I. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Health and Physical Education (HPE) at Winthrop University requires that each Sport Management major complete a three (3) credit hour field experience (SPMA 392) as part of sport organization in order to meet the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Sport Management. The field experience is an opportunity to acquire invaluable work experience in sport management. Students have the opportunity to apply the procedures, theories, techniques and skills they have mastered in the classroom to a work experience in the field of sport management. To enhance these benefits, the University requires students to participate in a seminar (SPMA 398) concurrently with the field experience, which is designed to allow sharing of the field experience among peers in the sport management program, as well as to prepare for the student’s internship.

The field experience requirement includes a minimum of ten (10) weeks and at least 120 contact hours with a University approved placement. If at all possible, the placement site will be decided during the term prior to the placement, so that both the placement site and the University have time to plan for the supervision of the student.

Sport management students have the opportunity to complete the field experience in a sport or recreational setting. Students are encouraged to seek a variety of administrative experiences which accompany the production of sport programs. The sport management program at Winthrop University has been designed to provide students with theoretical background in areas pertaining to sport including history, ethics, facilities, events, marketing, fiscal management, and legal aspects. All sport management students take a wide variety of courses that address each of these specific areas and include traditional business applications such as accounting, finance, marketing, sales, and management. Goals of the University are to produce students who will be: 1) computer literate in all types of technology; 2) flexible and adaptable in handling changing roles and management styles; 3) team players with networking, negotiating, learning, and personal career planning skills; 4) self-starters working within a strong ethical framework; 5) able to demonstrate global awareness; 6) able to demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills; 7) able to demonstrate the ability to function and work with diverse populations. Students should seek opportunities that will allow them to demonstrate their competency in each of the seven goal areas.
The field experience provides the student with practical experience needed for success in the competitive job market. Understanding that many of the applications of sport management are service-oriented professions, serving a variety of clients, learning is enhanced by the opportunities for hands-on experience and maximized when qualified professionals provide supervision. The field experience is also designed to allow the student to grow professionally, to identify strengths and weaknesses, to apply theory to practical situations, and to gain an appreciation of the role, duties, responsibilities, and nature of the work that has been chosen as a career.

Students should seek organizations staffed by qualified professionals. Qualified professionals will allow students to hone their professional skills in the workplace while providing much needed guidance and insight into the sport management field. Some of the recommended qualities of such sport organizations should include:

1. Reputation – Choose organizations that have regional, national, or global reputations for excellence.
2. Qualified Personnel – Seek information about the professional background and education of the person for whom you will be working.
3. Goal Orientation – Seek information regarding the current and future goals of the placement site for which you are applying.

Lists of potential field experience sites are available in the Sport Management Resource Notebook located in the Sport Management Coordinator’s office. The notebook contains information on placement sites used by past Winthrop University students.

Listed below are the minimum criteria for a placement site to be approved:

1. Placement site must be in the sport management area and supervised by a sport management professional.
2. Placement site must provide the student with the opportunity to experience a variety of programs, functions, and duties.
3. Placement must be approved by the Sport Management Coordinator (SMC).

A. Mission Statement

The mission of the Sport Management field experience at Winthrop University is to provide students with opportunities to apply classroom theories, concepts, methods and techniques in realistic situations.
B. Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of the field experience is to provide for students a transitional work experience, from university training to a professional career, through field experiences gained in a sport management setting. In addition, students will gain valuable experiences in management and administration.

The following objectives will be met through the field experience:

1. Students will be able to field test knowledge, skills, and leadership styles, as well as gain first-hand experience in supervision and administration.
2. Students will be able to develop professional behaviors under the guidance of a sport management professional.
3. Students will reflect on strengths and weaknesses in their performances.
4. Students will demonstrate computer literacy.
5. Students will demonstrate networking, negotiating, learning and team building skills.
6. Students will demonstrate effective verbal and written communication skills.
7. Students will demonstrate ethical decision-making skills.
8. Students will demonstrate flexibility and adaptability while performing their assigned duties.
9. Students will complete assignments without supervision.
10. Students will demonstrate their ability to work in various capacities with diverse populations.
11. Students will determine their degree of commitment to the field, as well as their personal career planning skills.

II. STUDENT CONSIDERATIONS

Every sport management major will complete a field experience in an area related to her/his career goals. Explanations and examples of field experience processes and procedures are provided in this handbook. It is important to recognize, however, that a field experience is a privilege that carries distinct responsibilities. To begin, field experiences are available only to students carrying a minimum 2.0 grade point average (GPA). Secondly, students will only be placed in positions if they have demonstrated
maturity, competence, and reliability, both in the classroom and in activity. Finally, because of the competitive selection process, students must realize that they may not secure their top choices of field experience. **It is the student’s responsibility to find available and appropriate field experience sites. Students will not contact a perspective site until it has been approved by the University Supervisor.** Sources of information are abundant. Students can check the Sport Management Resource Notebook available in the Sport Management Coordinator’s office, network with professionals and fellow students, talk to faculty members, and contact volunteer and community service programs in the area. The time to begin exploring possible placements is the semester before, and in some cases one year before, the scheduled field experience.

Due to the competitive nature of the sport industry, prospective students must recognize that the pool of candidates for various field experiences will be highly competitive. Candidates will come from the growing number of sport management programs throughout the country (and the world) and will also come from other disciplines such as business administration, public policy, mass communications, journalism, and other established professions. Therefore, it is extremely important that you represent Winthrop University, the Sport Management program, and yourself in the most positive and professional manner when seeking a placement.

Students completing a field experience must remember that performance on the job can either enhance or hinder their career objectives. Eagerness, reliability, positive attitude, and responsibility will always be in demand. A field experience presents the student with the opportunity to establish a reputation for these qualities. Students who carefully plan and successfully complete a meaningful field experience will have a better chance of launching a successful career in the sport industry.

Success depends on the student’s appropriate and efficient completion of assigned duties. Field experience sites have a regular job to perform and must maintain their reputation for professional services. Sites cannot tolerate inefficiency, irresponsibility, or actions that might impact the public/client’s confidence in their ability. During the field experience, the student is a functional part of the organization. What the student does reflects the policies and standards of both the site and the University. The student must be committed to professional conduct in all phases of her/his field experience assignment.
A. **Financial Consideration**

Students need to plan ahead financially as well as academically. Some field experiences may provide salary or an hourly wage, but many of the best field experience opportunities provide no compensation whatsoever. Field experiences need to be considered on the merits and opportunities for potential learning experiences. More important than the immediate financial rewards, a field experience is an investment in the future of the student. The skills learned, contacts made, and references obtained should be the prime consideration in the selection of the field experience. For these reasons, financial planning is very important before a student selects a placement.

B. **Eligibility**

Students normally do a field experience near the completion of all coursework. In addition, the following criteria must be met:

1. The student must have completed 54 credit hours of coursework with a minimum of a 2.00 GPA.
2. Concurrent enrollment in SPMA 398 (Field Experience Seminar)
3. The student will complete the Field Experience Application (Appendix B), and provide a signed copy of the Insurance Acknowledgement Form (Appendix A) and the Field Experience Contract (Appendix C). All forms must be submitted prior to beginning the field experience to the university supervisor.

However, if a student has completed all of her/his 300 level coursework in the major and 54 credit hours of coursework, and a quality field experience becomes available, the student may accept the position with the approval of the Sport Management Coordinator (SMC).

C. **Student Responsibilities**

The student will:

1. Contact your placement site supervisor after the site has accepted you as a field experience student.
2. Attend all individual and group meetings called by the university supervisor and as designed in SPMA 398.
3. File all forms and reports on time with the proper recipients.
4. Report to the placement and site supervisor on the date specified by the site.
Students may begin the field experience on whatever date is most appropriate for the effective training and initiation for the placement site. The bulk of the total required field experience hours must be completed during the official term of enrollment unless special permission from the SMC is obtained. The student must be in continual contact with the university supervisor. If the student fails to report on a weekly basis, hours completed during the week will not count towards the 120 required hours.

5. Meet with the site supervisor weekly to discuss and document progress or problems.

6. Become thoroughly acquainted with the structure, operation, functions, and policies of the site, and abide by all regulations of the site.

7. Notify your site supervisor and university supervisor as soon as it becomes evident that you will be unable to report to work.

8. Support the site and its staff in any contacts with the public and/or client groups.

9. Be properly groomed and appropriately dressed on all occasions. When in doubt, ask the site supervisor.

10. Conduct all actions, both on and off the job, in a professional manner.

11. Plan assignments well in advance.

12. Promptly seek help from your site supervisor or university supervisor if problems arise.

13. Write a “Thank You” letter at the completion of your field experience, and submit a copy to the University Supervisor.

14. The student should obtain appropriate permission for spending any agency funds or any personal monies for which reimbursement is expected.

15. The student must report to the university supervisor any circumstance or situation that may be perceived by the intern to display unfair treatment, including sexual harassment, on the part of any agency staff member or patron.
D. Field Experience Assignments

1. Submit the Insurance Acknowledgment Form (Appendix A), Field Experience Application (Appendix B), and Field Experience Contract (Appendix C).

2. Keep a Bi-Weekly Log (Appendix E) of activities and duties performed at the field experience site and submit the log to the university supervisor every two weeks. Failure to submit this bi-weekly report will result in the loss of hours completed during the unreported time period.

3. Write Bi-Weekly Reflections (Appendix F) on your perceptions of the various experiences during the week. These reflections should go beyond the reporting of your duties and center on your feelings about the experience, how the experience is or is not meeting your expectations, and provide evidence of insightful and thoughtful thinking about your field experience. See Appendix F for a description of the contents of a reflection. These reflections are to be submitted with your Bi-Weekly Logs.

4. Arrange meetings between the university and site supervisors. Keep in contact with both your university and site supervisors.

4. Present an evaluation (due date: ______________) of your performance, to be completed and signed by the site supervisor (Appendix G). This evaluation is shared between the university supervisor, the site supervisor, and the student. Make sure your site supervisor receives self-addressed envelopes to mail the form.

6. Complete a Final Field Experience Evaluation (Appendix H). Comments made will not be communicated to the site without your permission. The information provided on the form will be used to guide the placement of future students at the site. (due date: ____________)

7. Submit the Sport Management University Supervisor Evaluation (Appendix I) during the last week of the field experience. This evaluation form will not be shared with the University supervisor until the end of the academic year. No evaluation will be shared with the University supervisor until the supervisor has at least five returned evaluations from students. At no time will the university supervisor see the original evaluation from the student. All information will appear in aggregate format based on at least five evaluations. All evaluation feedback is completely confidential and the university
supervisor will not be able to identify the source of any comment. Electronic copy the form and return it to the following email address:
copeland@winthrop.edu (due date:______________)

8. Students should complete a letter of appreciation to the site supervisor the last week of the field experience. Provide a duplicate copy to the university supervisor.

E. Grading

Grading will be on a letter basis. The university supervisor will assign the grade. Site evaluations as well as the quality and promptness of the various assignments will be considered in the final grade. Communication is a key component in the field experience program. The caliber and promptness of the various assignments will be a key component of the final grade evaluation.

II. AGENCY CONSIDERATIONS

In accepting a student, the placement site is helping to prepare future professionals in the field of sport management. The field experience is a joint project of the University and the site. The site supervisor must be willing to participate in an educational process and be vested in the learning experience of the student. The site supervisor will be the role model for the student and can be a major influence on the student’s professional development.

A. Benefits of the Field Experience Program to the Profession

1. Provides the graduates of professional curricula with a better insight into the operations of sport management organizations and prepares them to be more effective professionals.
2. Compares the site’s practices with what students have learned in the classroom.
3. Provides a mechanism whereby the profession can screen future members prior to their full-time employment.

B. Benefits of the Field Experience Program to the Site
1. Contributes to the education and preparation of future professionals.
2. Allows the site to broaden its base of service by utilizing the student and University resources.
3. Students may bring new information to the site.
4. May stimulate the site’s professional staff and strengthen the in-service development program.
5. Provides the site with an opportunity to evaluate prospective staff candidates for potential employment.

C. Agency Selection and Field Experience Placement

The University is responsible for the review and selection of sites, and ultimately the approval of students to the sites. When feasible, the University encourages a site representative to visit the campus and interview prospective field experience program candidates as part of the placement process. Funds used in the University representative’s visit to sites with students are derived from University resources.

In order to live within these financial limitations, the University endeavors to place its students with sites in geographic proximity to the University, if the standards of quality are not contravened. Distant locations are considered if they represent outstanding programs or if cooperative agreements can be established with faculty from nearby University. Supervisory visits by University personnel will be infrequent at distant locations, but frequent discussions via phone calls or emails will occur.

D. Agency Student Supervision

It is requested that the site supervisor or a designated representative have weekly conferences with the student to discuss definite means to help the student gain desirable experiences. This part of the field experience should also help the student understand the total concept of the site through the discussion of actual problems and situations in as many areas of operation as possible.

Agency areas of operation (where appropriate) include the following:

1. Administration – The student should study and observe in action the policies and practices of the site. This would include the legal status of the site, board-staff relations, budgeting and record-keeping procedures, personnel and supervisory practices, and general staff relations.
2. Program Services – The student should help plan a broad program of activities, events, and/or services characteristic of the site involved, and be involved in helping to carry out those programs and services.

3. Planning and Facilities – The student should gain practical experience in facility planning and operation. This would include experiences in long range planning as well as the layout and operation of facilities and areas used in ongoing programs or events.

4. Maintenance – The student should be scheduled and assigned to various operations to provide a number of learning experiences in the area of maintenance management and operations.

5. General Experiences – The student should gain experience in dealing with public relations problems, attend board and/or other community meetings, and work with committees during the internship experience.

E. Agency Responsibilities

The site responsibilities are to:

1. Appoint a site supervisor to work with the student(s).

2. Complete and return all reports on the student to the University. The site supervisor will complete an Agency Placement Confirmation (Appendix D) and a final evaluation of the student’s performance (Appendix G). A constructive evaluation of the student as if s/he were employed by the site is desired. All evaluations are confidential among the agency, the student, and the university supervisor. Often, it will be necessary to complete a final evaluation prior to the official termination of the field experience, so that students can be provided a grade for the academic term. In addition, an evaluation form on the supervision provided by the university supervisor (Appendix J) is also requested. A self-addressed envelope will be provided for your convenience. The evaluation is returned to the Department Chair and will be kept confidential.

3. Orient the site staff to the objectives of the field experience. Provide staff members guidance regarding her/his role in the field experience.

4. Present the student to the site staff in such a manner as to ensure high professional status.
5. Orient the student to the site and the surrounding community.

6. Provide for meetings between the site supervisor and the student at which time the student and the supervisor will have an opportunity to discuss any issues regarding the student’s performance.

7. Provide a variety of experiences for the student as appropriate for the site. Also, provide access to various forms and information that the student will use to build a comprehensive knowledge of the organizational function of the site.

8. Notify the University immediately when situations occur that would warrant intervention by the University.

9. Notify the University when an student needs to be removed when her/his performance or behavior is unsatisfactory and/or detrimental to the site, and remedial alternatives have been exhausted.

10. Notify the university supervisor immediately if the student is experiencing difficulty with the field experience. If a field experience is discontinued or significantly interrupted, a record of this action must be recorded as an addendum in the field experience contract. The addendum must be signed and dated by both the University supervisor and the site supervisor.

IV. UNIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

A. Responsibilities to the Agency:

1. Meet or correspond with the site supervisor to clarify the expectations of the University for participating agencies. Provide advice and guidance for mentoring and assessing the student’s performance.

2. Interpret the field experience program to new agencies and clarify their roles and responsibilities.

3. Regularly meet and correspond with the site supervisor to discuss the student’s performance and agency’s satisfaction with the student. If a field experience is discontinued or significantly interrupted, a record of this action must be recorded as an addendum on the field experience contract. The addendum must be signed and dated by both the university supervisor and the site supervisor.
B. Responsibilities to the Student:

1. Meet with students enrolled in SPMA 398 to introduce the Field Experience Program and review the Field Experience Handbook.

2. Conduct conferences with student for the purpose of determining student eligibility and readiness for undertaking the field experience assignment. Advise and direct the student’s selection process based upon the agency and assignment best suited to the needs and interests of the student.

3. Approve the selection of an agency as a field experience location based upon discussion with the student and site supervisor. Insure that the Insurance Acknowledgement Form (Appendix A), Field Experience Application (Appendix B), and Field Experience Contract (Appendix C) are completed.

4. Insure that the Agency Placement Confirmation (Appendix D) is completed.

5. Regularly meet with the student, on and off-site, to review the student’s journal and discuss issues regarding performance of the assignments.

6. Receive and review student’s bi-weekly logs and reflective narratives.

7. Receive from the student notification as to the final date of the field experience and arrange a final visit or contact with both the student and the site supervisor.

8. Receive Final Performance Evaluation (Appendix G) from the site supervisor.

9. Receive from the student a completed Final Field Experience Evaluation (Appendix H)

10. Maintain Assignment Checklist (Appendix K) detailing the student’s completed assignments.

11. Assign grade.