student). The practicum site must identify an individual who is a member of staff and who is able to supervise the activities of the student. The supervisor must possess at least the same level of position that the student would be shadowing.

The actual practicum experience

LINKS Institute involvement. A practicum coordinator at LINKS Institute will be available on a continual basis by telephone or email to discuss any matters related to the practicum experience. The practicum coordinator will conduct a half way meeting with the practicum student, and an end point meeting with the practicum supervisor. Where possible these will be in-person meetings.

Practicum evaluation. Towards the end of the practicum, LINKS Institute requests that the practicum site supervisor complete their portions of the practicum evaluation, and facilitate the student to complete their portion. This will be collected to by LINKS Institute and reviewed with the student. In collaboration with the practicum site, the student will be granted a PASS/FAIL for their practicum.

Hours & Schedule. We encourage students to keep the same schedule as employees of the practicum site. We encourage a variety of shifts and times of day where possible. We suggest that students should be given any statutory holidays off. Whether the student chooses to complete any practicum hours on a weekend will be based on the student's preference.

Please note: practicum students cannot be used as replacement for practicum site staff, and practicum students should not work alone with clients without readily available supervision and support.

Duties & expectations of support workers. LINKS Institute students have been trained to work in Social and Community Service roles. Examples of these positions include: shelter worker, crisis worker, mental health worker, addictions worker, mental health support worker, and more. During the practicum experience, we encourage sites to provide students with the same types of experiences that their employees would engage in- with supervision and guidance. This may include: performing basic intake procedures, collecting client information, basic interpersonal counselling approaches, helping clients complete tasks, exploring basic mental health and addiction problems, and more. We ask that practicum sites weight the opportunities they

provide students with their perceived and developing understanding of the student's skills and competencies.

Assessment criteria. As per the practicum evaluation, students should be monitored for their skills in the following areas:

1. Work skills: judgment, critical thinking, organizational ability, motivation, initiative, determination, timeliness, dependability, independence, interest in discovery, etc.
2. Communication skills: quality of written & oral communications with colleagues, other professionals, clients, etc. (e.g., report-writing, feedback)
3. Other interpersonal skills & personal resources: ability to establish and maintain rapport, trust and respect in professional relationships; self-awareness, self-reflectiveness, openness to supervision, resiliency and capacity to cope with the internship experience, etc.
4. Professional conduct: knowledge of ethics, readiness to seek and use supervision, awareness of limitations, respect and knowledge with regard to diversity and individual differences, etc.

Employment. LINKS Institute recognizes, and has made the student aware, that completion of a practicum with an agency is not a guarantee of any future employment. Of course, LINKS Institute would be very excited if a practicum site decided to employ a student, after their practicum!

Thank you for your time and partnership.

John Jackson, RPN, MPN
President & CEO
LINKS Institute

Updated May, 2023