

The Heller School for Social Policy and Management

Brandeis University



The Master of Arts Degree in Coexistence and Conflict

Practicum Guidebook

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SECTION I. THE PRACTICUM SEARCH

1. Overview

The practicum allows students to examine a significant problem or issue within the broader field of conflict development & coexistence through experiential learning. Students who complete a practicum will develop a range of skills and varying levels of content knowledge and expertise, and they will have different overall experiences based on where their organization is located and the type of organization for whom they work. However, the value of the experiential learning and training opportunity extends to all students and includes the **learning objectives** listed below.

By the end of their practicums, students will have:

- Translated into practice the concepts and principles learned in the classroom
- Developed skill competencies
- Acquired deeper understanding of conflict challenges and the context in which it is situated
- Reflected on the content and process of the learning experience
- Demonstrated professional and personal development through relationship building and applied knowledge, skills, and experience in the work place
- Demonstrated awareness of organizational culture and/or community concerns

Anticipated **outcomes** of the practicum include the following practical skills:

- Inquiry and analysis
- Critical and creative thinking
- Information literacy
- Teamwork and problem solving
- Professional goals and networks
- Personal growth through greater self-awareness and confidence

The practicum should allow students to maximize learning, hone practitioner skills, increase responsibility, and expand their professional networks.

The practicum experience is meant to inform the student's final paper and to align closely with the COEX curriculum frameworks. Students have three options for their practicum experience.

2. Practicum Options & Requirements

A. Internship Option

Full-time (35-40 hours a week) internship with an organization project for a minimum of 3 months.

- Students are required to negotiate a Terms of Reference (TOR) with the organization to outline their responsibilities and duties during their internship, and this TOR must be approved by the student's practicum advisor.
- [Final Product – Internship Report \(35-40 pages\)](#)

B. Master's Paper Option

Students complete semi-independent research for an organization. Research duties must last a minimum of 3 months.

- The research topic will be chosen by the student, who will then complete the research on their own. Students are required to negotiate a TOR in which the organization will provide support, resources, and possible funding for this research.
- Students do not need an IRB, but their research question and proposed methodology must be approved by their practicum advisor and organization.
- Students should also discuss with their research organization if they will have the rights to publish their research work independently, or if it will remain the property of the organization
- [Final Product – Master's Paper \(60-75 pages\)](#)

C. Master's Thesis- Independent Field Research

Students complete independent research for a period of at least 3 months. This option requires an IRB if the student is conducting Human Subjects Research. Brandeis University defines Human Subjects Research as "*A living individual about whom an investigator conducting research*". If you are conducting any research that involves interviewing, surveying, observing, experimenting, or intervening with another human being you will need an IRB.

- Student's research question and methodology must be approved by their practicum advisor before the IRB process.
- The IRB process requires a lengthy proposal and documentation process. Students who undertake IRB thesis projects must submit their IRB proposal no later than March of their first year.
- Note: Most Master's thesis projects do not involve Human Subjects Research. A thesis can be written without Human Subjects research. Students should meet with their advisor and carefully consider if their topic truly requires the use of Human Subjects Research
- It is highly advised that students pursuing this option take additional research courses at Heller or Brandeis.
- [Final Product – Master's Thesis \(85-100 pages\)](#)

3. TOR Requirements

- Students must submit a **terms of reference (TOR)** to their advisor for review (please note that the practicum is not approved until the advisor has received the TOR and signs off on it). Typically, after the student and their supervisor have negotiated and finalized the expectations for the practicum, the supervisor develops the TOR. It must include the following information.
 - An offer to place the student with a full-time practicum (35-40 hours per week) for at least 3 consecutive months. The start and end dates of the practicum must be included in the TOR.

- Indication that the practicum will be based at the host organization or that arrangements have been made for remote work the student will be given office space and access to a computer and internet (if relevant to the position)
 - Description of the student's anticipated duties and responsibilities
 - Description of any support that will be provided (e.g., mentorship, financial or in-kind compensation)
 - The language in which the student will be expected to conduct their duties.
 - Any vacations or anticipated breaks in the assignment.
 - The supervisor's name, title, and contact information (email address and phone number).
 - Supervisor's signature (or the signature of a person of authority from the host organization)
- Students must submit a **signed and witnessed Practicum Release and Waiver form** to the practicum coordinator (see [Appendix A](#); the form can also be found on COEX form webpage).
 - Students must maintain full-time status by paying a **continuation fee** during the term(s) that they are completing their practicum.
 - Students must maintain their Brandeis or other **health insurance** policy or other health insurance coverage that meets the standards set forth by the university, regardless of their practicum location. Information related to the Brandeis insurance plan can be found at: <http://www.brandeis.edu/health/insurance>.

International students undertaking a US practicum must complete a CPT application. CPT requirements can be reviewed [here](#). Please note that international students cannot begin their practicum until their CPT has been approved. If students have questions about CPT or any other ISSO requirements, they should reach out directly to ISSO (Bonnie Ryle: bryle@brandeis.edu or Ruth Brigham: rbigham@brandeis.edu).

4. Searching for a Practicum

The practicum is a learning experience -- an opportunity to explore different professional positions, learn about a new field, and develop skills. It's also an opportunity for students to learn what type of environment they like to work in. As much as possible, students should keep an open mind as they approach the practicum search and remember that it's a time of exploration! The practicum does not have to be perfect, but it should be a good fit.

Students may begin by identifying a particular sub-field of development and a problem or issue within it that interests them. They can begin reading about the problem and looking for organizations that work actively in this sub-field to solve this problem. The following steps may be helpful for students as they search for a practicum.

Step 1: Identify purpose and goals

Students may begin by asking the following questions:

- Where do they see themselves professionally in five or ten years from now?
- What kind of practicum can help to get them there?
- What development problems drive their professional interests and/or passions?
- Where do they want to work?

- What type of organization do they want to work for?

Students might start with different professional options to help them think through their interests, talents, and goals, such as:

- Environment / social / economic / policy / education
- Research / advocacy/ communications
- Government / IGO/ NGO / private sector
- Large / small / grassroots organization
- International / national / local level
- Headquarters / field office
- Development manager / field specialist

There may be skills that students would like to develop, such as:

- Monitoring, evaluation, and learning
- Data collection and analysis
- Proposal writing
- Fundraising
- Mediation

Their purpose is reflected in what students want to achieve within the field of conflict resolution. It might refer to a particular social or environmental change, or to groups or issues that spark their interest.

Step 2: Know the situation and institutional landscape within your sub-field of conflict resolution

Students may want to explore the context and institutional landscape of conflict resolution. They can look for organizations working on policies, issues, programs, and projects related to their coexistence problem. They should identify organizations that align with their academic and professional interests and that might be a good fit for their practicum. Students may also want to familiarize themselves with the literature on relevant issues within their chosen field to build their knowledge about their topic and to inform their conversations with organizations.

Online searches for organizations

Students may also want to identify organizations working in a particular sector or region through **online searches** and by searching **websites that highlight NGOs**. They can search the organization’s website to learn about its mission, programs, and services, as well as to identify the names and email addresses of individuals to contact. Students can also review the LinkedIn COEX Opportunity Forum to see organizations which have relevant internship opportunities.

Step 3: Develop strategies for searching for and obtaining a practicum

1. Develop a strong resume

Students may want to work with the Heller Career Development Center (HCDC) to ensure that their resume compellingly reflects their skills and expertise. Students can schedule an appointment to meet individually with one of the HCDC career specialists to review their resumes. For further information about HCDC, visit their website at <http://heller.brandeis.edu/careers/>

2. Network

Networking allows students to make connections between people, build on relationships, and learn more about the field. It's about gathering information about an organization or particular career path that will help them to make informed decisions about their professional goals and lead to future opportunities (see the HCDC networking guide located on Handshake).

Informal Networking

Networking can be informal—students can talk with friends and family members about their professional aspirations, seek advice on organizations that best align with their interests, and seek out introductions to individuals who can help to advance their goals.

Formal Networking

Networking can also be formal through career treks, attending conferences, alumni and association events, and job fairs.

COEX Community

COEX students can also reach out to current practicum students or alumni for advice, information about working in the field, and organization contacts. Students can also ask their professors and the program coordinator for advice on individuals or organizations to contact for their practicums.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn offers another platform for building professional connections. Students can work with HCDC to create a strong profile and to learn how to use LinkedIn effectively for networking. They can join the [Heller School LinkedIn Group](#) to identify alumni working in the development field. Other guidance can be found on *The Student Job Hunting Handbook Series* on the LinkedIn website located here: <https://students.linkedin.com/>.

Professional associations & forums

Professional associations and forums provide students with another opportunity for networking and learning more about their fields of interest. Here are just a few examples of professional associations that may help students with this process:

- Association for Conflict Resolution: <https://www.acrnet.org/>
- Alliance for Peacebuilding: <https://allianceforpeacebuilding.org/our-members/>
- PCDN Network: <https://pcdnetwork.org/>
- Peace and Justice Studies Association <https://www.peacejusticestudies.org/>
- Program on Negotiation: <https://www.pon.harvard.edu/about/welcome/>

Networking tips

-Be intentional. Know your goals and the opportunities that will help you to meet them.

-Break out of your comfort zone. At the next conference or networking event, introduce yourself to someone new. Share your goals—and contact information!

-Follow up. If you were connected to someone else, follow through. Build relationships and extend your network.

3. Conduct informational interviews

According to the HCDC guide on networking, *an informational interview is a conversation between you and someone whose job, work, or organization you admire, aspire to, or otherwise believe can be helpful to your professional development.* It provides an opportunity to learn directly from an individual working in the field. Typically, the interviews are brief—only about 20–30 minutes long. For a review of best practices for conducting informational interviews, see the HCDC guide on networking.

Step Four: Approach the organization

Students can apply for an open practicum position within an organization by submitting their application according to the posting's guidelines.

If students would like to approach an organization about a potential practicum (i.e., not advertised), they can try to negotiate a role that contributes to the organization's mission, solves a problem, or supports an existing program with their expertise. They may offer to incorporate a new dimension into the organization's work; for example, examining gender issues or human rights, improving project design, or developing participatory methods.

Taking initiative, being innovative and prepared, taking risks, staying flexible, and being persistent helps!

Step Five: Negotiate Terms of Reference

Once a student finds their practicums, and has it approved by their Practicum Advisor, they will negotiate and work with the organization to define the Terms of Reference (TOR). The students' purpose and learning goals, combined with the organization's mission and activities, will drive their TORs.

Considerations for the TOR

During the TOR negotiation, students should clarify the expectations for their field supervisor and host organization. The student's field supervisor should be based at the practicum location and oversee the student's work according to the TOR.

Host organizations should be encouraged to support students in any way possible to ensure a successful practicum. For example, host organizations should provide students with the professional assistance necessary to implement the TOR, such as training, staff support, office space, introductions, and access to office and field equipment, as necessary. Although the organization is not responsible for providing a salary, students can negotiate wages, a stipend, travel expenses, housing, or any other support that the host organization may be willing to provide.

Students should submit their signed TORs to the practicum coordinator for final program approval. Upon program approval of the TOR, any changes made to the work plan, location, or field supervisor must be approved by both the host organization and the MA/COEX Program. Questions related to drafting a TOR or any other aspects of the MA/COEX practicum requirements should be addressed to the COEX Program Coordinator.

Release & Waiver Form

Students must also submit a **signed and witnessed Practicum Release and Waiver form** to the practicum coordinator (see [Appendix A](#)).

SECTION II: PRACTICUM & RESEARCH OPTIONS

Practicum Internship Option

Required Documents prior to undertaking your internship:

- Terms of Reference (TOR) (Read more on the TOR in Section 1, Number 3)
- Internship Practicum Proposal which includes the following:

Introduction

- The introduction consists of a short paragraph describing what you will be doing for your project and where.

Project Details

- Describe the organization you will work with and its mission.
- Where will you do your work? Will it be in one or more countries? Is it a field level assignment, a headquarter assignment, etc.
- Provide draft Terms of Reference (TOR). (See examples on Latte).
- Who will be your field supervisor on the internship, and what is their role or responsibility in the organization?
- What will be your specific role?
- What preparation will you need?
- Work plan:
- Will you keep a daily or weekly diary to record observations, changes to work plan, meeting notes, progress on required drafts, etc.?

Learning Objectives

- State 3-5 learning objectives you hope to achieve in undertaking this internship.
- Be specific about how this project relates to the studies you have undertaken, the field of conflict resolution, and to your potential career goals.
- Ask yourself while drafting the proposal how realistic are these objectives?
- Are they too ambitious?
- Are they too modest?
- Are they unclear?
- Are you allowing yourself time to complete both the project and the writing assignment?
- How do you plan to accomplish your learning objectives?

The Problem or Issue(s)

- Define the coexistence (and development) problem or issues that you will be addressing in your internship, and later in your paper.
- Provide sufficient background so that a reader will understand the importance of the problem or issue(s).
- For dual degree students, part of your learning objective and problem/issue could include aspects of both learning fields – for example:
- *A conflict in a developing country dealing with issues of poverty and land reform may draw on theories both in conflict and development.*
- These combined fields should also be included in your literature review

Initial Literature Review

- Read and summarize current thinking on the proposed problem or issue.

- Pose challenging questions that you expect to grapple with in your field research.
- Demonstrate that you have familiarized yourself with major thinkers in your field(s) of investigation.

Proposed Timeline

- When will you begin/finish your practicum?

Other Issues

- Describe any other issues, concerns, or constraints – (health, security, cost, etc.) – that may have impact on your ability to carry out your research.
- If you plan to intern abroad: What are the visa requirements for your internship? How to plan to fulfill those visa requirements?

Bibliography

- Provide an initial bibliography of your sources

Your final paper for the program if you choose the internship option will be as follows:

Internship Report (30-40 pages) which includes the following:

1. Cover Page with title, your name, the name of the organization, your advisor's name
2. Table of Contents
3. Executive Summary (150-200 words)
4. Keywords
5. Acknowledgements
6. Abbreviations
7. Introduction
8. Problem Statement or Research Question
9. Literature Review
10. Analysis and major findings
11. Policy recommendations or recommendations to the field of conflict resolution
12. Tables and Figures
13. References and Bibliography in APA format

Master's Paper Option

The master's paper option is a shorter research paper. This option is for students who conducted **research for an organization (not independent research)**. It may also be appropriate for students whose practicum project requires a longer analysis; such as an extensive policy analysis, a longer monitoring and evaluation, a special project such as a monograph on an issue for the field, and other projects. Please talk to the COEX team and your practicum advisor to decide which paper is appropriate. **All students pursuing this option must have it cleared by the COEX program including if the project will need a Brandeis Institutional Review Board approval. You may not interview, conduct surveys, have focus groups, or talk to any individual for your paper without having your exemption or non-exemption from IRB cleared with the COEX program and the Brandeis Human Research Protection Program office.**

Required Documents prior to undertaking your master's paper:

- Terms of Reference (TOR) if working with an organization (Read more on the TOR in Section 1, Number 3)
- Master's paper proposal consisting of:
 - **Introduction**

- The introduction consists of a brief paragraph describing your research project, what you seek to uncover by completing the research, and its contribution to the field. You will also discuss these items in more detail later in the proposal.
 - If applicable: include what institutions or significant individuals in the field have agreed to host or partner your work.
 - If you are signing on to work on an existing research project within an institution, indicate what that project is, and who you will be working with.
- **Project Details**
 - If conducting research for an organization provide the following:
 - Describe the organization you will work with and its mission.
 - Where will you do your work? Will it be in one or more countries? Is it a field level assignment, a headquarter assignment, etc.
 - Provide draft Terms of Reference (TOR) if possible.
 - Who will be your field supervisor on this research project, and what is their role or responsibility in the organization.
 - What preparation will you need? (Include additional coursework, language classes, etc.).
 - Work plan:
 - Will you keep a daily or weekly diary to record observations, changes to work plan, meeting notes, progress on required drafts, etc.?
 - If conducting independent field research provide the following:
 - Where will you conduct your research? Will it be in one or more countries?
 - What preparation will you need prior to undertaking this research (such as additional research classes, time to complete IRB, etc.)
 - **Learning Objectives**
 - State 3-5 *learning and research objectives* you hope to achieve in undertaking this independent field research.
 - Be specific about how this project relates to the studies you have undertaken, the field of conflict resolution, and to your potential career goals.
 - Ask yourself while drafting the proposal how realistic are both your personal objectives and the objectives of your research.
 - Are they too ambitious?
 - Are they too modest?
 - Are they unclear?
 - Are you allowing yourself time to complete the IRB, the field research, and the writing assignment?
 - Additionally, indicate if you have identified any significant individuals in the field to assist you with your work?
 - **The Problem or Issue(s)**
 - Define the coexistence problem or issues that you will be addressing in your research, and what contribution your study will make towards the field.
 - Provide sufficient background so that a reader will understand the importance of the problem or issue(s).
 - For dual degree students, part of your learning objective and problem/issue can include aspects of both learning fields – for example:

- *A conflict in a developing country dealing with issues of poverty and land reform may draw on theories both in conflict and development.*
 - These combined fields should also be included in your literature, methodology and bibliography sections listed below.
- **Initial Literature Review**
 - Read and summarize current thinking on the proposed problem or issue.
 - Pose challenging questions that you expect to grapple with in your field research.
 - Demonstrate that you have familiarized yourself with major thinkers in your field(s) of investigation.
- **Methods**
 - What research methodology will you use to carry out your work?
 - Explain why have you chosen that method, and why it is appropriate for your work.
 - How will you gather data using that methodology? E.g. interviews, focus groups, interviews.
 - Will you need an IRB for this work? Please explain why or why not.
- **Timeline**
 - Please provide a detailed timeline including the following:
 - When you will complete the steps needed for IRB, including CITI certification training, the completing of the proposal, the submission of the proposal, writing your interview protocol, etc.
 - When you begin your research
 - When will you complete each step in your research
 - When will you analyze your data
 - When will you begin writing your paper
 - When you will submit drafts of your paper
- **Budget:**
 - Include a detailed budget of the expenses you expect to incur in the field, such as for transportation and translators. Please make this as detailed as possible, as your ability to conduct research will sometimes hinge on your ability to finance said research. See examples of budgets provided in class.
- **Other Issues**
 - Describe any other issues, concerns, or constraints – (health, security, access, etc.) – that may have impact on your ability to carry out your research.
 - Some countries require you to have an institution affiliation and approval from the government to conduct research there. Please identify the regulations for the country you wish to conduct research in. How do you plan to comply with those requirements?
- **Bibliography**
 - Provide an initial bibliography of your sources

Your final paper for the program if you choose the Master’s paper option will be as follows:

Master’s Paper (50-70 pages) which includes the following sections:

1. Cover Page with title, your name, your advisor’s name
2. Table of Contents, with page numbers
3. Abstract

4. Key Words
5. Acknowledgements
6. Abbreviations
7. List of Illustrations
8. Introduction
9. Literature Review
10. Research question
11. Background
12. Methodology
13. Findings and Analysis
14. Policy Recommendations/Recommendations to the field
15. Conclusion
16. References and Bibliography in APA format
17. Appendices

Master's Thesis: Independent Field Research

This option is for research that is conducted independently. It may feature human subjects research or may be written *without human subjects research*. If you are interviewing, surveying, observing, conducting a focus group, experiment, or any kind of research involving interacting with other human beings your project is *human subjects research*. **It is the student's responsibility to obtain Institutional Review Board approval from Brandeis prior to conducting any human subjects research, which includes completing the CITI Certification and Training, as well as the Institutional Review Board application and Approval.**

It is your responsibility to review the IRB application process and begin work on it immediately with a submission deadline of no later than the March prior to your summer thesis work. It is critical to submit early as the process is very lengthy and you cannot start your research without it. Please contact the COEX team with any questions about whether your thesis will need IRB approval.

Required Documents prior to undertaking your thesis:

- CITI Certification, IRB application and approval if conducting human subjects research <https://www.brandeis.edu/ora/compliance/irb/>.
- Master's Thesis Proposal which includes the following
 - **Introduction**
 - The introduction consists of a brief paragraph describing your research project, what you seek to uncover by completing the research, and its contribution to the field. You will also discuss these items in more detail later in the proposal.
 - If applicable: include what institutions or significant individuals in the field have agreed to host or partner your work.
 - If you are signing on to work on an existing research project within an institution, indicate what that project is, and who you will be working with.
- **Project Details**
 - If conducting research for an organization provide the following:
 - Describe the organization you will work with and its mission.
 - Where will you do your work? Will it be in one or more countries? Is it a field level assignment, a headquarter assignment, etc.
 - Provide draft Terms of Reference (TOR) if possible.

- Who will be your field supervisor on this research project, and what is their role or responsibility in the organization.
 - What preparation will you need? (Include additional coursework, language classes, etc.).
 - Work plan:
 - Will you keep a daily or weekly diary to record observations, changes to work plan, meeting notes, progress on required drafts, etc.?
 - If conducting independent field research provide the following:
 - Where will you conduct your research? Will it be in one or more countries?
 - What preparation will you need prior to undertaking this research (such as additional research classes, time to complete IRB, etc.)
- **Learning Objectives**
 - State 3-5 *learning and research objectives* you hope to achieve in undertaking this independent field research.
 - Be specific about how this project relates to the studies you have undertaken, the field of conflict resolution, and to your potential career goals.
 - Ask yourself while drafting the proposal how realistic are both your personal objectives and the objectives of your research.
 - Are they too ambitious?
 - Are they too modest?
 - Are they unclear?
 - Are you allowing yourself time to complete the IRB, the field research, and the writing assignment?
 - Additionally, indicate if you have identified any significant individuals in the field to assist you with your work?
- **The Problem or Issue(s)**
 - Define the coexistence (and development) problem or issues that you will be addressing in your research, and what contribution your study will make towards the field.
 - Provide sufficient background so that a reader will understand the importance of the problem or issue(s).
 - For dual degree students, part of your learning objective and problem/issue can include aspects of both learning fields – for example:
 - *A conflict in a developing country dealing with issues of poverty and land reform may draw on theories both in conflict and development.*
 - These combined fields should also be included in your literature, methodology and bibliography sections listed below.
- **Initial Literature Review**
 - Read and summarize current thinking on the proposed problem or issue.
 - Pose challenging questions that you expect to grapple with in your field research.
 - Demonstrate that you have familiarized yourself with major thinkers in your field(s) of investigation.
- **Methods**
 - What research methodology will you use to carry out your work?
 - Explain why have you chosen that method, and why it is appropriate for your work.
 - How will you gather data using that methodology? E.g. interviews, focus groups, interviews.

- **Timeline**
 - Please provide a detailed timeline including the following:
 - When you will complete the steps needed for IRB, including CITI certification training, the completing of the proposal, the submission of the proposal, writing your interview protocol, etc.
 - When you begin your research
 - When will you complete each step in your research
 - When will you analyze your data
 - When will you begin writing your paper
 - When you will submit drafts of your paper

- **Budget:**
 - Include a detailed budget of the expenses you expect to incur in the field, such as for transportation and translators. Please make this as detailed as possible, as your ability to conduct research will sometimes hinge on your ability to finance said research. See examples of budgets provided in class.

- **Other Issues**
 - Describe any other issues, concerns, or constraints – (health, security, access, etc.) – that may have impact on your ability to carry out your research.
 - Some countries require you to have an institution affiliation and approval from the government to conduct research there. Please identify the regulations for the country you wish to conduct research in. How do you plan to comply with those requirements?

- **Bibliography**
 - Provide an initial bibliography of your sources

Your final paper for the program if you choose the Thesis option will be as follows:

- Master's Thesis (90-120 pages) that includes the following sections (*page limits and structure are suggestions*):
 1. Cover Page with title, your name, your advisor's name
 2. Table of Contents, with page numbers
 3. Abstract
 4. Key Words
 5. Acknowledgements
 6. Abbreviations
 7. List of Illustrations
 8. Introduction
 9. Literature Review
 10. Research question
 11. Background
 12. Methodology
 13. Findings and Analysis
 14. Recommendations and Conclusion
 15. References and Bibliography in APA format
 16. Appendices

SECTION III. PREPARATION FOR THE PRACTICUM AND LIVING ABROAD

Students may want to invest time in the library and online before they depart for their practicums. They can refer to the [Research Guides](#) page of the Brandeis Library website for COEX research resources. Reading as much background material as possible on their focus area will result in a better paper and make them a more valuable member of the team at their host organization.

Students may also want to research local customs, habits, and etiquette, and reach out to alumni and others who could provide helpful insight to living and working in their practicum location. Making the most of your practicum may require some preparatory work on your part. Here are some suggestions and resources to consider.

1. Research the practicum destination

Students may want to research the practicum destination to gain an understanding of local history, politics, culture, traditions, professional etiquette, climate, transportation options, and safety concerns. Here are some suggested resources:

General and local country resources

- [Commiseco Global: Country Guides to Culture, Customs and Etiquette](#)
- [BBC country profiles](#)
- [InterNations Country & City Guides](#)
- [Peace Corps Countries](#) webpage
- Local online newspapers and radio stations
- [Local alumni](#) (connect via LinkedIn)
- Expat community in practicum location
- Online travel guides (e.g., Moon Travel Guides, Rough Guides, Lonely Planet)

Transportation

- The [World Health Organization](#) provides information on road safety, including country profiles and statistics, reports, and standards.
- The [Association for Safe International Road Travel](#) (ASIRT) provides information on how to minimize road risks, including local transportation options, road conditions, and road travel tips.

Practical information

- Local emergency numbers (police, ambulance, and fire): [911 Abroad](#)
- Time zones, holidays, and weather: [The Time Now](#)
- Currency converter: [OANDA](#)

Resources for LGBTQ practicum students

As students prepare for their practicum, they may want to research the culturally based ideas and definitions of gender and sexual identity in their practicum location and to become familiar with the laws that may affect them. Here are some resources that may be beneficial to their preparation.

- [International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association](#)
- [LGBTI Travel Information](#), US Department of State—Bureau of Consular Affairs
- [OutRight Action International](#)

Diversity, ethnicity, and race

The [Diversity, Ethnicity, and Race Abroad](#) webpage of Brandeis' Office of Study Abroad provides information and resources for students of color from historically under-represented ethnic or racial backgrounds who are traveling abroad. Some students may find being outside of the American context a welcome relief, while others may experience challenges from general perceptions of racial and cultural groups in the host community. It may be beneficial to learn about the environment you will be entering. Students may want to reference the resources offered on the Diversity, Ethnicity, and Race Abroad webpage.

Disability and accessibility

Students with disabilities may want to review the types of accommodations that are provided in the host community, as well as the way the community understands disabilities. The [Students with Disabilities](#) webpage of the Brandeis Office of Study Abroad provides information and resources that may help students with disabilities to prepare for their practicum.

Students may want to reference [Mobility International USA](#), which provides a library of resources and information on inclusive practices and disability advocacy.

2. Be proactive about health and wellness

Maintain health insurance

Students are required to maintain their [Brandeis health insurance policy](#) or other health insurance coverage that meets the standards set forth by the university, regardless of their practicum location.

Identify quality health care options prior to departure

The quality and quality of medical care varies within the US and abroad. Students should consider how they would access health care should a medical problem or emergency arise while they are completing their practicum. They may want to research health clinics and hospitals in the area in which their practicum organization is located and determine which medical facilities would provide the best quality care. For a list of resources that will help identify health care providers and facilities around the world, please visit the [Centers for Disease Control's Obtaining Health Care Abroad](#) webpage.

Medicines

If students plan to take prescription or over-the-counter medication with them, they should research whether it is legal to bring the medication into their practicum country, and, if the medication is legal, if there is a limit on the quantity of medication that can enter the country. Certain packaging restrictions may also apply. Students may refer to the websites of their home embassies for their practicum countries for information on permitted medications.

If traveling outbound from the US, students may want to review the [Transportation Security Administration \(TSA\)](#) rules for traveling with medications.

Additional guidance on this issue can be found in The New York Times article [How to Make Sure You Travel with Medication Legally](#) and TripSavvy's [Tips for Traveling with Prescription Drugs](#).

Vaccinations (if applicable for international practicums)

To determine if any vaccinations are recommended for travel to the locale of the host organization, students may want to consult the following websites: [Massachusetts General Hospital: Heading Home Healthy](#) or [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

Pack a Health Kit

Students may want to consider packing a few items to help them manage ailments and illnesses. Please refer to the CDC's [Pack Smart](#) webpage for suggestions on what may be useful to have during their practicum.

Health-Related Resources

- The CDC's webpage [Your Survival Guide to Safe and Healthy Travel](#) provides valuable information and resources to help students to be "proactive, prepared, and protected" during their travels.
- [World Health Organization](#) directs and coordinates international health within the United Nations' system. The WHO website includes country-specific information related to health and general information related to various health topics.
- [US Department of State—Country Information](#) provides information about the availability and quality of medical care within specific countries.
- iHope remote counseling services: see [Appendix D](#)

3. Apply for visas and/or permits

Internships can be subject to specific visa requirements and it is important to understand the requirements at the start of your planning.

Students are responsible for obtaining required visas, permits, and other documentation, with guidance from the host organization. The host organization must provide any documentation needed to confirm their role. Some host organizations require students to provide proof of enrollment at Brandeis University. See the [Office of the University Registrar](#) page of the Brandeis website for instructions on how to obtain a proof of enrollment letter. Contact Janie Marsan (jmarsan@brandeis.edu) at Heller's Office of Student Records and Enrollment with any questions.

Curriculum Practical Training for international students

International students on an F-1 visa who are doing practicums in the US or with a US organization cannot begin the practicum until they have met all International Student and Scholars Office (ISSO) requirements, including an approved [CPT form](#). Students should review the visa guidelines on the

[Employment/Academic Internships](#) page of the ISSO website and reference the [CPT Application Check List](#).

International students who are recipients of United States government funded scholarship programs, such as Fulbright or USAID Prestasi, should check with their scholarship program officer prior to accepting a practicum. These scholarship programs may have travel restrictions and other documentation students must complete before they can embark on their practicum.

Students who are funded under these programs may have been awarded a J-1 visa, which has different paperwork requirements for CPT. Please check with ISSO to determine your visa status and the required documentation needed.

4. Prepare finances and travel documents

Students may want to **contact their financial institutions** to notify them of their travel plans. This will help to ensure that they have continued access to their accounts. If possible, they should have a back-up credit card and/or emergency cash in case they have any banking issues or lose their credit or debit card.

It's also a good idea for students to **prepare their PIN** before traveling abroad. Many international ATMs only support four-digit PINs. Students should ensure that their PINs do not begin with a zero, and they should know their PIN by the numbers, as some foreign ATMs do not have letters on the keypads.

Some countries have limited credit card use, or credit cards limited to one type (for example Visas). Some countries may also have restrictions placed on the exchange of foreign currency, including limits on amounts, and requirements for the physical appearance of the bills (not torn, etc). It is always a good idea to familiarize yourself with local customs around banking and currency prior to your travel.

As a precaution, students should also make **copies of their important documents**, including two copies of their passport, credit cards, and other travel documents. It's recommended that they leave one copy with a family member or trusted friend and bring the other copy with them.

5. Be prepared for the unexpected

Identify local emergency numbers

Students should identify the local emergency numbers (police, ambulance, and fire) for their practicum destination. Students may reference [911 Abroad](#) to determine this information.

Contacting COEX

Students may reach out to the program coordinator at any time. She can also be reached at slamorey@brandeis.edu

Register with home embassy

Students may want to register with their home embassies upon arrival in their practicum countries to receive updates about local safety conditions. US students may want to sign up for the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#), a free service that provides US citizens and nationals traveling and living abroad with information about safety conditions in their destination country.

Enroll in the CHUBB Travel Assistance Portal

Students may want to sign up for CHUBB Travel Assistance Portal (this service is offered through the emergency medical and travel insurance policy) – see page 13 and [Appendix C](#) for further information.

6. Notify Program Coordinator of Placement

Once a placement is secured students must notify the COEX program coordinator so that they can be registered in the field practicum course (HS218) as full-time students through the Heller School's Office of Student Records and Enrollment. The practicum course counts for 12 credits each semester and is graded as credit (CR) or no credit (NC). Students will be charged a continuation fee- this fee varies from year to year. Students can request the exact amount from Student Financial Services (sfs@brandeis.edu)

Emergency medical and travel insurance

Brandeis University is contracted with [CHUBB Travel Assistance Program](#) and Europ Assistance to provide assistance to students doing international practicums or internships. In addition to the coverage provided by the student's health insurance, CHUBB and Europ Assistance provide the following benefits (adapted from the Insurance and Travel Assistance Coverage webpage of the Brandeis Office of Study Abroad):

- Medical Assistance: referral to a doctor or medical specialist; medical monitoring while hospitalized; emergency medical evacuation to proper medical facilities (100% of covered expenses); and repatriation of remains (100% of covered expenses).
- Personal Assistance: pre-trip medical referral information; emergency medication; embassy and consular information; lost document assistance; emergency cash advances; emergency referrals to legal assistance.
- Travel Assistance: emergency travel arrangements
- Security Assistance: crisis hotline; on-the-ground security assistance; access to secure, web-based system for tracking global threats and health- or location-based risk intelligence; security evacuation due to political causes (\$100,000 maximum); security evacuation due to natural disasters (services only – this service is billable).

The Brandeis policy and details for activating emergency services can be found by clicking [here](#) and in [Appendix F](#).

Students should sign up to access [CHUBB's Travel Assistance Services Portal](#), which provides information and tools to support travelers before and during their international trips. The site contains real-time destination-based health, security, travel-related information including:

- Country and city risk ratings and profiles
- Health, medical, safety, and security reports per locale
- Mitigation tips and consulate contacts
- Information on business conduct, transportation, holidays, and currency exchange rates
- News and real-time security alerts
- General travel tips

To receive proof of coverage (card) of CHUBB emergency travel and medical insurance, students should send the following information to the COEX program coordinator.

- Name
- Birth date
- Practicum country
- Countries other than practicum destination that student will travel to
- Travel dates

Although CHUBB offers emergency travel, medical and security services, it is NOT health insurance. Brandeis requires all practicum students to maintain health insurance coverage that meets the standards set forth by the university

SECTION III. THE PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

Students may want to consider the following at the beginning and throughout their practicum:

- **Apply theories and principles learned in the classroom.** Students should explore ways to use theories studied and skills developed through coursework.
- **Review academic sources,** including available “gray literature” (e.g., in-house project reports and publications, documents/files) to better understand the institutional mandate, achievements, and constraints of the host organization.
- **Establish rapport with colleagues.** This helps to open doors for support and access to information. Experience of previous students shows that “interrogating” (extracting or pushing for information) does not work, while informal “interviewing” (engaging, dialoging, and exchanging information) is often highly successful.
- **Volunteer to help colleagues.** Besides being generally helpful, students will learn a lot and this may allow them to take on more responsibility.
- **Adopt standards of professionalism.** As in all work, professional behavior is foundational. Organizations are complex, with webs of relationships and unspoken alliances. Understand and respect internal hierarchies. In case of difficult issues related to institutional politics, students should avoid personalization; rather, they should focus on their work, avoiding gossip and personal confrontation. They should try to maintain neutrality, objectivity, and discretion and to keep cordial relationships with everyone. It’s important to be transparent, flexible, respectful, and a team player, eager to learn about institutional and local culture.

Tips for Getting the Most out of Your Practicum Experience

- Prepare—review background material on your development issue
- Understand workplace expectations
- Engage—build relationships with your colleagues
- Learn about the language & culture
- Apply what you learned in the classroom
- Take initiative and solicit feedback
- Learn from mistakes (they’re inevitable and part of the learning process)
- Keep a journal—compile observations, gather evidence, and write your reflections

Students should also dress appropriately for the workplace, be punctual and dependable, and produce quality deliverables. They should never hesitate to ask questions. If they don’t know or are unsure of something, they should ask their supervisor. Students should remember that they not only are representing COEX, the Heller School, and Brandeis University, but also the host organization when they are in the field. The quality of their work and, ultimately, of their master’s paper will demonstrate their capacity as a practitioner.

- **Cultivate humility.** Listening to what people have to say, and recognizing that there are many ways to operate in the world, can go a long way towards creating positive relationships across cultures and may make the practicum experience richer.
- **Stay Connected to the COEX Community.** Students should contact with their practicum advisors a few times throughout their placement to provide them with updates on their practicum and to communicate expectations related to the development of the master’s paper.

Students may also want to initiate a Facebook group or other method to stay in touch with each other while working in the field.

- **Reflect on the practicum experience.** Students may want to keep a journal during their practicum as a way to think about the skills they are developing, the content they are learning, and the feedback they are receiving from their colleagues. Reflecting on the practicum experience also allows students to explore more deeply their connections to the community in which they are living, as well as to understand their own personal and professional growth. This is also useful to remind yourself of the tasks and projects you worked on in your practicum when interviewing for positions in the future.

Here are some questions for students to consider about their practicum experience:

Learning outcomes

- Which outcomes did the practicum intend to address and were they achieved?
- How were theories and concepts learned through coursework applied?
- What new learning occurred and how might it be beneficial in the future?

Practicum goals

- How did the practicum relate to academic, professional, and/or personal goals?
- How did the student advocate for their own learning during their practicum?

Practicum responsibilities

- What were the main responsibilities of the practicum? Did they help to meet learning goals?
- Were the responsibilities challenging and meaningful?
- What skills, expertise, and knowledge did the student bring to the practicum?

Deeper reflection

- What ethical, social, cultural, political, and/or economic issues surfaced during the internship? How were they addressed?
- Did the student's awareness of organizational and/or community issues expand?
- Did the student build a stronger professional network and positive relationships through their practicum?

- **Plan for the Internship Report or Master's Paper.** It's important to establish a timeline for the development of their paper early in the academic year.

At their host organization, students will professionally fulfill a TOR under the direction of a field supervisor. The focus of their master's paper will be related to this work. Although their paper is expected to be of use to their organization, the paper is solely the students' responsibility, is produced on their own time, and should not burden or rely on the support of anyone at the host organization. (The student's field supervisor and others are welcome to help, if they wish, but their support is voluntary.) The practicum student-field supervisor relationship is a professional employee-employer relationship that includes a mentorship component. This means that, with the exception of the master's paper, all work described in the TOR is under the guidance of the student's field supervisor or their designee.

During the practicum, many students find that they want to adapt their plan or modify the focus of their paper. Students should communicate any proposed changes with their practicum advisor. Any unauthorized changes in terms of practicum location, duration, or topical focus may invalidate approval of the student's practicum.

Other considerations for the practicum experience include the following:

- **Maintaining *Do No Harm* within the organization and community**

Students should also be mindful of the organization and community in which they are working and how their behavior, attitude, and actions may impact the organization's culture, as well as the organization's perception within the community, and the trust created between the community and the organization. Cross-cultural sensitivity and competency, open-mindedness and flexibility, and, above all, humility will go a long way toward creating a positive practicum experience. Students may want to reference UNESCO's [Intercultural Competences: Conceptual and Operational Framework](#) and CDA's [Do No Harm Framework](#)

APPENDIX A—RELEASE AND WAIVER
RELEASE AND WAIVER

Print Name: _____

This Release and Waiver is executed by the undersigned graduate student with respect to the Brandeis University Graduate Programs in Sustainable International Development at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management.

I hereby acknowledge and understand that the program and destination I have selected in order to fulfill the Second-Year Project Requirement (“the Project”) is not sponsored by Brandeis University or the Heller School of Social Policy and Management, or the Graduate Programs in Sustainable International Development (“Brandeis”), and that Brandeis neither accepts nor assumes responsibility for my welfare or for any injuries, claims, or losses arising from my participation in, or travel to and from, the Project.

I hereby knowingly and willingly consent to participate in the Project. I acknowledge that an alternative course of study in the United States is available to me, and I elect nonetheless to attend the Project. I understand and acknowledge that there are inherent risks involved with study and living abroad, which are beyond the control of Brandeis, and that Brandeis cannot guarantee my safety or security. I understand that my choice of living accommodations, whether on-campus or off-campus and regardless of the use or non-use of assistance provided by Brandeis, is not and is not intended to be under the auspices of Brandeis.

I acknowledge that I am advised to monitor the United States Department of State web-site (<http://travel.state.gov>) for updates and information about travel to this particular destination and travel abroad generally.

In consideration of the Project being approved, I, the undersigned, do hereby agree to release and forever discharge Brandeis University, the Heller School of Social Policy and Management, and the Graduate Programs in Sustainable International Development, Trustees, officers, employees, agents and assigns (“Brandeis”) of and from any and all loss or liability in connection with any personal injury, accident, damage, claims, costs, expenses or other loss suffered or incurred by me during, arising out of, or in any way associated with my study and/or participation in the Project, including, but not limited to, travel to and from this destination and any and all other travel incident to my study and/or participation in the Project. I agree not to raise any claims or to institute any legal action or proceeding against Brandeis for any cause of action that may result from or arise out of or in connection with my participation in the Project or any travel related to the Project, including, but not limited to, any loss or liability resulting from, arising out of, or occurring in connection with the acts or omissions of Brandeis. In addition, I hereby agree to release, indemnify and forever discharge Brandeis of and from contribution or indemnification with respect to any claim made against me by any person or entity in connection therewith. I further agree to indemnify and hold harmless Brandeis of and from any actions brought against it in connection with my acts or omissions.

I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understood the above statements, and I represent that I am of the specified legal age in my State of residence to bind myself to this Release. This Release and Waiver has been executed on behalf of myself, my heirs and assigns, and has been made with full knowledge of possible risks and hazards involved in travel and study abroad. This instrument has been executed in and shall be governed by the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Witness Signature _____ Date _____

Witness Name Printed _____

APPENDIX B—Terms of Reference Format Example

On organization’s letterhead

Address to:
Student’s name
The Heller School for Social Policy and Management
Brandeis University
Waltham, MA 02453

DATE

Dear STUDENT’S NAME:

I am pleased to confirm our offer of the position of (NAME OF POSITION) with (NAME OF ORGANIZATION), located at (ADDRESS OF ORGANIZATION).

The practicum is (UNPAID/PAID – if paid, please provide the amount and/or type of compensation). You will be expected to work (#) of hours per week, beginning (DATE) and ending on (DATE). Our typical schedule is (e.g., MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY, FROM 8:30 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M.). You will report to (NAME OF SUPERVISOR, TITLE). Their contact information is: (EMAIL ADDRESS, PHONE & SKYPE #S). We will also be able to provide support through (e.g., mentors).

The purpose of this position is to (e.g., assist the director of sustainability on a city-wide transportation study and climate change vulnerability assessment for the City of X). You will conduct your work in (LANGUAGE[S]) and coordinate with (e.g., volunteers, staff, organization’s board of directors, community stakeholders)

Specific responsibilities of the position include the following: [EXAMPLE BELOW]

- Analyzing the environmental, social, and economic aspects of the transportation study
- Researching best practices and capacity building resources
- Assisting with the production of reports and presentations
- Assisting with stakeholder engagement

We are delighted that you have accepted this position, and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

SUPERVISOR’S SIGNATURE
TITLE

APPENDIX C—CHUBB Travel Assistance Portal FAQs

CHUBB'S TRAVEL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

PORTAL FAQ'S

WHAT IS THE CHUBB TRAVEL ASSISTANCE PORTAL?

Chubb's Travel Assistance Portal features information and tools to support travelers before and during their trips abroad. The site contains real-time destination-based health, security and travel-related information including:

- Country and city risk ratings and profiles
- Health, medical, safety and security reports per locale
- Mitigation tips and consulate contacts
- Information on business conduct, transportation, holidays, currency exchange rates, etc.
- News and real-time security alerts
- General travel tips



A variety of tools have also been integrated within the portal to minimize inconvenience during trips and support travelers in an emergency. These include:

- Drug translator which can be used to find the foreign equivalent of a US drug
- Medical terms translator to facilitate communicating with medical personnel in foreign locations
- Medical provider search to look up hospitals and doctors in a given locale
- International calling code search and obtain the code to dial from one country to another
- Call Me Back feature so that travelers can contact Chubb's Assistance Provider and receive a call back within a defined time, particularly useful if you have difficulty calling collect or making international calls
- Emergency number look up for finding the foreign equivalent of 911

The portal also includes a personalized MyTrips feature that allows you to enter upcoming trips or import them from TripIt so that destination content is automatically displayed based upon logging in.

HOW DO I GET ACCESS TO THE SITE?

Please go to the URL listed below and click on the "Sign Up Now" link in the gray box on the right. This will take you to a registration page where you can register for the site using the below Group ID and Activation Code.

URL:	www.acetravelassistance.com
Group ID:	aceah
Activation Code:	security

Once registered, an automated e-mail will be sent to the e-mail you used to register. Please confirm your registration by clicking on the link provided within the communication. From there, you may access the site at any time using the login and password you established during the initial registration.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF INDIVIDUAL USER REGISTRATION?

Individual user registration allows us to provide clients with more detailed reporting on site utilization by their members. From the user perspective, registration allows us to provide a better experience, both through personalized content (e.g. MyTrips) and servicing (e.g. Call Me Back feature).

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE GROUP ID AND ACTIVATION CODE?

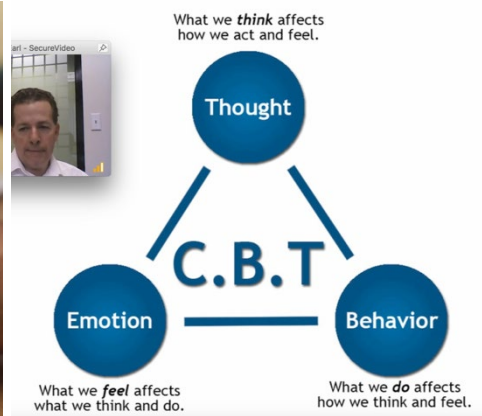
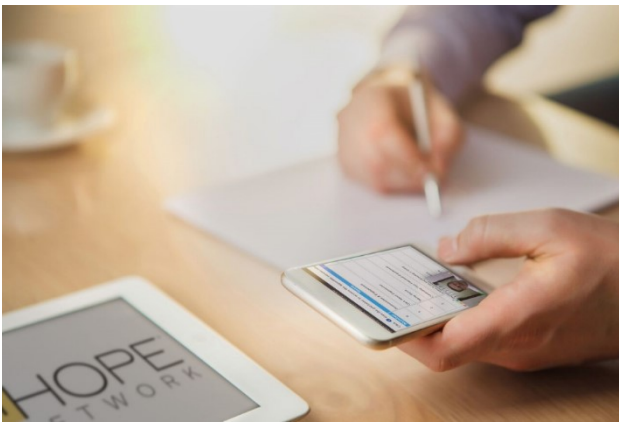
The Group ID and Activation Code are used to manage access and provide reporting. Each unique Group ID and Activation Code allows for controlling the access to the unique Group ID and Activation Code (e.g. deactivating the site) as well as the ability to report on the users within that unique Group ID and Activation Code. Both are only required once upon initial registration.

APPENDIX D—iHope



What is Video therapy?

Video therapy is an easy way to see a therapist on video-conference.



iHope Network provides video therapy to the Brandeis community in collaboration with the counseling center.

What is the Goal of Video Therapy?

iHope wants you to feel well as quickly as possible. Plus, the skills your therapist teaches you will help prevent these problems in your future. All of us at iHope want to make it easier for you to get effective treatment, and to feel better. We are really looking forward to working with you with you.

iHOPE NETWORK

100 Cummings Center Suite 438N^[1]Beverly, MA 01915
Phone: 800-225-0634^[1]E-mail: info@ihopenetwork.com

How Do I Get Video Therapy?

The counseling center at Brandeis can make a referral for you, just ask. Or you can go to iHope www.ihopenetwork.com on the web, or call iHope at 800-225-0634 we will call you right back and get you an appointment with a therapist in a week or less.

Is iHope Part of Brandeis?

iHope is a medical practice based in Massachusetts, it is not part of the Brandeis Counseling Center.

iHope prefers to provide collaborative care for members of the Brandeis community working with the counseling center at Brandeis.

Hope addresses all concerns with sensitivity to and respect for diversity and individuality. We maintain the strictest standards of privacy and confidentiality, and your therapist will discuss this with you when you first connect.

What Happens in Video therapy?

Your iHope therapist meets with you on your schedule. iHope offers cognitive behavior therapy, a form of therapy that has been shown to help people with many conditions including anxiety, depression and OCD.

Each therapy session teaches you skills that enable you to overcome the condition that is bothering you, and improve your life. In between sessions you'll receive regular texts to check in on how you're doing and you'll be provided practice activities designed to help you and your therapist treat your condition.

Who Pays for Video therapy?

In Massachusetts Blue Cross Blue Shield, Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare and United Health all pay for video therapy. You can also pay privately using your credit card, or pay with money in your FSA account. If you have insurance through Brandeis you are covered.