

Mental Health Counseling Program Practicum and Internship Manual

INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of the beginning and advanced practicum and internship is to provide students with closely supervised and integrated counseling experiences as part of their overall professional preparation program. Practicum and internship field experiences are expected to integrate didactic preparation with practical application. It is intended that the practicum and internship experience be designed to assist students in developing not only a better understanding of themselves as persons and competent counselors, but also a better understanding of the constituency with which they expect to work in the future. **All students in the M.Ed. Counselor Education Program within the Mental Health Counseling track are required to successfully complete four consecutive semesters of beginning and advanced practicum and internship. (The internship should be divided into two consecutive semesters unless approved otherwise in advance).**

PREREQUISITES

**The following prerequisites are required before taking Practicum and Internship:
Practicum (Beginning & Advanced) and Internship**

- 1) MHS 5005 Processes in Counseling
- 2) MHS 6401 Counseling Theories & Techniques
- 3) MHS 6055 Life Span Development
- 4) MHS 6700 Legal, Ethical & Professional Issues in Counseling
- 5) MHS 6070 Psychopathology in Counseling
- 6) MHS 6220 Appraisal & Evaluation
- 7) MHS 6430 Family Counseling
- 8) EDF 6481 Research Methods
- 9) MHS 6701 Issues in Mental Health Counseling Practice

These nine courses must precede the beginning practicum.

Group Counseling MHS 6510 and Substance Abuse MHS 6450 are the only courses approved in prior policies to be taken concurrently with Practicum. However, if a student has not taken Group prior to their first practicum, he/she will not be able to conduct/lead group counseling at their site.

Advanced Practicum

MHS 6800 Practicum in Counseling (150 hours)

MHS 6340 Career Development and MHS 5428 Counseling Special Needs Populations are the only courses approved in prior policies to be taken concurrently with Advanced Practicum and Internship. However, students are advised to complete the academic courses prior to these field experiences due to the time involvement required in field experiences.

Internship

MHS 6801 Advanced Practicum in Mental Health (250 hours)

PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

♣ Step One

Submit application for Practicum (Beginning, Advanced) or Internship to Coordinator at the Counselor Education office (Bldg 47, Room 270) by the deadline.

Practicum and Internship Application Deadlines:

SUMMER & FALL – February 15

SPRING – September 15

Students are to contact the on-site supervisors of the practicum/internship sites recommended by the department. The list of the selected practicum/internship sites can be obtained from the clinical coordinator. Students are allowed to do their practicum/internship in other clinical site only in the extenuatory circumstances approved by the clinical coordinator. Any other clinical site is required to be approved by the clinical coordinator first. In order to obtain the approval, students are to submit the **Site Approval Form** with application.

♣ Step Two

Students will go through the interview process by the on-site supervisors to be accepted for their clinical experiences. Once accepted, students are to submit the following document to the clinical coordinator at the Counselor Education office (Bldg 47, Room 270) **by the first day of the semester of their practicum and internship.** Agency Approval Form is available in the Student Handbook (V. Mental Health Appendices) and Supervisor Agreement Form with specific date for each semester can be obtained from the clinical coordinator.

- 1. Professional malpractice insurance**
- 2. Signed Agency Approval Form**
- 3. Signed Supervisor Agreement Form**

♣ **Step Three**

Begin at your site after the first week of class (or unless instructed otherwise). Beginning practicum students must complete a **minimum of 150 hours** at their clinical site within the semester.

- o 60 hours will be direct, face-to-face contact in counseling.
- o 90 hours will be indirect services related to counseling activities.

Example: 10 hours a week (x15 wks) of direct & indirect = 150 hrs/semester
4 hours a week (x15 wks) of direct counseling = 60 hrs/semester
6 hours a week (x15 wks) of indirect activities = 90hrs/semester

Advanced practicum students must complete a **minimum of 250 hours** at their clinical site within the semester.

- o 100 hours will be direct, face-to-face contact in counseling.
- o 150 hours will be indirect services related to counseling activities.

Example: 17 hours a week (x15 wks) of direct & indirect = 250 hrs/semester
7 hours a week (x15 wks) of direct counseling = 100 hrs/semester
10 hours a week (x15 wks) of indirect activities = 150hrs/semester

Split Internship (over two consecutive semesters) students must complete a **minimum of 300 hours** at their clinical site within each semester.

- o 120 hours each semester will be direct, face-to-face contact in counseling.
- o 180 hours each semester will be indirect services related to counseling activities.

Example: For each semester – (must be consecutive)
20 hours a week (x15 wks) of direct & indirect = 300 hrs/semester
8 hours a week (x15 wks) of direct counseling = 120 hrs/semester
12 hours a week (x15 wks) of indirect activities = 180 hrs/semester

**Students may complete 600 hours internship in one semester only with the approval of their advanced practicum instructor and the clinical coordinator.

**Students may obtain permission to schedule their field experiences in non-consecutive semesters (except a split internship) with their advisor and the clinical coordinator. This is not encouraged, as most community sites want their students to complete consecutive experiences at their sites to facilitate continuity of care and supervision. Therefore, if the student chooses to request semester breaks between their field experiences, the student should be aware that their placement would become more difficult.

♣ **Step Four**

Obtain the **Field Experience Log and Summary Forms** from the Student Handbook (V. Mental Health Appendices) in the beginning of the semester. These forms will validate the student's counseling and administrative experience while at their clinical site.

The student is expected to keep these forms current and obtain the appropriate signatures. All forms should be copied and turned into the clinical coordinator by the end of semester for the student's file within the department.

♣ **Step Five**

Obtain the **Practicum and Internship Evaluation Form** and **Student Counselor Site Evaluation form** from the Student Handbook (V. Mental Health Appendices) and submit the signed forms to the clinical coordinator.

The student is expected to participate in an on-going evaluation process with their site supervisor and their practicum/internship course instructor. The **Practicum and Internship Evaluation Form** will evaluate the student's progress and should be completed and returned to the practicum/internship course instructor three weeks prior to the end of the semester.

The practicum/internship experience is evaluated on the basis of each student's counseling skills and ability to integrate theory and practice. Since practicum involves clients in a community counseling setting, a great deal of value is placed on providing high quality service in a professional and ethical manner.

Become familiar with your responsibilities and assist your site supervisor in understanding their responsibilities, as described in this handbook.

♣ **Step Six**

Submit the signed **Field Experience Log and Summary Forms to the clinical coordinator by end of the semester**. This submission completes your practicum and internship experiences for the semester.

♣ **Step Seven**

If, after receiving your approved site, you have an emergency situation which makes it impossible to proceed with the Practicum or Internship, notify the clinical coordinator immediately. You must reapply (by the semester deadline) for Practicum or Internship.