

Oncology Practicum - Project Guidelines for Supervisors

This practicum project will involve students in a real-world research or quality improvement project with relevance to their chosen area of focus (population and global cancer control, psychosocial oncology/palliative care, clinical cancer research, and cancer care services and quality). Students will be matched with a supervisor who has an appointment in the Faculty of Medicine and an ongoing research or quality improvement project related to oncology to which the student can contribute. Real-world experience may include participating in the development of grant applications, experimental design, protocol development, participant screening, data collection, data analysis, literature reviews, quality improvement design, implementation or assessment.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the project, students will:

- 1) Understand how to develop, carry out, and analyze or assess the success of a research project or quality improvement initiative.
- 2) Have the ability to provide critical analysis of published literature.
- 3) Have learned about research activities and quality improvement initiatives in various cancer-related disciplines.
- 4) Be able to describe a research or quality improvement project to their peers in an oral presentation and in a written report.

Project Posting Process

Interested supervisors should submit the *Oncology Practicum Project Proposal* Form (sections A and B) seven weeks (deadline to be advertised) before the beginning of the semester in which the project will be carried out. Completed forms, which describe the projects including expectations such as tasks and milestones, should be submitted to the Course Instructor at john.kildea@mcgill.ca. All project proposals will be reviewed by the Course Instructor who will follow-up individually with each supervisor if there are any parts of the proposal that require clarification. The Program Committee of the Graduate Diploma in Oncology will select which projects will be posted online to the students.

Project approval will be based on the relevance of the project to the program, the diversity of projects proposed, and the range of skills that the project will help engender in the student. It is expected that the selected research and QI projects should provide students with actual experience working on a real-world research or QI project in which the student is provided with the opportunity to make an original and creative contribution. Projects should not involve simplistic work such as data entry, repetitive tasks, or following basic instructions without need for critical thinking. Projects must not have been undertaken previously by other students although new projects may build on the results of previous projects.

Student-Supervisor Matching

Posted projects will be released and advertised to all students simultaneously one month before the beginning of the semester. Students will be expected to contact the supervisors who have posted projects that they are interested in and provide them with a copy of their CV and list of interests. Supervisors are expected to follow up with all students who contact them.

It is at the supervisor's discretion to accept a student or not. The acceptance process should include an in-person meeting and should take into account the CV and experience of the student. Supervisors may consult with the Course Instructor during the acceptance process if they feel the need. On acceptance of a student, both the student and supervisor should complete and sign the *Oncology Practicum Project Proposal Form* for the given project. The form should then be submitted to the Course Instructor by either the student or the supervisor in advance of the add/drop date for courses at McGill.

It is expected that students should only submit one form with one supervisor. Supervisors may accept more than one student per semester if they have more than one approved project. However, no more than one student should be working on a particular project.

Project Supervision

At the outset of the project, the supervisor and student should meet and review/confirm the project-specific tasks and milestones as already set forth and agreed upon in the *Oncology Practicum Project Proposal Form*.

Supervisors are expected to meet with their students at least once per month in a one-on-one meeting. More frequent meetings are encouraged and these may take the form of inviting the student to participate in routine group meetings or smaller dedicated group meetings with other students.

Students should maintain an online lab book and share it with both the supervisor and the Course Instructor. All project-related activities and data should be recorded in the lab book. Supervisors should monitor the lab book frequently and discuss its contents with the student at the prescribed monthly meetings.

Supervisors and students should agree in writing (email acceptable) on the due date of the final report, which will be corrected by the supervisor according to the *Oncology Practicum – Grading Rubric*. The due date should allow the supervisor sufficient time to complete to correct the report and provide it to the student in advance of the final due date for its submission to the Course Instructor. Following correction of the report, students should have at least two days (student-supervisor arrangement) to implement corrections. In this way, the student will experience a mini-peer review process and the supervisor will be left with a corrected version of the report that may be provided to future students who may undertake follow-on projects.

For more details regarding the Oncology Practicum project, please refer to the following three documents:

- **Oncology Practicum – Course Outline**
- **Oncology Practicum - Project Proposal Form for Supervisors and Students**
- **Oncology Practicum - Grading Rubric**