

George Mason University
Counseling Program
Practicum & Internship Handbook for Site
Supervisors

Welcome

Dear Supervisor,

Thank you for serving as an on-site supervisor for GMU counseling students. We deeply appreciate your commitment to help develop and mentor our students on their journey to becoming professional counselors.

We hope that the following information is helpful as you orient to our program, procedures, policies, and expectations. If you have any questions about the information outlined here, please contact Dr. Tori Stone, (vstone@gmu.edu) Clinical Coordinator.

Sincerely,

GMU Counseling Program Faculty

Introduction to GMU Counseling Program Field Experiences

GMU Counseling Program Mission Statement

The Counseling program is committed to prepare counselors who promote the social, psychological, physical and spiritual health of individuals, families, communities and organizations in order to contribute to the advancement of global well-being. The program strives for national and international excellence in implementing a counseling perspective that provides a foundation in basic counseling skills, and focuses on social justice, multiculturalism, international, advocacy, and leadership. It is our belief that a global perspective on development across the life span, and an understanding and appreciation of multiculturalism, diversity, and social justice are integral to the preparation of professional counselors, requiring that professional counselors are prepared to assume leadership roles, be proactive change agents, and become advocates for social, economic, and political justice. The program is committed to accomplish this mission by working through interdisciplinary teams as well as promoting the interconnectedness of teaching, research, service and professional practice. Through this mission, faculty will facilitate a continued tradition of international, national, and regional leadership through the development of collaborative partnerships and projects, research, publications, presentations, consultation, and training. (<http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/counseling>)

Purpose

Practicum and Internship are the culminating clinical field experiences for students in the Counseling master's program. Practicum is comprised of 100 hours of field experience over one semester. Internship is comprised of 600 hours of field experience across two semesters (300 hours in Internship I and 300 hours in Internship II). These experiences are designed to provide specific on-site opportunities and help the student refine basic and advanced counseling knowledge and skills; demonstrate knowledge of human development; and explore applications of multiculturalism and social justice to their counseling work. The Practicum and Internship experiences take place in approved community agency settings under the supervision of the University Supervisor and a qualified On-site Supervisor. The Practicum and Internship (P&I) experiences are based on current research, practice, and ethical guidelines.

Goals and Objectives

The Practicum and Internship clinical field experiences are associated with on-campus courses (Practicum, Internship I, and Internship II). The courses and field experiences are designed to provide practical counseling experience for students in school or mental health settings. Students are provided with supervision from both On-Site and University Supervisors during the P&I experiences. The goals and objectives of the P&I experiences will enable students to:

1. Integrate knowledge of counseling theory, conceptualization, and intervention into clinical practice;
2. Demonstrate basic/advanced knowledge and skill competencies per Supervision Agreement and criteria for mid-semester and final evaluations;
3. Apply the program mission, including multiculturalism, social justice, and advocacy;
4. Respond appropriately to ethical/legal issues, site professional standards, and program professional dispositions;
5. Understand and develop the role of a professional counselor;
6. Develop program evaluation and prevention program planning and implementation skills consistent with the program mission.

Professional Expectations during Practicum and Internship

Counseling Program Professional Dispositions

As counselor trainees, students have additional professional performance standards. The codes of conduct for the American Counseling Association require counselors and counselor trainees to maintain standards of professional competence and possess good moral character. Therefore, the Counseling Program in the School of Education at George Mason University requires its students to adhere to GMU University and Counseling Program Professional Dispositions while in the Counseling program, to include their conduct and behavior while doing their field experiences.

The GMU Counseling Program's Professional Dispositions are as follows:

Professional & Ethical Attitudes and Behaviors

1. Demonstrates the ability to express thoughts and feelings effectively and appropriately through sound judgement that promotes social justice and diversity.
2. Demonstrates respect, honesty, integrity, confidentiality, and care for others.
3. Demonstrates an understanding of ethical and legal standards/codes.
4. Accepts responsibility for decisions and actions.
5. Does not copy or plagiarize (all work is student's own).
6. Is able to work and understand working with others that have different beliefs without imposing their own values on others.
7. Is on time and present for classes, meetings, and/or appointments.
8. Written work and assignments are timely and well written.

Multiculturalism & Social Justice

9. Demonstrates an appreciation, commitment, and value for human diversity in words and behaviors.
10. Displays behavior that is sensitive to age, gender, sexual orientation, language, ability/disability, culture, religions, race, ethnicity, and nationality.
11. Acts as a social justice advocate for a just world on behalf of students, self, and profession.
12. Recognizes and respects dignity, worth, and rights of all people and individuals.

Professional & Personal Growth

13. Actively engages in activities, learning, development, and reflective practices to facilitate ongoing professional and personal growth.
14. Is able and willing to flex or adapt to changing circumstances, unexpected events, new ideas, people and situations.
15. Demonstrates tolerance for ambiguity.

Self-Awareness & Self-Care

16. Demonstrates an ability, willingness, and awareness to self-reflect honestly and objectively on their own belief systems, values, needs, biases, and limitations on the effects of "self" on their work with clients including barriers in promoting social justice and diversity.
17. Is able to recognize one's own limitations and barriers including those in promoting social justice.
18. Demonstrates an understanding of the importance of caring for self and follows through with this practice.
19. Maintains appropriate boundaries.

Interpersonal Relationships & Collaboration

20. Is able and willing to cooperate and collaborate with peers, professors, supervisors and other professionals respectfully and effectively, including group projects.
21. Is able and willing to receive and integrate feedback from faculty, supervisors, and peers.
22. Values and demonstrates effective interpersonal and intrapersonal communication.

Ethical Obligations

All counselors, to include University Supervisors, Students, and On-Site Supervisors, are bound by the professional ethical standards and practices of the American Counseling Association (ACA) and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA).

University and On-Site Supervisors for CMHC students must adhere to [*ACA's Code of Ethics, Section F: Supervision, Training and Teaching*](#). See the ACA Ethical Codes (2014) for detailed information.

University and On-Site Supervisors for SC students must adhere to [*ASCA's Ethical Standards for School Counselors, Section D: School Counseling Intern Site Supervisors*](#). See the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2016) for detailed information.

Understanding the P&I Experiences

Phases of the P&I Experiences

The structure of each student's P&I experiences will vary greatly. However, there are three broad phases that the Student Counselors can expect during the P&I experiences.

Phase One: Orientation & Observation. This includes a physical tour of the site and introductions of staff. The Student Counselor should be given a clear sense of office routines, regulations and policies, including work hours, absentee policies, use of equipment, and interaction with clerical personnel. The Student Counselor should be instructed in record-keeping techniques, scheduling procedures, and additional counselor duties specific to the site/department. It is during this first phase that the Student Counselor may shadow and/or observe the On-Site Supervisor (or other site counselors) doing clinical intakes, assessments, groups, family, and/or individual counseling sessions.

Phase Two: More Responsibility. After completing an orientation phase (the length of which will depend on the needs and regulations of the site), the Student Counselor should build his or her client/student caseload under direct supervision of the On-Site Supervisor. It is expected that the Student Counselor will move toward leading sessions independently. The Student Counselor should conduct individual counseling sessions, plan and lead small group counseling sessions, conduct assessments, and engage in staff conferences and professional development. For SC students, this may also include engaging in intervention team and special education meetings, MTSS, PBIS, faculty meetings, etc. Activities should be consistent with the Student Counselor and On-Site Supervisor's assessment of the student's level of skills. At no time should the

Student Counselor's caseload exceed her/his competence level. The On-Site Supervisor is expected to monitor the nature of clients assigned to the Student Counselor and consult with the University Supervisor on this matter, as needed.

Phase Three: Closure. During the Internship experience, the Student gradually withdraws from his/her responsibilities at the site and engages in closure activities.

Requirements During P&I Experiences

Minimum Hours Requirements during P&I

The program has requirements for on-site hours and direct client hours during each semester of P&I as follows:

Practicum: 100 on-site hours; 40 direct client hours

Internship I: 300 on-site hours; 120 direct client hours (minimum of 85; see below)

Internship II: 300 on-site hours; 120 direct client hours

Internship I & II: may be combined for a total of 600 on-site hours; 240 direct client hours.

Total Hours in P&I: 700 on-site hours; 280 direct client hours

In **Internship I**, the minimum direct client hours allowed in order to pass Internship I is 85 (rather than the 120). However, the total 240 total direct client hours in Internship I and II must be reached by the end of Internship II, so the Student Counselor must make up the missing hours.

Direct Hours. Direct client hours are face-to-face client interactions. Per the Virginia Board of Counseling, direct hours must be face-to-face hours, meaning that client contact that is not in person (e.g., phone contact) does not count as direct contact.

Weekly Hours. In Practicum, students should expect to be on-site for approximately 8 hours per week, and to have at least 3 direct (face-to-face) hours per week.

- In Internship I and II, students should expect to be on-site for approximately 20 hours per week, and to have at least 10 direct (face-to-face) hours per week.
- In combined internship I&II (600 hour internship), students should expect to be on site for approximately 40 hours per week, and to have at least 20 direct (face-to-face) hours per week.
- The minimum number of hours spent on-site at one time is to be **no less than a 3-hour block of time.**

Group Counseling. All students must facilitate or co-facilitate at least one counseling group during internship.

Recording Requirement

All students must be permitted to record counseling sessions during the practicum and internship experience. Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) students must record two counseling sessions; School Counseling (SC students) must record one session. These recorded sessions can be individual, small group, or family sessions. University Supervisors set deadlines for completion of these recordings, but are flexible given that there may be delays in acquiring consent and completing recordings.

Consent for recording forms are available in the Practicum and Internship Required Forms folder on our program Blackboard site. *If a separate consent form is also required by the site, both the GMU consent form and the site consent form must be signed.*

Start and End Dates for P&I

Student Counselors are permitted to begin working at their sites one week prior to the first University Supervision/On-Campus Course and one week after the last University Supervision/On-Campus Course. Student Counselors are not permitted to see clients individually prior to the first University Supervision/On-Campus Course, but they are encouraged to visit the site and complete any necessary trainings and orientations during this time. Students are expected to stay in their site for the entire semester. If students complete their hour requirements early, they are still expected to report to their site until the end of the semester in order to provide continuity of care for their clients/students.

Term Break Hours

Student Counselors may accumulate 30 **INDIRECT** hours during the winter break between Fall-Spring placements and during the summer semester (**CMHC Only**) between Spring-Fall placements (for a total of 60 **INDIRECT** term break hours). The hours will count towards the Student Counselor's hours for the semester *following the break* in which they were accrued. The Student Counselor must receive approval prior to beginning these hours from the On-Site and University Supervisors via the *Term Break Agreement* form. Any additional hours worked outside of the approved 30 hours cannot count towards the P&I hours. Student Counselors should discuss the expectations for work during the winter or summer breaks with the On-Site Supervisor prior to beginning the P&I experiences. Sites differ in their protocols, and some may require Student Counselors to continue providing services during breaks.

Weekly On-Site Supervision

The weekly supervision meetings are critical for the Student Counselor's growth. It is during these meetings that the On-Site Supervisor focuses on the Student Counselor's areas of strength and areas for growth. It is also a time to review the log of hours to ensure that a variety of experiences are occurring over the duration of the semester. Students will meet with their supervisor for individual supervision every week for at **least one hour** and every other week if they are participating in triadic supervision.

The American Counseling Association (ACA) and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) provide ethical supervision guidelines within their Codes of Ethics for University and On-Site Supervisors.

Weekly University Supervision/On-campus Course

All three field experiences have an accompanying on-campus weekly class that meets for 90 minutes. Student Counselors meet with a University Supervisor (GMU instructor for the course) and Student Counselors also enrolled in P&I for group supervision. The purpose of this class is to develop counseling skills, present case studies, and reflect on field experiences. Along with participating in group supervision and processing client cases, Student Counselors will be given assignments by the University Supervisor.

Communication

The On-Site Supervisor and University Supervisor will establish a regular schedule of consultation. The University Supervisor will initiate the first contact via email or phone call to the On-Site Supervisor within the first two weeks of the semester, to introduce her/himself, check in on the student, and answer any questions. The On-Site Supervisor and University Supervisor will schedule a site visit (in-person or virtual) to occur after the midterm evaluation is completed, where the student's progress will be thoroughly discussed. This will occur not later than the 8th week of the semester. The third contact will take place at the end of the semester (no later than the last day of the semester) and will focus on the student's performance throughout the term. The On-Site Supervisor will *immediately* contact the University Supervisor with any concerns s/he has of the Student. Honest and open communication will ensure student growth and development.

Required Paperwork

The following items are completed and/or signed by the On-Site Supervisor: Supervision Agreement, Extended Learning Agreement (ELA) Mid-semester Evaluation, Monthly Log of Hours, Final Evaluation, and Final Summary Log of Hours. At the beginning of the semester, students should: (1) provide the On-Site Supervisor with electronic or paper copies, (2) notify the On-Site Supervisor of paperwork deadlines.

Evaluations

Site supervisors will be asked to provide an evaluation of their student(s) at midterm and at the end of the semester. An electronic survey will be emailed to the site supervisor for completion. After the evaluation is submitted, a copy of the responses are provided to the site supervisor. Site supervisors are asked to review each evaluation with their student(s) to discuss their progress and areas for growth and improvement.

Support and Resources

Stipend

Each On-Site Supervisor is eligible to receive a monetary stipend from George Mason University at the end of the semester. Paperwork will be provided to P&I Site Supervisors by the student. Paperwork for payment must be returned to the College of Education and Human Development within 30 days of the last day of practicum or internship.

Orientation

All of our supervisors are provided with a GMU Counseling Field Experience Orientation which will be sent at the start of each semester. The Clinical Coordinator will email all supervisors a link to a recorded webinar that may be viewed at your convenience at any time before the semester begins.

Training Opportunities

The GMU Counseling program works in close conjunction with other university partners to provide free supervision trainings to our site supervisors. An Advanced Supervision Topics

Workshop is offered each spring for our CMHC supervisors and free CEs are provided for those who attend. An email is sent to all CMHC site supervisors by the Clinical Coordinator at the beginning of each spring semester with information regarding the training. SC supervisors are offered two supervision trainings per year presented by counseling faculty members of the School Counseling Leadership Team (SCLT). Flyers with dates and information are sent out each semester to all SC supervisors in the surrounding school districts. Finally, all site supervisors will be offered a general supervision training from our program in tandem with the orientation webinar (see above).

Questions and Concerns

The GMU Counseling Program strives to provide robust and cooperative support to all of our Site Supervisors. Open and frequent communication is encouraged, and Site Supervisors may reach out to our program any time. Queries regarding administration or any information in the Site Supervisor Handbook can be directed to the Clinical Coordinator, while questions or concerns specific to the development or progress of your practicum/internship student may be directed to the student's University Supervisor. The Clinical Coordinator should always be notified if any significant concerns or emergencies arise.