

**PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP STUDENT
HANDBOOK**

for the

COUNSELING PROGRAM

BRADLEY
UNIVERSITY

Master of Arts in Counseling

Track I: Professional School Counseling

Track II: Clinical Mental Health Counseling

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Department of Leadership in Education, Nonprofits and Counseling (LENC)

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HEALTH SCIENCES

Practicum and Internship Handbook for Masters Programs in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and Professional School Counseling

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of the Handbook

This handbook is designed to introduce prospective student interns to departmental expectations and requirements for satisfactory completion of EHC 690 (Practicum) and EHC 691 and 692 (Internship). No handbook can ever completely prepare one for the Practicum and Internship experience and resultant learning can come only through the exploration of the unknown, taking risks, making mistakes, and incorporating this learning into one's counseling. However, this handbook can provide information about much of the necessary paperwork, suggest ways to ensure solid communication between student and supervisor, and share background data relative to professional standards and ethics. The intent of this handbook is to concentrate on the mechanics, thereby freeing the intern to focus on and maximize the learning experience that the Internship is intended to provide.

B. Prerequisites

1. EHC 690 Practicum: The following prerequisites must be completed prior to taking Practicum:
 - EHC 620 Intro to Counseling
 - EHC 623 Pre-Practicum in Counseling
 - EHC 624 Theories and Techniques of Counseling
 - EHC 625 Principles of Group Counseling
2. EHC 691 Internship I: The student must successfully complete Practicum and have consent of the instructor to enroll in EHC 691 (Internship I).

As of February 1, 2013 school counseling students must pass a state subject matter test in their specialty areas prior to practicum. These requirements are subject to change to meet certification standards.

3. EHC 692 Internship II: The student must successfully complete EHC 691.

C. Purpose of the Practicum and Internship.

Practicum and Internship emphasize counseling skills. Although interns are expected to assume a broad spectrum of counseling roles and functions, the focus of Practicum and Internship is on individual and group counseling. The intent is to relate academic and theoretical learning to field experience. The Practicum/Internship experience provides interns with evaluative feedback on their knowledge, attitudes, and skills with specific client populations. The intern participates in as many activities as feasible in the setting that are similar to the responsibilities of an employed counselor. The purpose of Practicum/Internship is to provide realistic, relevant, and meaningful experiences.

Practicum and Internship are designed to satisfy requirements for professional training as stipulated by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accreditation standards.

II. SELECTING A SITE

Each student is responsible for selecting an appropriate site with the approval of her or his advisor. Meet with your advisor to discuss possible appropriate sites. Students are encouraged to seek practicum/internship placements that are diverse in population and opportunities for professional growth. Community diversity may include (but not be limited to) race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, urban/rural location, ability/disability status, sexual orientation, country of origin or immigrant/citizenship status, and faith or religious belief. Sites should offer opportunities for rich and varied professional growth, to include as many experiences as possible in areas related to CACREP core curricular standards. Selecting the most appropriate site depends on a number of criteria, and the student is advised to consider carefully the following guidelines.

- A. When selecting a site, you may wish to consider the type of clients with whom you will be working. Thus, you may be concerned with the following questions: Will I be exposed to a heterogeneous group of people? Will my clients be of varied socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds? Will I be able to work with client populations with different presenting problems? Will I be allowed to choose with whom I wish to work, or will I be assigned clients?
- B. Facilities also play an important role in site selection. Certain minimum standards must be met. Suitably equipped office space must be available to you to ensure counseling privacy and the ability to video record each session. Additional facilities and equipment (such as cameras, observation rooms, and computer availability) may also be site selection considerations.
- C. A major portion of one's evaluation is based upon video recordings of on-site counseling sessions. Therefore, the student is responsible for selecting a site that ensures on-site recording can be accomplished.
- D. If your site is the same as your place of employment, your Practicum/Internship activities must be new experiences that are not part of your current job responsibilities. For example, if you teach at Richwoods High School and want to complete your school counseling practicum and internship there, your practicum/internship activities must be different from your teaching responsibilities. If you are employed by the Children's Home, your practicum/internship activities must be separate from your job responsibilities.
- E. **Students may not under any circumstance transport clients when they are serving in the capacity of an intern at any Practicum or internship site or setting.**

III. SITE SUPERVISOR

The Practicum student or intern is ultimately responsible for communicating LENC departmental expectations and requirements (application procedures, assignments, taping of sessions, etc.) to the site supervisor. The following steps are suggested as a means of assuring effective communication between the student and the site supervisor.

- A. Each site supervisor will receive a letter/syllabus from the LENC office which outlines course expectations. However, the student's job is to discuss fully all departmental expectations with the site supervisor.
- B. Early in the semester, the Department will host a meeting for the site supervisors. A letter of invitation will be sent to the site supervisor, but the student should also discuss this meeting with the site supervisor.
- C. The student should be prepared to work on a number of objectives during the Practicum/Internship. These should be communicated to the site supervisor and faculty (preferably in writing). It is advisable to schedule an early meeting with the site supervisor to discuss/review these plans.
- D. As a professional courtesy, the student should provide the site supervisor with a schedule of the beginning and ending dates of the Practicum/Internship as well as dates (holidays and the like) when the student would not expect to be present at the site.
- E. At least once during the semester, the university supervisor will visit the site to meet with the site supervisor and the student. During site visits the university supervisor will discuss the intern's progress, course expectations, and may wish to observe the intern conducting one or more counseling sessions.
- F. The student must spend a minimum of one hour per week with the site supervisor in one-on-one, face to face supervision. The content of these sessions is determined jointly by the student and the site supervisor. The format of supervision will vary; some site supervisors will wish to critique videos, while others will consult with the student counselor. In any case, the student has the responsibility of making sure that she/he receives the best possible supervision. If concerns arise, the student should first talk with the site supervisor. However, if problems persist, the intern should relate such concerns to the university supervisor.
- G. Evaluations of student counselors are completed by the site supervisor once or twice a semester. The form for these evaluations should be given to the site supervisor in the beginning of the Internship so that departmental expectations are clear (see Practicum/internship packet).

IV. INSURANCE

All students are required to have professional student malpractice insurance when enrolled in Practicum and/or Internship courses. Application forms to join ACA and obtain insurance through ACA are available in the LENC office and online at the ACA website www.counseling.org. Students must have \$1,000,000-\$3,000,000 coverage. Securing insurance takes time and students should apply at least one month prior to the start date of Practicum/internship.

V. ACTIVITIES AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

A. PRACTICUM

The Practicum experience is designed and supervised by the instructors for EHC 690 and by the site supervisor. Students enrolled in Practicum are required to spend a total of 100 clock hours of Practicum activities. Of these 100 hours, a minimum of 40 hours must be in direct service work with clients appropriate to one's program of study. Of the 40 direct hours, 10 should be group counseling. An emphasis is placed on developing individual and group counseling skills. The Practicum student has one hour per week in supervision with the site supervisor, one hour per week with the University Supervisor, and two and one-half hours per week in group supervision (class time). No clinical hours may be earned until after the course has commenced (EHC 690, EHC 691 & 692).

Students are required to complete the Practicum/Internship contract by June 1. As soon as a contract is signed and returned to the LENC Department office, the student will be registered for a section of Practicum. This contract requires a signature from the site supervisor. A site supervisor evaluation is completed at the end of each semester. Students are required to keep an electronic weekly log describing their field experiences, the date of the experience, the amount of time spent and the student's comments about the experience. Weekly logs should be printed, signed by the student and site supervisor and submitted to the University supervisor on a weekly basis. Students are required to attend all individual and group supervisory meetings held during the semester.

B. INTERNSHIP

The Internship (EHC 691 & 692) is a required 1 to 6-semester hour supervised opportunity for the student to perform all the activities that a regularly employed counselor would be expected to perform. Students enrolled in Internship 1 and 2 are required to spend a total of 650 clock hours on Internship activities. Of the 650 hours, 240 hours are spent in direct service work with clients appropriate to one's program of study. Of those 240 direct hours, 60 should be group counseling. Internship I (EHC 691) students meet one hour per week with the site supervisor and one hour per week with the faculty supervisor. Internship II (EHC 692) students have one hour per week of supervision with the site supervisor and one and one-half hours every week of peer

supervision in addition to class attendance. The student will meet once during the semester with a university faculty member for individual supervision.

VI. SUPERVISION

A. Practicum

The Practicum student has one hour per week in supervision with the site supervisor, one-hour supervision per week with the University Supervisor and two and one-half hours per week of group supervision (class). The Practicum experience is designed and supervised by the instructor of the EHC 690 class and by the field site supervisor. Site supervisors are required to have

- a. A minimum of a master's degree preferably in counseling, or a related profession;
- b. Relevant certifications and/or licenses;
- c. A minimum of two years of pertinent professional experience in the specialty area in which the student is enrolled;
- d. Knowledge of the program's expectations, requirements, and evaluation procedures for students;
- e. Relevant training in counseling supervision.

The *site supervisor* is expected to acquaint the student with the site and its activities, meet weekly with the student to discuss progress, participate in an evaluation of the student, and consult with the university supervisor about the student's progress. The *university supervisor* is expected to assist the student by providing weekly individual and group supervision with other students in similar field experiences, consulting with the site supervisor about the student's progress, assuring that all required field experience forms are submitted, attending all university meetings of supervisors, assuring that all students complete competencies and submit grades for the students at the end of the semester.

B. Internship

Internship 1 students have one hour per week supervision with the site supervisor, one hour per week in faculty supervision, and two and one-half hours per week in group supervision (EHC 691 class time). For Internship 2, students participate in peer supervision for one and one half hours per week and discontinue weekly faculty supervision. The Internship *site supervisor* is expected to acquaint the student with the site and its personnel, meet once a week with the student to discuss progress, participate in a midterm and final evaluation of the student, and consult with the university supervisor about the student's progress. The *university supervisor* is expected to coordinate supervision for each student, conduct group supervision with students in similar field experiences, critique video counseling tapes for each student, consult with the site supervisor about the student's progress, assure that all required Internship forms are submitted, attend all university meetings of supervisors, assure that students complete all Internship requirements, assess student counselor competencies, and submit grades for the students at the end of the semester.

VII. PROCEDURES AND STEPS (SUMMARY)

- Step 1 Meet with your Faculty Advisor and identify possible sites. Your advisor must approve the site.
- Step 2 After deciding on a site, have the Practicum/Internship Contract signed and return it to the LENC Department office. *The deadline for returning a signed contract is June 1.* As soon as the contract is returned you will be registered for a section of Practicum.
- Step 3 Obtain professional malpractice insurance. It usually takes about one month to process an ACA insurance application.
- Step 4 Visit the site to plan with the site supervisor prior to the first week of class. Inform the site supervisor of the required meeting during the second week of class.
- Step 5 Become familiar with responsibilities and assist the site supervisor in understanding his/her responsibilities, as described in this handbook.
- Step 6 If you have an emergency situation making it impossible to proceed with the Practicum or Internship, notify the LENC office immediately. You must reapply for the semester you choose for re-admission.

SUMMARY OF HOURS REQUIRED

Practicum

40 direct hours: 10 of the 40 should be group counseling.

100 total clock hours

Internship

240 direct hours: 60 of the direct hours should be group counseling.

650 total clock hours

Direct clock hours are exactly that: direct service to clients as in one-to-one counseling, group counseling, family counseling, group presentations addressing counseling topics (conflict resolution, self-esteem, communication, etc.).

Indirect clock hours are all the activities one performs in connection with the specifics and protocols of the Practicum/ Internship site.

Students may earn clock hours in their current work setting only if they are engaging in new learning; the Practicum/internship experience must be a new experience, not simply maintenance of what the student has been doing.

Professional School Counselor students only (CACREP).

Since the Practicum is a generic skills program, that is, all LENC counseling students are expected to address and learn the same counseling skills, school counseling students do not specifically have to have a school site placement to earn the 40 supervised direct service hours and the 100 indirect hours.

During the school counselor's Internship, the student may earn up to 300 supervised direct service hours in a non-school placement provided the following conditions are met.

One, the clients must be school age children; two, the non-school site must be related to the school site; three, the student must be supervised by a school counselor who meets the site supervisor standards.

Selected State of Illinois Requirements for school counselor students

At least 3 semester hours must be earned in a supervised counseling practice providing interaction with individuals and groups of an appropriate, school-aged population.

The Practicum must include a minimum of 100 clock hours, 40 hours of which must involve direct service work with school-aged children.

At least 3 semester hours must be earned in a post-practicum Internship that provides an actual on-the-job experience in a school setting. The Internship must be a sustained, continuous, structured and supervised experience lasting for a substantial period of time in which the candidate engages in the performance of various aspects of the counseling role and is gradually introduced to the full range of responsibilities associated with that role.

CACREP requires that ALL applicants must complete an internship with a minimum of 600 clock hours, 240 hours of which must involve direct service with an appropriate clientele. "Appropriate clientele" means school-aged children, parents, teachers and other parties interested in student's welfare.

VIII. HINTS FOR SUCCESS

Each site placement is idiosyncratic, so not all of the ideas and information that follow will apply to each field experience.

- A. Dress appropriately and in accordance with existing dress codes within the site setting. Also, call the site if you will be delayed or absent. Be on time for meetings with clients and staff. You wish to be treated as a professional and need to act accordingly. Consider that dress and behavior reflect not only on the student but upon the university and future students.
- B. Select a site that is as similar as possible to the setting in which you eventually wish to work. The advantages are twofold: you will discover if you do want to work in such a setting and if so, you will make important career contacts.
- C. Select a site early to avoid last minute, unsatisfactory placement. This also reduces the risk of not meeting program approval.
- D. Go to your site at least a week before the placement officially commences. This allows time to become acquainted with your coworkers and the site's procedures.

It also provides the opportunity to learn your way around and to select and/or arrange office space. In essence, arriving ahead of schedule will permit you extra time to attend to hundreds of details before you actually are faced with the awesome task of counseling clients.

E. Take advantage of co-worker's expertise; you have built-in resources, and you must take the initiative in making the best use of your experience.

F. Become involved in a variety of on-site activities; running groups, participating in in-service workshops and staff meetings, etc. These are all unique opportunities. Not only do you gain valuable experience, but you will have a chance to discover what you do and do not enjoy about a counseling position.

G. The video recording of your counseling sessions are a primary means of assessing your progress; thus, your supervisor(s) must be able to see and hear your recording. Use of a microphone attachment will ensure adequate quality sound.

H. Clearly, the key to a successful Practicum/Internship is involvement with clients, staff, supervisors, and peers. You may get by with doing the minimum: cutting corners, avoiding risks, and not trying new behaviors. However, your experience will be exactly what you choose to make of it. What you put into the courses is what you will get back. You will never have another opportunity for such intensive supervision.

IX. PRACTICUM & INTERNSHIP SUPERVISORS

The following are some guidelines for practicing counselors who are supervising students enrolled in EHC 690 & 691/692. Site supervisors spend at least an hour a week in direct supervision with the student. During Practicum, the university supervisor will also be spending an hour a week with each student. As compensation for their time, leadership and skill, the University offers CEUs for the Practicum and for the Internship site supervisor for attending the fall training orientation. There is a difference in emphasis between the Practicum and the Internship that will make some difference in the activities and the amount of time spent on certain activities depending on which class the student is taking. The Practicum stresses counseling skills. Individual and small group counseling activities should be the focus of the major part of the time the student spends on site. Other activities may be included in the student's experience, however the bulk of the time should be directed toward individual and group counseling. The Internship focuses on the range of services provided by the counselor. It is appropriate for the student to be involved in the variety of services the counselor provides including consultation, coordination, etc.

Also site supervisors work in consultation on a regular schedule with a counselor education program faculty member in accordance with the supervision agreement.

X. SUGGESTIONS FOR SITE SUPERVISORS

A. Provide the student counselor with an orientation to the agency or school, faculty and staff. Introduce the student and show her or him the ins and outs of the site. Explain any unique features of the site and the population it serves.

B. For the first week or two let the student observe you as much as possible in counseling situations. Discuss with the student your personal orientation and any specific procedures that the student should be aware of working in your school or agency setting.

C. When you feel that the student is ready, help her or him get started working directly with clients. One way to do this, and to check the student's readiness to work with your clients, is to begin by co-leading a group or two.

D. When you feel that students are ready for more independence, we would like them to have the opportunity to work with individual clients and to lead groups as the primary counselor. The first individual and or group the student counselor works with should be "normal" with a developmental emphasis. As the student gains skills and confidence, more challenging situations may be appropriate.

E. It would be helpful for you to provide feedback to the student as often as possible. We require at least two formal evaluation sessions with the student, one at midterm and the second at the end of the semester. This will enable the student to work on any specific weaknesses the two of you discover in your work together and will allow the student time to work with the university supervisor to improve skills as well.

F. Please feel free to contact the university supervisor at any time if you have any questions or need clarification.

G. The university supervisor will arrange site visits through the student counselor. The university supervisor will visit the site once during the Practicum and once during the Internship. During the visits the university supervisor might wish to observe the student working with clients. The university supervisor is available for site visits as needed to help the student and the site supervisor during the semester.

H. Student counselors will be required to complete interview notes for each individual and group session at some sites. They will also be asked to maintain a log of their activities and the time they spend in each activity. They should also complete any forms or paperwork you require for the normal administration of duties performed by the student counselor.

I. The student counselor is encouraged to join and participate in the state and national associations that promote counseling and the counseling profession. Students are required to have liability insurance before they begin to work independently in your site.

J. Grades for the class are given by the instructor for the course. Your input is a major part of the consideration in the grading process. Please be sure to return your evaluation form at the end of the semester or contact the university supervisor for an oral report.

APPENDIX – Forms used during Practicum and Internship on Sakai: *ENC Clinical Info*