

Ivy Tech Community College  
Planning for Your Library Practicum Experience  
**Information and Instructions for LTA Students**

LIB 206, Library Technical Assistant Practicum, is the culminating experience for LTA students. It is a three credit course that involves working in a library of your choice for a total of 144 hours over a semester during which you are registered.

### **Prerequisites**

Because you will be working in an actual library setting, you must be well-prepared to be useful to your host library while you are also learning from them. Consequently, there are many prerequisites required. They are the following:

- LIB 101, Introduction to Libraries & Library Services
- LIB 102, Introduction to Reference Sources & Services
- LIB 103, Introduction to Library Public Services
- LIB 104, Introduction to Technical Services
- LIB 201, Cataloging & Classification
- LIB 202, Electronic Resources & Online Searching
- CIS 101, Introduction to Microcomputers
- Most of the concentration courses in your specialty area (either Technical or Children's courses)
- Permission from the LTA Program Chair at your region

It is also recommended that you have most of your general education requirements completed as well. This is especially helpful for those not already working in a library because it increases the likelihood of completing the full degree rather than be tempted to move from the Practicum to a job.

### **Planning for the Practicum & Meeting with your Program Chair**

The Practicum course requires planning ahead. You should begin to think about and plan for this course one semester ahead of when you want to register for and take it. For example, if you want to take it in a fall semester, you should begin at the end of spring or early summer to plan for it. If you want to take in a spring semester, you should begin planning in early fall. This planning involves thinking about and discussing with your regional Program Chair what kind of library you might like to choose for your experience. You will stay in that one library for the entire semester; however, you might be able to move around within that library from one department to another, although that is not necessary or even recommended. Think about the kind of library you might like to work in once you complete your degree and then explore where those types of libraries are in your geographic area.

**Please note: Your supervisor in the library must be a librarian with a Master's degree in Library Science.**

**Before you approach any library about a practicum placement, you should meet with your regional Program Chair.** Read over the following documents and information and take them to the meeting with that person. (*The documents are available on the LTA web site at <http://www.ivytech.edu/library/lta/> .* Your Program Chair will be able to get a copy of your transcript for you.

- A transcript of the courses you have taken so far
- Course Outline for LIB 206
- Student and Library Goals form (discuss your goals with your Program Chair)
- Overview, Guidelines, and Forms for Students and Supervisors
- A list of the libraries you would like to consider as Practicum sites
- A possible schedule of times you might be available to work

At the meeting with your Program Chair, be prepared to discuss the following:

- Your ideas about the library(s) in which you might do your Practicum
- The above documents--to be sure you understand them and can answer questions about them when you meet with potential Practicum library personnel.
- What you want to accomplish during this practicum. Be sure you have read over the LIB 206 course outline before finalizing your goals.

Your Program Chair will advise you on the above issues and help you with your site selection and goals.

### **Making Contact with a Practicum Site**

After meeting with your Program Chair, you may approach the library of your choice about the possibility of doing your practicum there. You will want to talk with a Department Head or Library Director about this idea. It would probably be best to call ahead or stop by and make an appointment to meet with one of the above people.

When you go for your meeting, take the following with you:

- Dates of the semester during which you would be doing the Practicum
- Some idea of days and times you might be available to work
- The "Overview, Guidelines, and Forms for Students and Supervisors" document
- The LIB 206 Course Outline
- Student and Library Goals form

You should be prepared to explain what you hope to learn from your Practicum to the librarian you meet with so that the library will have a good idea of whether they can meet your expectations. They will also have an idea of what the

commitment would be if they accept you as a student. Not all libraries are able to commit staff time to the training of students; so be prepared that you may not be accepted by your first choice library.

Once you have found a library that agrees to accept you for the practicum, fill out the "Student and Library Goals" form that is on page 4 of the Guidelines document and get the signature of the Director of the library you have chosen. Return this to your Program Chair and register for LIB 206 at the earliest appropriate time.

### **What if you are already working in a library?**

If you are already currently working in a library, the College recommends that you seek out another library in which to gain new experience. If this is not possible, you may do your practicum in your library if you can be supervised by a librarian with a Masters degree in Library Science. You may not work in the same department you currently work in performing the same activities. You must choose to work in another department where you can learn about another part of your library's operation. You should consult with your library supervisor or library director about the practicum experience and find out what they would like you to do it in your library or find another library.

You should not be doing your practicum hours during your paid work hours if at all possible.

### **Practicum Site Selection/Placement**

The student will work with the Ivy Tech regional LTA Program Chair or Practicum Professor to determine what type of library and which specific library will most benefit that student. After preliminary discussion, the student will be responsible for approaching the library he/she wishes to use for the practicum and obtaining permission. Once the student has done this, the professor will contact the library and approve and finalize the arrangements. **This discussion and contact should take place early in the semester prior to when the student will register for the course.** After the site is finalized by the Program Chair, the student should contact the designated on-site supervisor and set up a first day and time of arrival. Preliminary discussion of a semester work schedule is also appropriate at this time.