Guide to HDSR for Field Study Supervisors

The Human Development and Social Relations Program (HDSR) is an interdisciplinary major offered at Earlham College. HDSR combines the study of Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, and Philosophy. The HDSR program prepares students for a variety of careers in the area of human services—social work, medicine, law, counseling, teaching, public administration, ministry, and many other fields.

What is the HDSR Field Study?

The Field Study is a required component of our major, giving the student a first-hand opportunity to integrate theory learned in the classroom with experience gained in the field setting.

The Field Study is purposely quite different than an internship or practicum that other programs may require. The primary purpose of a conventional internship is for the student to perform a job and to learn, in the process, skills that will be useful to him/her in a future career. The main purpose of the HDSR Field Study is for the student to gain insight into the workings of an organization and the nature of the interpersonal relations that take place within it. Of course, HDSR students are also expected to be responsible workers for their organizations during field study, to take their job seriously, and to contribute to the organization in positive ways. There is though, the added dimension of observing and analyzing the organization at the same time. An HDSR Field Study might be thought of as a conventional internship, job or volunteer service, plus ethnographic fieldwork.

Students fulfill the ethnographic fieldwork requirement through participant observation, to gain insight into the workings of an organization and the nature of the relationships that take place within it. They will appreciate your willingness to share your expertise and answer questions about why certain decisions are made and how the organization works at various levels.

Students are required to take notes, which are then used in a Field Study Seminar course where students to analyze and interpret different organizations and their workings, resulting in a final paper for the course.

Confidentiality

Research ethics dictate that students practice confidentiality in the reporting of their field work. The name and location of your organization, and other identifying information including the names of all persons the student comes into contact with, will be deleted or disguised. The final paper produced by the student will be shared only with the instructor, other members of the HDSR program, and persons interested in this kind of ethnographic research. For reasons of confidentiality, these papers are not shared with the organization. It is unusual for undergraduate student research to be published, but
should a publication result from the student’s project, it will be limited to a scholarly audience and will disguise the identity of your organization and its members.

**Site Supervisor’s Role**
The supervisor’s participation in this program is deeply appreciated by Earlham College and the HDSR faculty. We hope that having this student worker will be a mutually beneficial experience. When a supervisor agrees to take on a student, we trust that the supervisor or someone else on the staff will be able to devote a reasonable amount of time to the student. This is especially important at the beginning of the term. We ask that the supervisor, or his/her designee, orient the student to the organization, including any rules, regulations and responsibilities about which the student should be aware. In order for the students to achieve their learning goals, we believe that it is necessary for them to be treated as any other employees.

At times, it may be important for the student to ask questions about certain policies or issues, in order to gain a better understanding of the workings of the organization. We also ask that the supervisor be aware of the student’s progress, and at the end of the term, share the written evaluations with the student before mailing it to the HDSR Program Director, Michael Jackson. The student will provide you with an addressed envelope for that purpose.

Finally, we ask that you sign and return the consent form on the following page to the student, indicating your acceptance of this student as your employee, volunteer or intern, and your agreement in allowing the student to use this experience for their HDSR Field Study project.
SITE SUPERVISOR CONSENT

I have read the HDSR Guide for Field Study Supervisors, and agree to accept this student as an employee/volunteer/intern, for the period beginning _______________ and ending _______________.

I understand that (Student Name)________________________________________ will be using this work experience as a basis for meeting the requirements of their Field Study project at Earlham College.

Name of Organization______________________________________________________
Site Supervisor’s Signature_________________________________________________
Date of Signature __________________________________________________________
Title________________________________Telephone______________________________
Email Address________________________________________________________________