Gerontology Diploma Program
Practicum Procedures and Guidelines

Guidelines
Students must complete at least three courses before commencing the practicum. This will provide a comfortable base of knowledge and an opportunity to become acquainted with some of the agencies offering service to older people.

Students will learn concepts and theories and will develop research and skills while completing course requirements. The practicum is intended to augment these skills by providing “hands-on” experience working directly with older individuals. Ideally the practicum should reflect the student’s interests. The emphasis must be on providing service or working directly with older clients, as opposed to research or administrative tasks.

The practicum may be completed outside of the Vancouver area and can involve work with one or more agencies, provided that appropriate supervision is available.

Some students have secured employment and have been able to obtain approval to complete the practicum in the form of a summer or part-time job, however most students complete their practicum as an unpaid volunteer of the agency. Such arrangements are dependent upon the level of supervision provided, the type of agency and the tasks performed.

Students with provincial or federal student loans should note that the practicum does not appear on official transcripts and has not been assigned any credit value. Depending upon loan requirements, students may need to complete the practicum while maintaining a course load of nine credits in order to meet the criteria for full-time registration.

Criminal Record Check
Students doing a practicum must go through a Criminal Record Check through SFU since they will be working directly with vulnerable adults. This requirement comes directly from the BC Ministry of Public Safety and the Solicitor General’s amendment to the Criminal Records Review Act of which SFU is mandated to comply.

Process to obtain a Criminal Record Check: http://students.sfu.ca/criminalrecords/consent.html

Time Commitment
Usually the practicum is completed by working 2.5 days per week for 13 weeks or an arrangement equivalent to a total of **260 hours**. Students who have been granted a partial waiver of the practicum component will complete 130 hours or an equivalent specified by the Gerontology program. The hours of work will be negotiated between the student and the practicum supervisor and may be changed on the approval of both the student and the supervisor.
Approval of Site and Supervisor
Students are responsible for researching organizations and contacting potential supervisors. A list of organizations that have served as practicum sites is available in the Gerontology Information Centre. Students may select sites in addition to those on the list, provided the appropriate approval can be obtained. It is suggested that students examine several sites before making a selection.

Settings for the practicum may include senior’s centres, adult day centres, community care facilities, hospital-based extended care units, home-maker agencies, recreational facilities or any other agency providing service to a substantial number of older persons. Students will not receive permission to work for private families or in situations where there is not adequate supervision.

Students will contact the student advisor once they have identified the practicum site and potential supervisor. The student advisor will provide a practicum approval form, which is to be completed by the supervisor and the student and signed by the program director before the practicum begins.

Evaluation
Students must submit a work log signed by the supervisor. The work log should indicate the dates and hours worked and the total number of hours completed. The student and the supervisor are each required to complete two evaluation reports, an interim evaluation a few weeks after the practicum is started and a final evaluation near the end of the practicum. There is no grade or course credit assigned to the practicum, however students may wish to obtain a letter of reference from the supervisor.

Responsibilities of Student During Practicum
The student is responsible for researching and locating a practicum site and supervisor and for completing the duties outlined on the practicum approval form. Students will behave in a professional manner and will comply with agency policies regarding conduct, respect of client and agency confidentiality and any relevant policies as outlined by the practicum supervisor. The student will maintain regular contact with the practicum supervisor and will advise the supervisor of any difficulties, questions or if further instruction or assistance is required. The student may also contact the student advisor should the need arise.

Responsibilities of the Practicum Supervisor
The practicum supervisor is responsible for completing the practicum approval form and providing assistance and supervision to the student as required. The practicum supervisor will maintain regular contact with the student and will ensure that the work log is completed and submitted to the student advisor, along with the interim and final evaluations. The practicum supervisor will contact the student advisor when required.

Responsibilities of the Gerontology Program
The student advisor will maintain a list of potential practicum sites and will provide all relevant forms and letters of introduction as required. The student advisor is available to answer questions regarding the practicum requirement and will assist with the submission of practicum approval forms, work logs and evaluation forms.

Completion of the Practicum
The practicum requirement must be fulfilled prior to graduation. The practicum requirement will be considered complete when the number of specified hours have been worked and work logs and evaluations have been submitted to the student advisor. The student and the practicum supervisor will receive written confirmation that the practicum has been completed.