

Lewis & Clark College

**Professional Mental Health & Addiction Counseling Program
Practicum Manual
2014-15**

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The two-semester PMHC-A practicum program is designed to provide an intensively supervised beginning clinical counseling experience for Lewis & Clark graduate students. The first semester of the PMHC-A practicum experience is spent solely at the Lewis & Clark Community Counseling Center (L&C CCC). The second semester is a dual placement experience with students continuing their placements at the L&C CCC and additionally being placed at one of our many participating practicum/internship sites. The assigned PMHC-A program days at the L&C CCC are Thursday or Friday and all students can expect to be present 6-8 hours per week at the clinic on their assigned class days.

Practicum students have been trained in basic counseling skills, including the consistent use of micro-skills as well as a basic understanding of client issues. Students have also taken classes in: Introduction to Professional Counseling, Law and Ethics, Counseling Theories, Family Theories, Diagnosis, Group Counseling, Diverse Populations, and usually both of the two required Treatment Planning courses. The practicum provides for the development of counseling skills under supervision. Successful completion of the practicum requires adequate demonstration of the basic counseling competencies and skills, and completion of required hours. Students must complete a supervised practicum experience that totals a minimum of 100 clock hours to be completed during their two semesters of placements. The student's practicum includes all of the following that apply for both L&C CCC and second semester community placements:

1. 40 hours of direct service with clients, including experience in individual counseling and group work;
2. during practicum I (L&C CCC placement only) each student receives an average of three (3) hours per week of group supervision that is provided on a regular schedule over the course of the student's practicum by a program faculty member or a supervisor under the supervision of a program faculty member; and
3. during practicum II at L&C CCC each student receives one (1) hour per week of individual and/or triadic supervision and an average of two (2) hours per week of group related interaction and supervision. Additionally, each student receives one (1) hour per week of individual supervision at their community site which occurs regularly over the academic term by a program faculty member or a qualified site;
4. evaluation of the student's performance throughout the practicum including a formal evaluation after the student completes each semester of the practicum.

The practicum is the initial clinical experiential component of the PMHC-A degree program. It provides the opportunity to develop the therapeutic relationship and basic counseling competencies under intensive supervision from CPSY faculty and qualified site supervisors. Placements in community mental health agencies or school settings allow the acquisition of training and knowledge working directly with clients from the community.

During the two semester practicum experience, students spend at least 100 hours performing activities associated with the practicum. The actual number of hours spent at L&C CCC and the community practicum site may vary according to the needs of the site and the student, with the understanding that at least 40 hours consist of direct service with clients. The amount of required paperwork, training and meetings, and the typical no-show rate of clients are site characteristics impacting number of hours spent at the site. Student characteristics influencing the number of hours include: ability to work independently, time needed to complete case notes and other paperwork, and the amount of time spent in consultation with colleagues.

PRACTICUM REQUIREMENTS

Direct Service Hours

The following requirements were established by PMHC-A Program faculty and standards set forth by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. A total time commitment of at least 100 hours is needed to complete the practicum. Typically, first semester practicum counselors can expect to spend between 6-8 hours per week at L&C CCC, and in their second dual placement semester an additional 8-10 hours at their community based site. These hours are divided into the following activities: direct service, supervision, and “other” activities. The following table shows a breakdown of the number of hours associated with each type of activity. Definitions of these different types of hours are provided below the table.

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	HOURS REQUIRED Total 2-semesters
Direct Service	40
Supervision L&C CCC	45 (group only practicum I)
On-site	45 (15 individual & 30 group, practicum II)
	15 (15 individual, practicum II)
Other Hours	varies
Total Hours	at least 100

Direct Service: Face-to-face interaction with clients either individually, in groups (including psycho-educational groups or human development skills training), in consultation, or in other activities involving working with clients. Fifteen hours should be in group work.

Supervision: At community sites at least one hour of supervision a week **must** be face-to-face individual supervision with the site supervisor. The L&C CCC practicum I class provides an additional three hours of group supervision per week and practicum II three (3) hours per week of individual and group supervision.

Other Hours: Activities such as observation, training, attending staff meetings, completing paperwork, assigned homework, outside reading.

Students may begin their practicum after a faculty advisor has signed off on their completion of all prerequisite courses, the Professional Development Portfolio, and a national criminal background check. The practicum placement may start at the beginning of any semester and will typically be followed immediately by the two semesters of internship.

Although students may begin to accrue training hours at their sites just prior to beginning classes, they **may not** count direct service hours until they are receiving supervision at L&C CCC. Students who complete their direct service hours prior to the end of the practicum semesters are required to continue working at their site until the end of the term, as per the practicum contract.

Supervision

Individual Supervision: Practicum students are required to obtain a minimum of one hour of on-site individual supervision per week. There may also be the opportunity to take part in group supervision offered at the site.

Practicum Class/Group Supervision: Students are required to register for and attend a weekly class at the L&C CCC during both of their practicum semesters. The class focuses on skill acquisition, additional supervision, consultation, support, feedback, and allows for evaluation of the practicum counselor's clinical work and professional growth.

Given the clinical nature of the practicum experience, students are expected to demonstrate professionalism in supporting classmates, accepting and giving constructive feedback, and showing openness to supervision. Students missing more than one class session per semester will be assigned appropriate make-up work by the L&C CCC practicum supervisor. Additionally, more than two unexcused absences may require a faculty review. Given the need for continuity of care for clients it is strongly advised to be present for all counseling sessions when and if possible.

Paperwork

Practicum Agreement: There are two practicum agreements: 1) first and second semester at L&C CCC; and, 2) second semester only at the community based placement. Students are required to read and understand the practicum agreement between Lewis & Clark and their respective sites. Prior to beginning their placement at the community site, practicum counselors are required to meet with their site supervisors to complete and sign the signature page of the agreement. This document outlines the objectives, duties, and responsibilities of the practicum placement and provides information essential for evaluation and supervision.

Students are expected to adhere to the provisions of the practicum agreement including:

- specified duties
- duration of contract
- number of practicum hours per week
- location

If significant changes to the provisions of the agreement occur, an amended agreement must be completed and filed with the department.

Proof of Insurance: Students are required to provide proof that they personally have professional liability insurance by providing the department a photocopy of the certificate page of the policy.

- Becoming a student member of the American Counseling Association enables one to obtain malpractice insurance at no cost.
- Students failing to provide proof of insurance will not be allowed to see clients at their practicum site.

Criminal Background Checks: All students will have completed a national criminal background check during their first year of graduate study. Also, many sites require an additional background check prior to the start of the practicum placement.

Documentation of Practicum Hours: Students are required to document the time spent in activities related to the practicum. Both Daily/Weekly Record Forms and the Semester Summary Report of Practicum Hours must be turned in by the end of the semester.

Evaluation of the Practicum Experience: Practicum counselor performance is continuously monitored and evaluated by both the L&C CCC and community site supervisors. Formal written evaluation of each student's performance is required at the end of each semester of the practicum placement.

Students are evaluated according to competency guidelines and outcome assessments for the development of clinical skills and professional counselor qualities. These competencies reflect the mission and training philosophy of the PMHC-A Program and are aligned with competencies established by the Council for Accreditation in Counseling and Related Educational Programs.

In this evaluation process, it is important to keep in mind that the PMHC-A Program frames all therapeutic work as connected to the broader project of recognizing and addressing issues of social justice. This means that factors such as the following are acknowledged as essential in considering how the forces of power and oppression impact the well-being of each individual and the relationships in their lives: physical ability, culture, race/ethnicity, social and political forces, socioeconomic status, exile/migration, religious and spiritual beliefs, language, education, gender, sexual orientation and age.

This evaluation form can be found with the other clinical forms on the PMHC-A website under "Evaluations, Forms, and Handbooks." The evaluations are used to generate a dialogue between student and supervisor about the student's training and professional growth. If students are not making adequate progress in their practicum work, the site supervisor will first discuss this with the student and if needed, notify the campus supervisor to devise a plan for student support.

All hours reports and evaluations should be turned in to the practicum counselor's L&C CCC supervisor at the end of each semester or, if not available, to the Counseling Psychology office.

Videotapes and Live Supervision

Students will be provided the opportunity for audio/video taping and/or live supervision. It is required that at least one taped recording or observation of the student working with a client be made during the semester. An alternative to this is a transcribed audiotape as well as live supervision observed by the site supervisor.

PRACTICUM AGREEMENT

A practicum placement and its fulfillment involves not only the interests of the practicum counselor, but also the interests of the L&C CCC, host agency/school, the site supervisor, clients of the agency/school, and the relationship of mutual support and accountability between the host agency/school and the PMHC-A Program. Important aspects of these relationships are outlined below. Agencies, practicum counselors, and Lewis & Clark College agree to the provisions detailed below. On the final page of this agreement all parties sign off on the particulars of the agreement; this document serves as a contract between all parties.

Practicum Site Settings

Approved sites accepting graduate student counselors from Lewis & Clark offer sufficient structure and stability to allow practicum counselors to complete their practicum requirements at the site within one semester. This includes providing appropriate training and supervision to ensure client welfare and enhance student learning.

Sites will provide:

- Access to a client caseload appropriate for a beginning level student counselor, and sufficient to provide a minimum of 40 direct client contact hours with an average of three client contact hours per week throughout the duration of the contract.
- A qualified supervisor on site during all times when a practicum counselor is meeting with clients. If the primary supervisor is not available, a qualified back-up supervisor must be available at the location where the practicum counselor is meeting with the client.
- Orientation to the site with written documentation and pre-service training to ensure student understanding of agency policies and procedures including:
 - Agency administrative and supervisory organization
 - Client assignment and scheduling
 - Clerical support available
 - Paperwork and documentation expectations
 - Protocols for reporting abuse
 - Crisis response process for client(s) considered to be a danger to self or others (including suicide assessment supervisory support)
 - Confidentiality procedures/release of information/consent for treatment
 - Acquainting practicum counselors with culture and norms of setting.

- Support from the site administration to foster a learning environment. This includes support for site supervisors to provide adequate time for appropriate supervision as outlined in the section on supervision expectations. Although this requires a minimum of one hour per week of individual supervision, it is expected that supervisors may need additional time to track client caseload and welfare.
- Opportunities for the practicum counselor to develop professional relationships with peers, experienced counselors, supervisors, and related agency personnel through training, case staffings, and other agency activities.
- Ability to videotape client sessions for review during on-campus faculty supervision.
- An adequate workspace in which practicum counselors can schedule time to see clients on a regular basis.
- In cases where changes to the agreement need to be made, a request to the Lewis & Clark faculty supervisor to make any changes in the agreement including work location, supervisor, practicum counselor hours or expectations. Any changes must be approved by Lewis & Clark prior to the change and will be appropriately documented.

Site Supervision

An important aspect of the practicum experience is the supervision on site and at L&C CCC. The supervisor's role is to consult with the practicum counselor about clients as well as provide ongoing feedback about counseling skills. Additionally, ethical principles mandate that the primary responsibility of all supervisors is to ensure the welfare of clients. This means that client welfare takes precedence over the needs of student counselors.

Consistent with supervision expectations outlined by licensing agencies, site supervisors are responsible for direct supervision to ensure client care. Faculty supervisors will typically not have the access to client data needed to manage client care directly. Along with the primary responsibility of ensuring the welfare of clients, the expectations of site supervisors are outlined below.

Site Supervisor Qualifications

- A master's degree in counseling, social work, or a related field
- Licensure in chosen discipline (preferred)
- A minimum of two years of post-degree counseling experience
- Training and experience in supervising students is strongly preferred. However, in lieu of previous training and experience, consideration will be given for the following:
 - Enrolling in the Lewis & Clark continuing education course in supervision during the first semester the student is on site
 - Supervision of supervision: the site supervisor will receive regular supervision of their supervision of the practicum counselor

- A familiarity with, and adherence to, the ethical code of the American Counseling Association
- Familiarity and compliance with the Lewis & Clark Professional Mental Health Counseling – Addictions program Practicum policies as outlined in the Agreement
- Familiarity and compliance with the practicum practices and policies as outlined in this Manual

Site Supervisors will provide:

- Individual supervision for a minimum of one regularly scheduled hour per week. Group supervision time cannot replace individual supervision but may be used for additional supervisory time.
- Supervision appropriate for the developmental level of the practicum counselor including:
 - Consultation with the practicum counselor to develop individual learning goals
 - Client screening and assignment according to student competency level and individual learning goals
 - Monitoring client caseload for risk and reassigning clients if necessary
 - Helping the student learn to manage caseloads
 - Supervision and training in ethics and law as issues arise with clients
 - Regular review of work samples (video and/or audio tape), case notes, and treatment plans
 - Supervisory experiences to assist the student in applying basic counseling skills and developing new skills
 - Assistance in developing ability to apply theory to practice including case conceptualization and treatment planning
 - Ongoing evaluation and feedback to practicum counselors to facilitate professional growth of the practicum counselor
 - Communication with faculty supervisor as needed
- Formal written evaluation of the development of basic counseling competencies. This includes:
 - Completing the evaluation forms at the end of the term
 - Reviewing evaluations with the practicum counselor
 - Reviewing and signing off on the student's documentation of practicum hours

L&C CCC Supervision

The L&C CCC practicum supervisor's role is to provide clinical supervision to students for direct client service provision, issues of ethics, standards of care, student counselor growth and development, case conceptualization, treatment planning, development of theoretical orientation and other relevant topics. As a representative of the PMHC-A Program and Lewis & Clark College, the faculty practicum supervisor's primary responsibility is to assure the welfare of the clients at L&C CCC and supervise the clinical training of the practicum students. The student's performance at the L&C CCC is continuously monitored and evaluated by both the practicum supervisor and, while the needs of the practicum counselor are always important, client welfare will always be the primary concern.

The faculty practicum supervisor is the instructor of record for the practicum class and is a faculty member (either roster or adjunct) of the PMHC-A Program.

Practicum class requirements and course content may vary according to instructor, but they have a common set of learning goals and objectives, with comparable emphases and quantity of requirements.

L&C CCC Practicum Supervisors will provide:

- Weekly class meeting/group and individual supervision with practicum students. Contents will include:
 - Supervision of group feedback on client issues
 - Discussions, support, and supervision for practicum counselors in their development as counselors
 - Understanding the supervision process and determining appropriate professional and personal content (boundaries) in supervision, such as issues of professional development, countertransference, and personal content appropriate for supervision
- Coordination of the practicum experience at L&C CCC, and the student practicum counselors, including:
 - Conflict resolution consistent with ethical standards of the counseling profession
 - Scheduling
 - Contract changes (e.g., practicum counselor hours, location, supervisor, etc.)
 - Monitoring of practicum counselor progress toward completion of the practicum requirements
- Regular ongoing feedback to the student. This includes giving feedback and voicing any concerns about stress levels and/or emotional well-being. In some cases, the practicum student may be required to limit or suspend his/her practicum placement. This decision is the responsibility of the faculty practicum supervisor in consultation with the Clinical Director.
- Periodic review of practicum counselor work samples including videotape, audiotape, and written case summaries to ensure that the student has developed basic counseling competencies.
- Final evaluation of practicum counselor performance for purposes of meeting standards and requirements for the PMHC-A Program, including both the awarding of academic credit and the approval of the student's move to the internship level. Determination of the successful completion of practicum will be based on demonstration of adequate skills and counselor competencies, and adherence to ethical standards and appropriate resolution of ethical dilemmas. These expectations will be evaluated as evidenced by: adequate ratings on the evaluation forms from the on-site supervisor, observations of work samples including video and written work, observations from the site visit, verbal reports from officials and supervisors at the site, and supervision content and observations in campus supervision.

PMHC-A Program Responsibilities

The department's primary responsibility is to ensure appropriate training of students through monitoring quality of training experiences.

The PMHC-A Program will provide:

- Evaluation and approval of practicum/internship sites and supervisors
- Approval of appropriate placements of students
- Appropriate academic supervision
- Tracking of paperwork for the practicum placement
- Cooperation and consultation with site regarding student progress, possible conflicts, or impairment (including decisions regarding modification of duties or the termination of the placement)
- Intervention consistent with ethical guidelines of the profession in cases where the faculty practicum supervisor believes that there is an ethical dilemma around client care or agency/student relationships, and the matter has not been successfully resolved in a less formal manner.

Practicum Student Responsibilities

The primary purpose of the practicum is for students to gain supervised practice and clinical experience to help develop and integrate the skills necessary to become professional counselors. Important aspects of the student's role and responsibilities are highlighted below:

Welfare of Clients: The basic assumption underlying all agreements between students and host agencies/schools is that the primary responsibility of all involved is to ensure the welfare of clients. Client welfare always comes before practicum counselor needs.

Counselors in Training: The student's primary role as a practicum counselor is as a "counselor in training" and therefore as a member of the staff at the agency. However, it is important to remember that student counselors are temporary and often novice members of that staff.

Being a Supervisee: Another important aspect of being a practicum counselor is the role of supervisee – a person who is open and receptive to the comments and critiques of his/her work by the on-site supervisor and the faculty practicum supervisor.

- The role of counselor in training requires the student to demonstrate a willingness to be supervised and to receive the supervision provided by both the on-site supervisor and the faculty practicum supervisor. This includes:
 - Developing an understanding of the scope and purpose of supervision
 - Engaging in a working alliance with on-site and college supervisors

- Attending all supervision sessions on-site and at the college
- Accurately communicating content and scope of counseling sessions in supervision
- Maintaining an openness to feedback in supervision, and following through on directives of supervisors
- Willingness to videotape interactions with clients and receive feedback on taped interactions
- Seeking supervision in a timely manner about individuals who are at risk (full disclosure to supervisors of risks to client welfare)

Training: Practicum counselors are expected to participate in ongoing staff development, meetings, and administrative duties at their site.

Records: Practicum counselors maintain records in accordance with agency/school norms. If the setting does not require the keeping of records, students are still obligated to do so in keeping with the Code of Ethics of the American Counseling Association.

- The requirements for maintaining records are as follows:
 - At a minimum, a record of the name, date, and type of activity; a brief description of the activity; and note of any unusual occurrences must be kept. This holds true for both individual and group activities.
 - Use of the forms supplied with this manual to keep track of practicum hours and activities while on site. Ultimately, copies of these records will be turned in to the department and kept on file.
- It is important that students keep copies of all practicum hours and have them readily available. Accurate documentation of practicum hours may be needed when applying for licensure.

Work Samples: At least once per term, students are expected to present either a videotaped session of their work with a client or be observed by their faculty practicum supervisor during a live clinic session

- The presentations are often stressful. The expectation is not that practicum counselors are able to present a “perfect” counseling session. Rather, reviewing the session provides an opportunity for the faculty practicum supervisor to assess skills directly and to give specific feedback to further professional development. Additionally, students in the practicum class learn by viewing and giving constructive feedback about each other’s work samples.
- The faculty practicum supervisor may require additional videotaped sessions if more work samples are needed in order to adequately evaluate skills.

Additional Responsibilities: Expectations of student counselors also include the following:

- Adopting an attitude of attending to client welfare as a counselor’s primary responsibility
- Adhering to the ethical standards of the American Counseling Association

- Adhering to the legal mandates of the state of Oregon or Washington
- Consistent and punctual attendance at all work and training activities on site
- Following agency policies
- Appropriate client termination or transfer
- Maintaining appropriate documentation as outlined by the site and the college confidentiality guidelines
- Maintaining personal liability insurance (\$1 million per occurrence, \$3 million aggregate)
- Following detailed expectations as outlined in this manual
- Completion of **all** documentation at end of practicum

Problems/Conflicts at Community Sites

If problems arise at the practicum site, the faculty practicum supervisor and the site supervisor will work with the student to develop a strategy to solve them. In the event of a conflict between the student and the site supervisor, deference will be given to the supervisor's knowledge and experience. Final decisions concerning problem/conflict resolution are the responsibility of the faculty practicum supervisor.

Changing Practicum Placements: Requests to prematurely change or end a practicum must be approved by the faculty practicum supervisor and the Clinical Director. The final decision must meet all relevant ethical and professional standards.

- Any student who considers leaving a practicum before the full practicum contract is fulfilled and the practicum is complete must proceed in a careful, step-by-step process of consultation and evaluation. This process includes:
 - Consultation with the faculty practicum supervisor and the Clinical Director or faculty member designated by the department chair
 - Disclosure of all relevant information from the beginning of any such consideration and continuing to disclose fully and consult until the matters are resolved
 - A good faith attempt to resolve the issues at the practicum site with the help and guidance of the faculty practicum supervisor
 - A willingness to abide by the decisions made by the faculty practicum instructor and Clinical Director about how to proceed in resolving the issues
- In discussing issues with the site supervisor or other site representative, it is essential that the interests of the site supervisor, the host agency, and clients be given full consideration.
 - Further, in initiating any such discussion, the student should avoid an approach that ends the possibilities of a positive resolution and continuation of the practicum before all

relevant considerations have been carefully weighed and discussed with the faculty practicum supervisor and Clinical Director, and the host agency and supervisor.

- Final resolution and decision regarding the status of the student at the placement is the responsibility of the faculty practicum supervisor.

Removal from a Practicum Placement: In some cases, students are asked to leave their placement early.

- Students removed from a placement will be required to take some time out from seeing clients and engage in reflective activities as determined by the faculty practicum supervisor and the Clinical Director. These activities may include:
 - Therapy
 - Medical care
 - Volunteer work
 - Other personal growth experiences

Students removed from a placement may not seek another placement until instructed to do so by the faculty practicum supervisor and the Clinical Director.

LEGAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES

Students are expected to practice within the Code of Ethics of the American Counseling Association and follow the laws affecting their practicum placement. Students must know and understand the ethical code and be aware of the laws affecting their practice before beginning to see clients.

As counselors in training, practicum counselors must tell clients that they are students under supervision and provide the client with the contact information for the supervisor.

Relevant Issues For Practicum Counselors

Competence: The ACA guidelines for an ethical practice mandate that counselors practice within their areas of competence. Competence is demonstrated by obtaining education and supervised practice. Students must complete all of the academic prerequisites for the practicum, including all courses in diagnosis and treatment, before beginning their practicum.

Informed Consent: Informed consent must be given by clients. An informed consent form must be signed either before seeing clients or during the first session.

Limits of Confidentiality: During the first session with a client, practicum counselors must discuss limits of confidentiality. These include:

- Reporting child abuse or neglect, elder abuse, or dependent adult abuse
- Reporting clients' intent to do harm to themselves or others

- Releasing records in a legal proceeding in response to a judge's order
- Testifying in a court case where a client's mental state is a condition of the case
- Notifying parents (as soon as it is therapeutically feasible) of treatment rendered to a child over 14 years of age who has legally consented to treatment without parental consent
- Discussion of the client with the on-site supervisor and/or the faculty practicum supervisor during individual and group supervision

Dual Relationships: Dual role relationships are to be avoided as it is inappropriate to engage in relationships other than therapeutic ones with your clients. This means:

- Practicum counselors are not permitted to socialize in any manner with a client
- Practicum counselors are not permitted to use their personal vehicles to transport clients

Disclosure of HIV Status: Oregon and Washington laws prohibit disclosure of an individual's HIV status without written permission. This includes disclosing a client's status to the supervisor(s).

Consulting with Colleagues and Obtaining Supervision

Students are expected to understand and follow ethical guidelines, and to seek supervision when there is confusion or an ethical dilemma to be resolved. Ethical decision-making involves consultation and using the advice pooled from numerous sources. If an ethical concern related to the practicum arises, the student should discuss it with the site supervisor. Additional support or guidance can be gained by raising the issue in the practicum class. Regardless of the setting, collaboration is an important part of the process.

The student must inform both the on-site supervisor and the faculty supervisor in the event that an ethical error is made so that steps can be taken to minimize harm to clients. Failure to follow ethical guidelines, disclose ethical errors, and/or seek appropriate supervision may result in dismissal from the practicum and/or Counseling Psychology program.

SELF-CARE

Practicum can be a stressful time. Sometimes students find themselves in emotional turmoil resulting from listening to the concerns of so many people. It is important to **make** time and **take** time for self-care.

Concerns About Self: Practicum counselors concerned about their level of stress and/or emotional well-being should consider:

- Being more attentive to personal needs
- Addressing concerns with their site supervisor and/or the faculty practicum supervisor
- Seeking out therapy to help resolve issues brought up by practicum experiences
- Limiting or suspending the practicum if the distress continues

Concerns About Peers: Practicum counselors concerned about the level of stress and/or emotional well-being of another practicum student should:

- Approach the student directly and express their concern
- Encourage the student to follow the steps for self-care outlined above, including discussing problems with the faculty practicum supervisor
- In the case of continuing concern about a peer's welfare, if it seems that the faculty practicum supervisor is not aware of the problem, discussing your concerns with the faculty practicum supervisor

SECURING A PRACTICUM PLACEMENT

Although advisors and other faculty and staff members at Lewis & Clark can provide guidance regarding practicum selection, students are ultimately responsible for contacting sites and securing practicum placements.

Students are not allowed worksite placements or multiple site placements for practicum.

Beginning the Process

Most students secure a clinical placement for a three-semester period, the first of which is the practicum. During the three to six months prior to the start of their practicum, students will have explored the approved sites listed in the CPSY Sites database; consulted with advisors, other instructors and the Placement Coordinator; and set up interviews at two or more potential placement sites.

Some students complete their practicum at a site where they will not be continuing on for two semesters of internship. In this case, they may undertake the search for practicum and internship placements at the same time, or they may begin the internship search at the beginning of their practicum semester.

The practicum-internship placement may begin at the start of summer, fall or spring semester.

Additional resources to help students prepare for and choose a placement include:

- Speaking with students currently in practicum or internship settings
- Obtaining assistance with resumes or cover letters from the Writing Studio at Lewis & Clark
- Attending the annual Internship Fair

Questions to Help Guide Selection

The first question to ask about a placement is whether it provides the opportunity to gain the experiences required for the practicum. A second question is whether a satisfactory working relationship can be established with the site-based supervisor. Additional questions to consider are:

- Does the site offer general experience or work with a specific population?
- Will the site provide the practicum counselor the opportunity to work with a specific population of interest? (For example, couples, families, groups, adolescents, schools, inpatient, etc.)
- Can the site assure enough clients to fulfill the required number of direct client contact hours?
- Is the site part of a large or small agency?
- Does the site have many practicum or internship counselors from different disciplines and programs or just one or two student counselors?
- What relationship has been established with the on-site supervisor? Does s/he facilitate a safe learning atmosphere? Will s/he provide the desired type of supervision?
- Does the site make provisions for adequate coverage in times of emergency?

Accepting a Practicum Position

It is unprofessional to make commitments to multiple practicum sites when intending to only work at one. Therefore, any intent to explore other options must be clearly communicated. Accepting more than one placement is unethical and is damaging to all parties. If a mistake or misunderstanding happens, the student should take steps to rectify the situation immediately.

Finalizing the Practicum Placement

Once a practicum placement has been accepted, a Placement Plan Approval Request form must be completed and turned in to the CPSY office. The purpose of the Approval Request form is for the Clinical Director to do a final evaluation of the chosen site and approve it as **the** practicum placement for a particular student. It is only after this evaluation that the placement at a site is “officially” approved. Most of the time, placements are approved without difficulty, but approval is **not** automatic. In some cases, this requirement may be waived by permission of the PMHC-A director. See the CPSY website for Placement Plan Approval Request and other forms.

- The primary factors impacting the approval of a placement are:
 - Sufficient opportunity for direct client contact hours
 - The specific qualifications of the site supervisor
 - The quality and availability of on-site supervision including the availability of a secondary supervisor to cover your supervision in the event that the primary supervisor is away
 - The stability of the site

- The match between the site and the student is also an important consideration when approving a practicum placement.

After the student receives notification that the placement is approved (and only **after** it is approved) a practicum contract may be signed by the student and the site supervisor. The Practicum Contract (the signature page of the actual Practicum Agreement) specifies the activities/responsibilities of the practicum counselor, the dates of the practicum agreement and the number of hours the student is expected to be on-site. Contracts are due in the CPSY office six weeks prior to the start of the practicum semester.

In the event of significant changes at the practicum site, such as changes in the types of activities, the hours spent on-site, or a change in site supervisors, an amended contract must be completed and be on file with the CPSY office.

Placement at a site becomes “official” only after all forms have been submitted and approved by the Clinical Director.

Signed practicum contracts, proof of insurance, and completed Clinical Pre-Approval form are due no later than six weeks prior to the start of the semester.

The student may schedule training, orientation and “shadowing” activities at the practicum site prior to the start of the term, but there may be no direct client contact until the semester has begun.

Under no circumstances will anyone who does not have all of their paperwork on file be allowed to see clients or attend the practicum class; and any student who has an incomplete in a class which is a prerequisite for practicum will not be able to start the placement.

Counseling Psychology Department Policy for Practicum and Internship Extenders

This policy applies to all students in practicum and internship. Students in practica and internships in schools will follow the regular school year for their districts as indicated by their contracts, however they will still need to follow the policy of being continuously enrolled in a supervision course.

For students who need to extend their practicum or internship past the end of a semester, they have the following options:

- For extensions up to four weeks past the end of a final semester (but no more than FOUR WEEKS), students must register for a zero credit practicum or internship course in order to continue to count hours towards their practicum or internship. Students must join an existing campus-based practicum or internship section for weekly supervision until they complete their practicum or internship hours.
- For extensions of more than four weeks, students must register for, attend, and participate in a full semester of practicum or internship (3 semester hours for PMHC & PMHC-A, 4 semester hours for MCFT).

- All students must obtain permission from the clinical coordinator before any extension is granted. Registration must be completed prior to the end of the semester for which the extension will be required.
- The clinical coordinator will assign campus practicum or internship sections to all extending students. Students must not assume that they will continue in the same practicum or internship section.

NECESSARY FORMS FOR THE PRACTICUM

Many forms are required to be submitted as students prepare for and complete their practicum experience. These forms can be divided into three categories: forms related to the process of securing the practicum, forms related to registering for the practicum, and forms related to the documentation and evaluation of the practicum experience. These forms are described below. This list of forms can be used as an itemized checklist to ensure that all proper paperwork has been completed and submitted in a timely manner.

Forms Related to Securing the Practicum

As stated above, all of the forms and information regarding the placement at a practicum site must be submitted to the PMHC-A Program **prior** to beginning the practicum.

Placement Plan Approval Request Form: Each site and site supervisor must be reviewed and approved as an appropriate placement for the practicum counselor. This form should be submitted to the CPSY office no later than six weeks prior to the start of the placement. In the unlikely event that a placement plan is not approved, notification will be given as soon as possible.

Practicum Agreement and Contract: This contract outlines the objectives, duties, and responsibilities of the placement as well as the specific dates of the practicum. Three copies of the signed form should be made. The original is kept by the site supervisor, one copy is submitted to the CPSY department office, and one copy is kept in the practicum counselor's records.

Professional Liability Insurance Confirmation: A photocopy of the Professional Liability Insurance certificate must be submitted by 30 days prior to the start of the placement.

Practicum Registration Approval

Registration for the Practicum class (and therefore practicum placement) is contingent upon successful completion of all course prerequisites and all portfolio requirements, reviewed by an advisor. The advisor also reviews the criminal background check result and signed Ethical Guidelines. A copy of the Clinical Pre-Approval Form, signed by an advisor, must be on file in the CPSY office prior to the student's registration for the practicum class.

CPSY office staff will initiate the process of practicum class assignment by distributing the Class Preference form to all upcoming practicum counselors. The Clinical Director, in consultation with

practicum class instructors, will determine assignments. When all paperwork is complete, office staff will give electronic permission for students to register.

Evaluation of the Practicum

The following forms and information are necessary to document and evaluate practicum experiences and are to be submitted at various points during and after the practicum. The use of these forms will be explained in more detail by the faculty practicum supervisor; all forms are available on the CPSY website.

Record of Hours: Direct, supervision, and other. To be completed weekly by the practicum counselor.

Evaluation Forms: For the site supervisor to complete at the end of each semester.

Semester Summary Report of Practicum Hours: To be completed at the end of the semester, summarizing hours for the semester.