



Practicum and Internship Manual Mental Health Counseling Program

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 three consecutive semesters of beginning and advanced practicum and internship. (The internship may be divided into two consecutive semesters with prior approval).

PREREQUISITES

The following prerequisites are required before taking Practicum and Internship:

Practicum (Beginning & Advanced) and Internship

- MHS 5005 Processes in Counseling
- MHS 6401 Counseling Theories & Techniques
- MHS 6055 Life Span Development
- MHS 6700 Legal, Ethical & Professional Issues in Counseling
- MHS 6070 Psychopathology in Counseling
- MHS 6220 Appraisal & Evaluation
- MHS 6430 Family Counseling
- EDF 6481 Research Methods
- MHS 6701 Issues in Mental Health Counseling Practice

The courses Processes in Counseling MHS 5005; Counseling Theories & Techniques MHS 6401; Lifespan Development MHS 6055; Issues in Mental Health Counseling MHS 6701; Legal and Ethical Issues in Counseling MHS6700; Psychopathology MHS 6070; MHS 6220 Appraisal & Evaluation; MHS 6430 Family Counseling; EDF 6481 Research Methods must precede the first 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)

APPLICATION DEADLINES

There are two deadlines for submitting Practicum and Internship:

- **SUMMER & FALL – January 31**
- **SPRING – September 15**

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.

- Students are encouraged to investigate the variety of practicum/internship sites in terms of: the type of clientele the setting serves; nature of the activities the student would be involved in; models for assessment and intervention; and specific practicum site requirements.
- The student will meet regularly on an individual basis with their practicum/internship instructor regarding their experience and review audio/video tapes of counseling sessions. The student will also attend weekly practicum/internship group seminars that will focus on the essential characteristics of counseling as it relates to their experiences.



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- Students will receive a minimum of 1 hour of individual supervision per week from their community counseling site. These meetings are to be in addition to other site meetings. Case management issues and counseling evaluation will be the major focus of these supervisory sessions.

Step Two

Obtain professional malpractice insurance. Documentation must be presented in the first seminar class prior to beginning to see clients.

Step Three

Submit signed Agency Approval form and the Site Agreement form to the Coordinator at the Counselor Education office (Bldg 47, Room 270) before beginning your practicum or internship.

- The student will be assisted in selecting a site and supervisor and once assigned; the student will contact the site to initiate any interviews and application process for the site.

The student is expected to keep his/her commitment and complete the placement. Failure to keep this commitment jeopardizes placements of other students.

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 counseling site within the semester.

- 60 hours will be direct, face-to-face contact in counseling.
 - 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 counseling site within the semester.

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



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- 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

Internship students must complete a **minimum of 600 hours** at their counseling site within the semester.

- 240 hours will be direct, face-to-face contact in counseling.
- 360 hours will be indirect services related to counseling activities.

- Example: 40 hours a week (x15 wks) of direct & indirect = 600 hrs/semester
 - 16 hours a week (x15 wks) of direct counseling = 240 hrs/semester
 - 24 hours a week (x15 wks) of indirect activities = 360hrs/semester

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

- 120 hours each semester will be direct, face-to-face contact in counseling.
- 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 obtain permission to schedule their field experiences in non-consecutive semesters (except a split internship) with their advisor and the practicum 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 your instructor and/or the main office. These forms will validate the student's counseling and administrative experience while at their community counseling site.



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- The student is expected to keep these forms current and obtain the appropriate signatures. All forms should be copied and turned into the coordinator and faculty instructor for the student's file within the department.

Step Five

Review with your site supervisor the site evaluation form he/she will be completing for you at the end of the semester.

- The student is expected to participate in an on-going evaluation process with their site supervisor and their practicum/internship course instructor. The site 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

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