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HLIN 8900 FIELD EXPERIENCE GUIDE  
FOR  
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HEALTH INFORMATICS

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EFFECTIVE FALL 2025



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## FIELD EXPERIENCE OBJECTIVES AND STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

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### OBJECTIVES

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The purpose of the MSHI's field experience is to provide students with an opportunity to apply the concepts, strategies and tools learned throughout the coursework. The overall objectives of the field experience are to:

- Expand knowledge and skills in health informatics
- Increase the professional awareness of the complexity of healthcare services industry, management, informatics, and policy issues
- Increase appreciation of cultural differences in the populations and health services professionals
- Apply theories, concepts, and tools learned in coursework
- Enhance competencies required for an early healthcare administrator
- Prepare for healthcare informatics careers as a professional
- Develop opportunities for job placement, professional references, and contacts
- Strengthening ties between the academic program and the healthcare informatics and management practice

### STUDENT PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

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Students are responsible for the arrangement of activities of their field experience and the ultimate responsibility for finding a placement that rests with the student. The Department has information to assist students in identifying Field Experience opportunities in appropriate organizations, given the student's professional interests. Students should browse the Field Experience list and of the past Field Experience sites.

The Field Experience may not duplicate current or previous work experiences. Students may complete the Field Experience at their current place of employment per Filed Experience Instructor's permission. The permission is given at the discretion of Instructor for working of a student's current scope of responsibilities while fulfilling all College and Department requirements and expectations.

Students must submit the Field Experience Application to the Field Experience Instructor that identifies the site, the preceptor's name and title, the goals and objectives of the project for approval.

When engaging in a field experience, a student is an official representative of the Program and the University. Each student is expected to always conduct him/herself professionally. This includes, but is not limited to, professional attire, demeanor, and behavior.

All field experience arrangements and activities are ultimately the responsibility of the student but are subject to approval by the Field Experience Instructor.

## ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

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Students pursuing the Master of Science in Health Informatics (MSHI) are required to complete a minimum of 120 contact hours of field experience (e.g. 10 hours per week for 12 weeks) to receive 3 hours of academic credit as part of their curriculum. To be eligible for field experience, students must be in good academic standing; have completed at least 21 credit hours of required coursework in the MSHI program, and permission of the advisor and field experience instructor. At the conclusion of the field experience all students will be expected to complete and submit the following minimum requirements:

1. Field Experience Application
2. Field Experience Work Plan
3. Field Experience Weekly and Periodic Reports
4. Field Experience Final Report
5. Field Experience Portfolio
6. Field Experience Preceptor Evaluation Form
7. Office of International Studies (OIS) documents (international students only)

## FIELD EXPERIENCE WORK PLAN OR PROJECT AND FIELD EXPERIENCE APPLICATION

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The Field Experience Work Plan or Project Proposal is the formal agreement between the student, Field Experience Preceptor, and Field Experience Instructor. At a minimum, the Project Proposal must identify the following:

- Field experience site, Preceptor's name and title
- The outline of the Work Plan.
- The required number of competencies that will be attained by the field experience. Each competency that is identified must have specific objectives, proposed activities, and target products or materials that will demonstrate attainment. Please use the field experience learning questions and competencies at the end of this guide and the preceptor's evolution form to help you identify the competencies that will be attained by your field experience.

The field experience site Preceptor and the field experience Instructor must approve the field experience site and all field experience objectives, activities, and products. Signing of the Application by each party indicates approval and allows the student to begin the field experience. Field Experience Applications must be submitted to the Field Experience Instructor.

## FIELD EXPERIENCE JOURNAL

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Each student is required to make journal entries each time the field experience work is performed. Your journals entries should reflect on your goals and objectives, and how experiences help to enhance specific competences. Write professionally using correct spelling and grammar. Be honest to yourself and express your thoughts clearly.

## PERIODIC REPORTS

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Students are required to submit written monthly or periodic reports to the Field Experience Instructor throughout the field experience. The monthly or periodic reports should address the following:

- Activities:
  1. Describe most important activities of the period.
  2. Describe interesting meetings, including group meetings or individual meetings
  3. Describe duties assigned, other organizations or facilities visited, training completed, projects worked on, and other significant activities.
  4. Do not submit a log of all activities. Describe in narrative form (not bullet points) selected activities and why they are important.
- Learning experiences:
  1. Write one or two paragraphs about the key learning experience of the period. Describe how the experience has expanded your knowledge base and relate it to your coursework or to your responsibility.
  2. Link the activities to specific competencies and how the activity helped you develop the competencies. This will help you when writing their final report.
  3. Describe how the key experience relates to the objectives in your Project Proposal.

Unless stated, the frequency for the reports is monthly and the due date is on the last day of each month. Each report should be submitted on the Blackboard. The length of the report may vary from one to two pages (single-spaced). The journal entries can be a good source for your monthly or periodic reports.

## FINAL REPORT

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All students are required to submit a Final Report at the conclusion of the field experience. Consistent with University policy, each Final Report must be approved by your instructor. The final report should include:

- A summary of major projects and activities engaged during the field experience.
- An assessment addressing how competencies selected for the field experience were met through the established objective, activities and deliverables. (This aspect of the final report is the most important and should thoroughly address each of the competencies identified).
- Emphasize insights and lessons learned through the field experience

- Evaluative comments about the Field Experience Preceptor and the site.
- A thoughtful reflection on how the field experience contributed to your overall educational experience and professional development.

The Final Report should be no more than 5 pages, single spaced. APA guidelines

## FIELD EXPERIENCE PORTFOLIO

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All students are required to submit electronically a Field Experience Portfolio that contains their Field Experience Application, Project Proposal or Work Plan, Field Experience Journals, Monthly or Periodic Reports, and Final Report on Blackboard. Make sure your Portfolio is in one file with a table of contents. A poorly organized portfolio will result in an unfavorable evaluation with the grade being lowered by one letter.

The content of the portfolio may vary depending on the organization and the project. The Final Report is a major part of your Field Experience Portfolio. The additional required components of the Portfolio can be found on the Blackboard (See Portfolio Table of Contents)

## PRECEPTOR EVALUATION FORM

Students will be evaluated by their Field Experience Preceptor at the conclusion of the practicum (Preceptor Evaluation Form). The Preceptor's evaluation of the student will be considered in determining the student's term grade for the field experience. Please see the Field Experience Preceptor Evaluation Form.

## GRADING

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Upon completion of the field experience, the instructor will award a letter grade for a student based on completion of the requirements outlined above and any additional requirements outlined in department and college policy, including:

1. Completed required hours
2. Weekly and Periodic Reports
3. Final Report
4. Portfolio
5. Field Experience Preceptor's evaluation

If a student defaults on the terms of the Work Plan or Project Proposal, the student may receive a failing grade. Once Blackboard is available, the student must begin uploading the required documents to the administrative document folder. Failure to do so within the first 10 calendar days of the course start will lead to being withdrawn from the course\*.

During the field experience, if the Preceptor or the Instructor determines a student is having difficulty functioning in a particular setting, the student may be reassigned or asked to withdraw and retake the field experience during a future semester. If the student's behavior is determined to be unprofessional,

unethical, or outside the rules of the field site or university, the student may be given a failing grade and thus no academic credit will be received for the field experience, and/or may be removed from the degree program depending upon individual circumstances.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

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In the effort to plan, organize and execute successful field experience, the student is expected to take a primary role and can be assisted by the Field Experience Instructor and Field Experience Preceptor.

### STUDENT

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- Before the Field Experience

The responsibility for making all field experience arrangements including securing a placement ultimately rests with the student and subject to Instructor and Preceptor approval. The student is primarily responsible for sending out inquiries, setting up meetings, ensuring communications among those involved, and making preliminary arrangements. The student is encouraged to seek information and advice from their faculty advisor, other faculty, and the Field Experience Instructor.

- Background Check
- Students are responsible for their background check for the field experience. The host site may require professional liability insurance.
- Students are responsible for obtaining a copy of the liability insurance certificate that covers them during the field experience.
- Field Experience Application and Project Proposal

Students are responsible for submitting the Field Experience Application and the Project Proposal that are used to ensure explicit communication of field experience arrangements and expectations. The student, Field Experience Preceptor, and Instructor will determine the nature of the field experience commitment (i.e., start and completion dates, total number of weeks, or number of days worked per week, or hours per day, etc.). The field experience Instructor has final approval of field experience placement, competencies, objectives, and activities. Each student is personally liable for their own behavior and performance during their field experience.

- Affiliation Agreements

Some organizations and agencies may require an Affiliation Agreement to be in place prior to students

engaging in a field experience. All Affiliation Agreements for field experiences are managed by the Dean's Office. Affiliation Agreements are made between the College and the organization/agency and may only be signed by those with appropriate institutional authority. Students are responsible to discuss with the Field Experience Instructor whether or not an Affiliation Agreement exists prior to initiation of the field experience.

- During the Field Experience

The student is responsible for completing all assignments and components of the field experience in a timely manner. Written journals, reports, papers, and other products required (see syllabus) must be collected in student's portfolio. The portfolio may be developed in collaboration with field experience preceptor, but its timely completion and submission are solely the responsibility of the student.

- At the conclusion of the field experience

The student is responsible for sitting with the field experience Preceptor to discuss the concluding performance and seek advice for future improvement. The student is also responsible for submitting all required documents of the field experience to the Field Experience Instructor.

- Ethical Guidelines for Students

- All information related to clients of the host organization or agency is to remain confidential
- Students must follow standards of academic integrity as outlined in MSHI student Handbook and University Policy. Any student identified as having engaged in any acts of academic dishonesty while engaged in field experience activities will be subject to the same standards and review process, including the possibility of dismissal.
- Students should be guided by the guidelines and expectations of their host organization or agency.
- Students are encouraged to discuss with the field experience Instructor any activities they believe may potentially compromise legal or ethical standards.
- Students may undertake only those program activities explicitly assigned or authorized by host site personnel, preceptor or the field experience Instructor.
- Students should immediately report any harassment of any form they might experience while participating in their field experience to the Preceptor, Instructor, and/or the Department Chairperson.
- Students may not visit clients socially during regular working hours without explicit approval of the Field Experience Preceptor.
- Students may not correspond with or for clients regarding matters of a professional nature without explicit approval of the Practicum Preceptor.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students must adhere to the rules and guidelines put in place by the Office of International Studies (OIS) and the United States Government while on a student visa. All documents must be approved by OIS before the student may begin their field experience. If all documents required are not submitted within ten days of the course start date, the student will be withdrawn from the course.

## Field Experience Preceptor



All Preceptors are technically considered Clinical Adjunct Faculty of the University. As such, they must possess a master's degree or higher in a field related to **Health Informatics, Healthcare administration, Health Information Management, Public Health, Nursing Informatics, Computer Science, or a related healthcare/IT field.**, or by the permission of the Field Experience Instructor. The student must submit the Preceptor's resume or curriculum vitae with their Field Experience application for approval by the Field Experience Instructor.

A role of a field experience Preceptor is to guide the student's experience in a supportive and professionally stimulating environment. During the field experience their role include:

- Serve as a professional role model and facilitate the student's identification with the profession.
- Serve as a work supervisor and employer with the addition of a strong educational focus.
- Serve as the point of contact for a student within field experience locations and functions as his/her immediate supervisor.
- Provide workplace guidance and knowledge.
- Work with the student and the instructor to develop a Project Proposal prior to the initiation of the field experience.
- Assist the field experience Instructor in evaluating the student's performance by completing the Preceptor Evaluation Form at the completion of the field experience

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### Field Experience Instructor (Department Faculty)

The Field Experience Instructor maintains the records associated with each student's Field Experience and monitors the progress of each student during her/his field experience. The role of the field experience Instructor includes:

- Act as a resource for assisting the student in identifying possible field experience locations
- Assist the student in developing an appropriate Field Experience Project Proposal
- Approve student's Field Experience Application, and Project Proposal prior to the initiation of the field experience.
- Assign Periodic Report timeline and secure completed field experience evaluations
- Submit the final field experience grade

## PROCEDURES

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There are six steps for students to complete their Field Experience: 1) Understand; 2) Identify; 3) Apply; 4) Plan; 5) Do; and 6) Document

## Step 1 Understand Field Experience Requirement

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The first step to a successful field experience is to understand field experience requirements outlined in this document, HLIN 8900 syllabus, and completing the online required field experience training on Blackboard. Completion of the training on Blackboard will ensure students have access to all required documentation.

The semester prior to planned completion of the field experiences the student needs to complete the following steps 2 to 4.

## Step 2 Identify Field Experience Placement

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During the semester prior to the semester of field experience the student should identify a placement for their field experience by doing the following:

- Schedule a meeting with HLIN 8900 Field Experience Instructor to discuss eligibility to complete field experience.
- Have clear overall goals for field experience based on student experience.
- Based on goals, the student should gather information on potential field experience opportunities and sites. There are numerous avenues to identify potential field experiences including websites, visiting speakers and adjunct professors, emailed announcements, current and former students, faculty, family and friends.
- Students should update CV/resume.
- Once potential sites are identified the student moves to the application stage.

## Step 3 Apply for Field Experience

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At this step the student should have narrowed the search, contacted potential sites and begun the application process or negotiations for conducting a field experience. The student may be submitting applications for field experiences and participating in interviews. Please make sure the following document to be submitted with the application form:

- Application Form
- Resume
- Proof of Liability Insurance: Students must obtain insurance and submit proof to the Field Experience Instructor with the application. This can be done at but not limited to:

H.P.S.O. Service: Marsh Affinity Group, a service of Seabury & Smith Phone: 1-800-928-9491

1440, Renaissance Dr. Park Ridge, IL 60068 [www.hpsso.com](http://www.hpsso.com) Phone: 1-800-503-9230 [www.proliability.com](http://www.proliability.com) ○

Criminal Background check: To be completed at: <https://www.castlebranch.com/> use CODE: Go15

(as in the word go". Choose "Community Health Worker" option when prompt.

- Complete necessary documents for OIS (international students only)

As the student applies for the field experience or makes contact regarding potential field experiences the student needs to ensure the opportunity will fulfill requirements and meet the goals desired. Once the student receives an offer or secures a field experience opportunity, he or she moves to the formal planning process.

#### Step 4 Plan for Field Experience

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Once a field experience site and opportunity are secured, the student must complete the formal application and Project Proposal. Through discussions with their Field Experience Preceptor and the Instructor the student should create a Work Plan including objectives aligned to competencies, activities and deliverables. Once the student and Field Experience Preceptor agree and approve the finalized Proposal the document is submitted to the field experience Instructor for final approval.

The student cannot begin or register for field experience until all paperwork is signed and approved. Registration blocks are in place for all students. The instructor will remove the registration block allowing the student to register for HLIN 8900 Field Experience.

#### Step 5 Do Field Experience

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Once students begin field experience during the planned semester, they are required to submit Weekly Journals and Periodic Reports to Field Experience Instructor. The students should continue to review their Project Proposal throughout the field experience to ensure that competencies, objectives, and deliverables are being met.

#### Step 6 Document Field Experience

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At the completion of the field experience, the student is required to complete several tasks to receive field experience grades.

- Submit a Final Report to the Field Experience Instructor
- Compile and submit Field Experience Portfolio to the Field Experience Instructor
- All required documentation including Field Experience Preceptors evaluation form and Field Experience Completion Approval Form must be submitted by the end of the semester. Failure to do so by the deadline can impact on the ability of a student to receive academic credit for field experience.
- Complete the final competency self-assessment

## MSHI FIELD EXPERIENCE LEARNING QUESTIONS

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The following questions are design to help you intentionally learn from your field experience. You can use these questions to help you know what to learn, write your Final Report, and compile your Field Experience Portfolio.

1. Describe the ownership and structure of the organization. If it is a subsidiary of a parent corporation or part of a larger system, include the description of the larger organization. Include an organizational chart and indicate where in the organization your component is located. Provide a brief history of the organization. Include a description of how your area/department contributes to the fulfillment of the mission, vision and values of the organization.
2. Look at the staffing of the department or organization in which you work. Identify the key personnel (in terms of their name and title) and look at their current functions in relationship to their training and experience. Interview them to identify how they got to the position they hold today. Did your direct supervisor/Preceptor have a mentor(s)? If so, describe how this supervisor/mentor helped your supervisor/Preceptor.
3. Identify and discuss the two most important external organizations to your organization. What impact do fulfilling these organizations' requirements have on your organization and its leaders? How do regulations, guidelines and/or requirements from the two external organizations affect the pursuit and delivery of quality healthcare services in your organization?
4. Describe the key competitors and collaborators of your organization. How has the leadership of your organization been able to work with competitors and collaborators? Identify the leadership skills required for building these collaborative partnerships.
5. Describe the progress you have made with your MSHI competencies and skill sets. Mention and discuss at least three with specific attention to what you have undertaken in your field experience to this point in time.
6. Specific to what you are responsible for in your field experience, who are your customers? Describe both internal and external customers? Identify all of them and discuss what deliverables you provide to them.
7. Develop and answer a question you would like to discuss which adds to your reader's understanding of your experience and your responsibilities.
8. Describe a major project in which you have been involved. How did you contribute to the project? How did this project relate to the coursework you have already completed? How has this project contributed to your development as a soon-to-be early careerist in health informatics?
9. Interview at least five first line staff, asking them: "If you could break or change any rule in service for a better care experience for patients or staff, which would it be?" What do you think of these ideas?
10. What did you learn about yourself during your practicum? How did this practicum improve your competencies and skill sets? Describe additional competencies, skills, or other elements you need to focus on and develop.

## MSHI FIELD EXPERIENCE COMPETENCIES

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Upon completion of the program students are expected to:

1. Have knowledge to access health data, use it to describe current performance and apply it to healthcare organizations to forecast trends and patterns to improve operations.
2. Develop advanced computational, analytical, and technical skills.

3. Explain the applications of healthcare informatics and how they are used in healthcare organizations to transform care.
4. Demonstrate the capacity to make sound and ethical decisions related to healthcare informatics.
5. Gain insight into the resources needed to optimize the use of information technology in areas of healthcare research and clinical services delivery.
6. Be eligible for mid-level health informaticist positions in healthcare delivery systems, consulting firms, governmental organizations and research organizations.

## FIELD EXPERIENCE PORTFOLIO CONTENTS

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### THE PORTFOLIO MUST CONTAIN AT LEAST THE FOLLOWING

- Resume
- PDF Version of your LinkedIn Profile
- Cover Letter
- Copies of letter of recommendation (if any)
- Copies of educational certificates, licenses, and degrees ▪ Also include
  - Copies of transcripts
  - Copies of awards, honors, or other forms of recognition
  - Samples of your work completed while working on your MSHI degree.

