



COLLEGE OF CONTINUING AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES
GRADUATE PROGRAM IN CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

PRACTICUM AND INTERNSHIP
FIELD PLACEMENT MANUAL

Fall 2011

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Purpose and Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to provide the student with information and materials that are needed to complete the clinical experiences required for the Master's in Clinical Mental Health Counseling degree program. The procedures outlined are outlined to assist students during the clinical experience by:

- a. describing the application process;
- b. outlining the sequence to be followed in securing a placement site;
- c. detailing practicum and internship requirements;
- d. noting student responsibilities regarding practicum and internship;
- e. providing the student with guidelines for appropriate recordkeeping.

Ideally, the field experience should provide the student with a supportive, structured learning environment for acquiring practical, on-the-job training. This experience is designed to prepare the student for skills development in the novice-to-expert model. The development of counseling skills is viewed in the broadest sense, including acquisition of specific intervention skills, an understanding of and an ability to use conceptual skills, personal growth related to appropriate handling of emotional reactions, an appreciation of diversity, and the development of professionalism (ethical behavior, sound judgment, appropriate communication skills, and a commitment to contributing to the profession of counseling).

Getting Started

Application

1. Consult your "Program Planning Form". When you began your graduate studies in counseling, you and the Clinical Coordinator completed a "Program Planning Tool" form. (Note: Your date for entry into COUN 609/610 should be noted on your Program Planning Form. Applications are required for both practicum and internships.
2. Secure an application. Applications may be found in this handbook on our website.
3. Each semester the Clinical Coordinator will hold a Clinical Orientation meeting. The Clinical Coordinator as well as your advisor will help you identify field placement sites that are appropriate for your interests, professional goals, and program track.
4. Complete your application and turn it in to the Clinical Coordinator immediately.

Deadline for practicum/internship application:

- Summer semester: **April 1**
- Fall semester: **August 1**
- Spring semester: **November 1**

Site Selection

1. Selecting the field placement site is perhaps the most important step in your clinical experience. At the time you submit your application for practicum or internship, you should meet with your advisor and or Clinical Coordinator to discuss possible sites. At a meeting held each semester, the Clinical Coordinator/coordinator will discuss with you the following:

- Your interests, needs, and expectations for the experience
- The kind of educational opportunities you wish to experience during your practicum or internship
- The location, client population, and philosophy of various sites
- Practicum or internship requirements for your program track
- State requirements for supervised work experiences related to counseling licensure or certification
- Qualities that you hope to find in your site supervisor

The Clinical Coordinator will provide you with contact information for possible sites. You should note, however, that it is your responsibility to contact the supervising counselor at the site.

Be certain to determine that the site has a staff member that meets requirements to provide supervision including (a) a master's degree in counseling or a related field, (b) a minimum of three years post-graduate clinical experience, (c) training as a counseling supervisor, and (d) a current resume or vita for submission

2. Be prepared. After meeting with the Clinical Coordinator, you are almost ready to begin interviewing possible field placement sites for yourself. Before you contact any site, however, you should attend to the following:

- Locate additional sources of information about various sites, such as other students, newspaper ads, internet sites or funding agencies
- Compose or update your resume or vita and make several copies

3. Contact sites. You are now ready to contact the supervising counselors at the sites the Clinical Coordinator has approved for you. This step involves the following:

- Make appointments with the supervising counselor(s) for informational interviews
- Dress appropriately and bring copies of your resume or vita with you to the interview
- Use the interview as an opportunity to present your talents and also as an opportunity to learn more about the site
- Follow up on all interviews with a thank-you note
- Follow up the thank-you notes with a phone call a week or so later
- Compare job descriptions, resources, and other information you obtained from each site
- Select a site

4. Make it official. Once you and a qualified supervising counselor have agreed to work together, you will need to formalize your commitment. Expectations and responsibilities for all parties should be made clear and explicit prior to the beginning of the field experience. This step involves the following:

- Obtain a “Site Agreement Form” (see Appendices) and have it signed by your supervising counselor
- Meet with your supervising counselor to formulate a “Prospectus.” The prospectus should outline your specific duties and responsibilities for the semester. Remember, this will be your job description
- Ask your supervising counselor how you can best prepare for your field experience
- Follow through on his or her suggestions
- Determine any academic areas relevant to the site that you need to review
- Read and review material pertinent to your new placement site so you will begin your placement feeling as competent and comfortable as possible

5. Lastly, a few details to take care of:

- Obtain professional liability insurance. Policies are available at discounted student rates through membership in the American Counseling Association and several of its larger divisions. Information about membership in and insurance coverage available through the ACA is available through the ACA website at www.counseling.org.
- Complete any security or background check that your site requires. These often take 30 to 45 days, so be sure to get the process started well before the semester begins
- If your site requires you to participate in an orientation or training program before you will be allowed to work with clients, try to have this completed before the semester begins

- Contact your university supervisor to determine if there is anything else that you need to do to prepare for the field experience

Facilitators

The following individuals will work with you toward completion of your practicum or internship.

Clinical Coordinator

- Discusses your specific requirements for practicum and internship as part of the Program of Study planning process
- Discusses and suggests possible site placements
- Approves appropriate sites for you to contact for field placement
- Approves your pre-registration
- Monitors your progress during practicum or internship as needed
- Reviews completed documentation in your file at the end of the semester
- Receive site agreement form, prospectus, and proof of insurance prior to the first day of the semester

University Supervisor

- Provides weekly individual supervision for practicum students
- Provides individual supervision for interns as needed
- Conducts weekly group supervision sessions with practicum and internship students
- Monitors your compliance with and fulfillment of practicum or internship requirements
- Maintains communication with site supervisors
- Provides consultation to site supervisors as needed
- Periodically visits placement sites
- Assists in the resolution of on-site problems as needed
- Assigns your final grade for the field placement experience

Site Supervisor

- Provides clinical experiences for you in accordance with training guidelines
- Makes provisions for orientation to the site buildings, facilities, policies, philosophies, and procedures for assigning clients, emergencies, and site-specific limits to confidentiality (if any)
- Attempts to help you meet program requirements, within site guidelines

- Provides office space for you to the extent feasible. As a minimum, you will be provided a private space to use while seeing clients
- Provides weekly face-to-face individual supervision during your internship
- Assists in the evaluation of your clinical performance relative to objectives of the experience. The site supervisor will notify the university supervisor of problems that may influence your completion of the field experience
- Ensures that all field experience placement students are properly supervised at all times by a qualified counselor

Professional Behavior

Although the primary purpose of practicum and internship is to assist you in the continued development and application of counseling skills, you are also an agent of the site. You are expected to operate under the norms of the site at all times. This includes *punctuality, appropriate attire, and professional behavior*, as well as *adherence to all aspects of your prospectus and site agreement*. Appropriate professional dispositions are outlined below.

Professional Dispositions—Counseling Program

The student will:

- Exhibit and understand the importance of respectful, genuine, and empathic attitudes toward clients, thereby promoting client dignity, self-determination, and welfare.
- Exhibit and understand the importance of the ability to engage clients, acknowledging the unique nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels and across cultures.
- Develop and value facilitative communication skills.
- Be aware of the importance of verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Demonstrate the ability to understand a client's presenting problems or concerns.
- Acknowledge the importance of themes presented by clients as they relate to presenting concerns.

- Acknowledge the importance of conceptualizing client themes and problems within a theoretical framework, encouraging client growth and development to foster the client's interests.
- Exhibit and understand the importance of the development and implementation of treatment goals.
- Recognize the need to develop and articulate a personal theoretical approach for working with clients.
- Recognize the importance of assessment of the counseling process and relationship.
- Value knowledge of the organizational structure of counseling settings.
- Appreciate the need for program development.
- Exhibit professional dress and demeanor in accordance with practice settings.
- Value self-awareness and self-examination, and take responsibility for seeking professional help for issues that might impede one's counseling practice.
- Understand, appreciate, and adhere to professional standards of ethics and practice.
- Recognize the importance of professional growth and development.

Procedures for Field Experience Completion

Practicum and internship placements should be discussed with the Clinical Coordinator before being finalized. The Practicum and Internship Site Directory, found in the department office, lists placement sites successfully used in the past. You may request a site not listed in the directory, but this must meet with the approval of the Clinical Coordinator prior to placement. It may be necessary that you drive a considerable distance to your location. There is no financial remuneration for transportation or other costs related to your field experience placement.

Deadlines for application for both practicum and internship are:

- **Summer semester: April 1**
- **Fall semester: August 1**
- **Spring semester: November 1**

Students will be assigned to practicum and internship class sections in accordance with accreditation standards; for that reason sections do not identify specific faculty since changes may be made up until the day classes begin.

Practicum

Counseling practicum involves a field placement in an agency, school, or university setting similar to the environment in which you may seek employment upon completion of your degree. Factors such as site availability, site-specific requirements, and course requirements will influence placement.

Time requirements for client contact, administrative duties, and supervision hours will be given in the syllabus. In general, you should plan to spend eight to ten hours per week at your practicum site. All of the time you spend in relation to practicum should be documented (see Appendices). You will submit a log of your activities to your university supervisor during the final supervision session of the semester. This log will be placed in your file to verify that you have completed the required number of supervised hours of counseling practice. The minimum time requirement for practicum is 100 hours, 40 of which must be direct client contact hours.

You receive several types of supervision during practicum. You will participate in individual supervision weekly with your university supervisor during regular office hours, in addition to an average of 90 minutes of group supervision each week. You will have a supervising counselor at your site that is responsible for providing one hour per week of supervision.

Each time you have individual supervision, you are required to submit an audio or video recording of your work as a counselor and a "Counseling Summary" (see Appendices). You should review this tape before submitting it for supervision. It is mandatory that you first obtain your clients' formal written permission to be recorded, and that you inform your clients both of your status as a counselor-in-training and also that the recordings will be used in individual and group supervision.

Internship

The basic objective of internship is to provide the student with opportunities to merge theory and practice in a realistic setting. Internship provides the means for the student to perform, under supervision, all of the expected activities of a regularly employed counselor. The internship is a gradual transition from the academic setting to the professional work setting. In addition to continuing to build skills, interns will become familiar with all aspects of the counselor's

world of work. Participation in individual supervision with a supervising counselor should allow interns to become aware of their strengths and their challenges. Although the intern is viewed essentially as a counselor in training and not as an employee of the agency or school, the intern is expected to act in a professional manner at all times.

Internship is expected to come near the end of the counselor training process. After completion of coursework and practicum requirements, the intern is ready to become involved in the wide spectrum of institutional or agency services. The minimum time requirement for internship is 600 hours, including at least 240 hours of direct client contact over two semesters.

Procedures for interns vary only to the extent that professional roles and functions vary and in relation to the long-range objectives of the intern. A basic objective for all interns is to become involved in a developmental fashion in the internship in the designated agency or school. Variations in procedures exist to accommodate level of training, nature of profession, and placement.

Supervision

Supervision is conducted by both the university supervisor and the site supervisor. The university supervisor is involved in pre-internship orientation with the intern, visits to the site for supervisory purposes, evaluative discussion with the site supervisor and intern, and facilitation of group supervision for an average of 90 minutes per week in a classroom experience. Additionally, the university supervisor provides one hour per week of individual and/or triadic supervision. The supervising counselor at the site is involved in orientating the intern to the site and its policies and procedures, providing on-site training whereby the intern is exposed to all aspects of the counselor's world of work, providing individual, face-to-face supervision for at least one hour per week, communicating with the university supervisor, providing, along with the university supervisor, formative and summative evaluations of the intern's performance, and case staffing administrative supervision, or additional group supervision as needed.

Evaluation

Grades are assigned by your practicum or internship university supervisor with input from your site supervisor. Evaluation forms are to be completed by your supervisors at mid-semester and again at the end of the term (see Appendices). A grade of at least B is required for successful completion of practicum and internship. Practicum students and interns are required to evaluate their sites and their supervisors at the end of each semester.

Professional Issues

Informed Consent

Before initiation of a counseling relationship, you must inform your client of any limitations to confidentiality, you must inform your client of your counselor-in-training status, and you must inform your client of any site-specific information required by your placement. You must secure the client's formal written permission to make audio or video recordings of counseling sessions which include that client. Examples of consent forms are included in the appendix to this manual.

Emergency Procedures

In order to perform effectively as a counselor, you must be aware of emergency procedures for a wide range of unusual things that can happen during counseling sessions or at any time during your field placement experience (i.e. high risk and suicidal clients, fires, client meltdowns, tornados, etc.). Ask your site supervisor about the emergency procedures under which your site operates, and be sure you know how to contact your supervisor in the case of an emergency.

Ethical Guidelines

When you enter into a counseling relationship, you are entering into an agreement with your client to keep his or her welfare uppermost in your mind during your time together. You are agreeing to provide the treatment most appropriate to address the client's concern, to treat the client with respect, to refer when appropriate, and not to exceed your competence level. You should be familiar with the American Counseling Association's Ethical Guidelines and use them as a guide for behaving in a professional, ethical manner by going to <http://www.counseling.org>.

As a practicum student or intern, you are allowed to see clients only under supervision. You are not available to clients after hours or off-site. You should not give your personal telephone number or other personal information to clients which might tempt them or enable them to contact you off-site or after hours. Do not call clients from your home (many clients have Caller ID systems that allow them to determine the telephone number of an incoming call). Your site will almost certainly have an emergency number to give clients in case they ask for it or if you should determine that an emergency number is necessary.

Professional Liability Insurance

Professional liability insurance is required and must be obtained prior to seeing any clients; hours cannot begin to be accrued until liability insurance is secured, a copy of which must be provided to the class section faculty member on the first night of class.

The ACA offers student members the opportunity to purchase professional liability insurance at competitive rates. Access to insurance coverage is also available through membership in the AMHCA, ASCA, or IAMFC as well as through a number of independent providers.

Practicum and Internship experiences and evaluation of student performances will be conducted according to the requirements of the current ***Mercer University Practicum and Internship Field Placement Manual.***

Periodic reviews of programs and policies will be conducted by the faculty of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program.

All practicum and internship students are covered by liability insurance furnished by the following source:

Connie Wells
Risk Management
Core Administrative Services
(478)741-3521
(478)750-1705 (fax)
conniew@mail.coremrq.com

Credentials

Upon successful completion of the courses noted on your planned program of study, you will have completed the academic requirements for several professional counseling credentials. For further information you may contact the following individual credentialing agencies:

Licensure

Licensed Professional Counselors
Association of Georgia, Inc. (LPCA-
GA)250 E Ponce de Leon Avenue
STE 427
Decatur, GA30030
404-370-0200
Fax line, 404-370-0006
Email: LPCA@mindspring.com

Certification

National Board for Certified Counselors
Terrace Way, Suite D
Greensboro, NC 27403-3660
Telephone (336) 547-0607
Website <http://www.nbcc.org>

**Graduate Program in Counseling
Mercer University**

Application for Practicum (COUN 609)

This form should be submitted according to the following application deadlines:

Registration for COUN 609 Application Deadline

Summer Semester	Proceeding April 1
Fall Semester	Proceeding August 1
Spring Semester	Proceeding November 1

Please Note: The application dates for COUN 609 are not negotiable. It is your responsibility to complete the practicum application form prior to the deadlines above.

Proof of liability insurance must be obtained prior to seeing any clients and a copy of the insurance presented to the section faculty member the first night of class.

For which term to do you plan to enroll in COUN 609 Practicum? (Check the appropriate block):

- Fall Spring Summer

What is your program track? (Check the appropriate block):

- School Clinical Mental health

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Cell phone: _____ Fax: _____

UM ID Number: _____ Email: _____

Local Mailing Address: _____

Application for Practicum (COUN 609) continued:

Check the courses you have completed or will have completed by the time practicum begins, and indicate when the course was or will be completed:

	Semester taken or planned
COUN 601-Career and Vocational Guidance	
COUN 602 Introduction to Clinical Mental Health Counseling or School Counseling*	
COUN 604 Psychopathology*	
COUN 605 Group Techniques and Procedures*	
COUN 606-Psychological Helping Skills*	
COUN 612-Counseling Theory*	
COUN 613 Cultural Perspectives in Counseling	
COUN 614 Life Span Development	
COUN 617-Individual Analysis and Testing	
COUN 618 Ethics and Professional Issues*	
COUN 621 Research and Program Evaluation	

*Must be taken before entering COUN 609.

List a minimum of three sites you will contact for an interview. Before contacting these sites, you must obtain approval from the Clinical Coordinator and the clinical coordinator:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

**Graduate Program in Counseling
Mercer University**

Application for Internship (COUN 610)

Instructions: Complete this form in its entirety and submit it to the Clinical Coordinator in counseling office. The application deadline for students planning to take internship in the fall or summer semester is the preceding April 1. The application deadline for students planning to take internship in the spring semester is the preceding November 1.

Proof of liability insurance must be obtained prior to seeing any clients and a copy of the insurance presented to the section faculty member the first night of class.

Which internship are you applying for? (check the appropriate block):

COUN 610 – I

COUN 610 – II

For which term to do you plan to enroll in COUN 610 Internship (check the appropriate block):

Fall

Spring

Summer

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Cell phone: _____

Fax: _____

MUID Number: _____

MERCER Email: _____

Date of Completion of COUN 609 _____

List a minimum of three sites you will contact for an interview. Before contacting these sites, you must obtain approval from the Clinical Coordinator

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

**Graduate Program in Counseling
Mercer University**

Practicum/Internship Agreement

Memorandum of Agreement by and between the Graduate Program in
Counseling, College of Continuing and Professional Studies, and Mercer

University, hereinafter referred to as the "Program" and

----- (STUDENT NAME)

AND

----- (SITE NAME/AGENCY)

referred to as the "Site," beginning on _____, 2011 (Fall, Spring,
Summer Semester) and ending _____ 2012 (Fall, Spring, Summer
Semester).

The Site and the Program agree as follows:

A. The Site agrees to:

1. Orient the practicum student or intern to the Site and its rules and regulations;
2. Share in the responsibility for training the practicum student or intern by providing appropriate client contact as well as appropriate instruction and supervision by qualified personnel;
3. Consider practicum students and interns as learners and not require of them services beyond the scope of the practicum/internship requirements;

4. Provide one hour a week of individual face-to-face supervision to each intern

5. Provide formative and summative evaluative information to the practicum student or intern and to the Program;

6. Allow the practicum student or intern to record work samples for the purpose of receiving evaluative feedback;

7. Maintain its accreditation status;

8. Notify the Program of any problems regarding the student and his or her responsibilities, and to request withdrawal of any student whose conduct or performance does not meet the standards of the Site; and

9. Maintain in effect professional and general liability insurance coverage in the amount agreeable to both parties, and further to cooperate with the Program in the event of an occurrence that gives rise to a claim.

B. The Program agrees to:

1. Send to the Site only those students who have been screened and have met all prerequisites for the practicum/internship;

2. Send to the Site only those students who are covered by liability insurance;

3. Provide faculty assistance for supervising and instructing practicum/internship students and to provide by name a faculty representative authorized to act for the Program in the event that a problem arises;

4. Help assure that all practicum students and interns placed at the Site conform to the rules and regulations of the Site, and that at the request of the Site, the Program will remove any student whose conduct or performance is regarded by the Site as inappropriate;

5. Cooperate with the Site in the event that there has been an occurrence involving a practicum student or intern that gives rise to a liability claim; and

6. Provide an average of 90 minutes of group supervision per week during the time in which the student is enrolled in practicum or internship.

C. It is mutually agreed that:

1. There will be no discrimination against any student because of gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, race, color, creed, national origin, or disability;

2. The clinical experience assignments for practicum students and interns will be selected, planned, and made by the Site and will correspond to practicum/internship requirements outlined by the Program;

3. Students will behave professionally and will report promptly at the time and place designated by the Site;

4. Responsibility for patient/client care and related duties is retained by the Site and will take precedence over student clinical experience;

5. All electronic and redactive information used for supervision off-site will be transported and destroyed as needed to protect client privacy; and

6. This agreement is considered in effect for the period designated and may be reviewed at any time, for any reason, and may be terminated by either the Site or the Program.

D. To accommodate this agreement, the student is expected to:

1. Abide by all policies, standards, and practices of the Site, and to all procedures specified by the Program;

2. Present proof of enrollment in an acceptable malpractice liability insurance plan;

3. be solely responsible for transportation and living arrangements, unless provided by the Site; and

4. Acknowledge intent to comply with all applicable conditions of the agreement.

For the Site:

For Mercer University:

Signature of Site Supervisor

Signature of University Supervisor

Agency Name:

Title: -----

Date -----

Date -----

For the Student:

-----Name

Print Your Name:

**Graduate Program in Counseling Mercer University
Practicum/Internship Prospectus**

Practicum/Internship Site Name & Address:

Job Description: A paragraph or bulleted description will be prepared with the site supervisor; it will be specific to the placement site.

Duties and Responsibilities:

Counseling:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Professional Development:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Professional Responsibilities:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

A practicum student whose performance does not conform to the policies and standards that apply to all employees is subject to discipline, and his or her services may be terminated.

Site Supervisor

Date

Practicum/Internship Student

Date

University Supervisor

Date

* The document is not limited to the categories below but should include these categories at a minimum.

**Graduate Program in Counseling
Mercer University**

**Practicum/Internship Statement of Confidentiality
Acknowledgement**

I _____ agree as follows:

1. Not to divulge any information regarding material, cases, names, concerns, etc. to any party outside of supervision (university/site) and class meetings. Failure to abide by this agreement will constitute violation of confidentiality and be representative of unprofessional conduct.
2. I have read and understand the terms and provisions of the practicum/internship agreement between Mercer University and the practicum/internship agency.
3. To abide by the policies, standards, and procedures of the Agency and the procedures required for the practicum/internship.
4. To comply with all applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations in connection with program activities.
5. To observe the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct, and to strictly maintain the Confidentiality of all patient/client information obtained through the privilege of participating in Agency program activities.
6. To obtain written approval from Agency, Department, and patient/client before making public or publishing any information or materials relating to practicum/internship activities.
7. I have received a copy of the Practicum and Internship Field Placement Manual.

Practicum/Internship Student Signature

Date

WHAT DO I DO FIRST?

1. Turn in the application to Dr. Foster fully completed. (Pages 13, 14, or 15 as applicable).
2. Complete the STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY (p. 21) and return immediately to Dr. Foster.
3. Provide evidence of your own personal liability (malpractice) policy to Dr. Foster immediately.
4. Begin your interview process.
5. After you have received an offer, get the PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP AGREEMENT signed and return this document to Dr. Foster as soon as possible and before the deadline.
6. Meet with your new site supervisor and complete the Practicum/Internship Prospectus (p. 20).
7. Purchase your textbooks, begin reading and get ready for the class on the first day of the semester.