

# SCHOOL COUNSELING PRACTICUM

## SUPERVISOR HANDBOOK

DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELING & SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

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*the power of learning*

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Dear Potential Practicum Supervisors:

Thank you for in advance for providing a vital practicum component for the counseling program at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls! The practicum student who is applying to your district for placement has completed, or will complete this semester, the core courses and is ready to engage in the culminating activity for master's level counseling students. They have been prepared to integrate and to apply counseling theories and skills, in actual counseling situations, under the supervision of an experienced counselor.

For the practicum student, this is an opportunity to refine one's counseling skills; to experience a real employment setting; to build professional contacts with practicing counselors and other community professionals and resources; to gain confidence in one's ability to function as a professional counselor; and, finally, to begin to identify needs and to envision one's own contribution to the counseling profession.

For the on-site supervisor participating in practicum offers the opportunity to make a contribution by enhancing the skills and the knowledge of beginning counselors; to reflect on how and why one's school engages in the profession of counseling as it does; to offer suggestions to the university counseling faculty for improved preparation of counselors; and finally, to be revitalized by the enthusiasm of the beginning professional.

If you need any further information please feel free to contact me at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, Department of Counseling and School Psychology (715-425-3890 or [mark.gillen@uwrif.edu](mailto:mark.gillen@uwrif.edu)).

I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Mark Gillen, PhD  
Practicum Coordinator

## UW-RF EXPECTATIONS OF PRACTICUM SITES AND SUPERVISORS

### **I. Practicum sites must be able to provide a student with the following:**

1. opportunities for both observation and counseling; and
2. opportunities to engage in all, or most of, the following areas:
  - a. individual counseling
  - b. group counseling
  - c. family /consultation
  - d. educational/developmental activities
  - e. staffing of clients/students
  - f. consultation with other professionals
  - g. evaluation of services and program development
  - h. report writing and other administrative tasks
  - i. testing/assessment
  - j. provide experiences with diverse client population including ELL students

**It is recognized that *not every site* provides the opportunity for all of these activities, but it is our intent that practicum students experience a broad variety of the tasks performed by counselors. Students need to have experience in all these activities by the time they complete their experiences at *all of their multiple sites*.**

### **II. Practicum supervisors are expected to:**

1. hold a degree/license/certification in the area of expertise sought by the practicum student; **in schools it is mandatory that the supervising school counselor hold a valid license for the level of school counseling at which they are providing supervision;**
2. be willing and able to observe the student and offer regular feedback;
3. be willing and able to allow regular time to consult with the student;
4. be willing and able to meet with the student and the university supervisor at least twice to discuss the progress of the practicum. This will be done at the practicum site and at the convenience of the on-site supervisor; and,
5. be willing to provide a written evaluation of the student over the course of the practicum.

### **III. Practicum students are expected to meet the following requirements before beginning practicum.**

1. Successfully complete all core counseling courses; remove any incompletes in those courses;
2. Successfully complete the program's written comprehensive exam;
3. Participate in Group informational meetings at least one semester before registering for practicum.

Final department approval of all students registering for practicum is required, and it often takes time to identify a practicum site that will meet the needs of the practicum student;

4. Identification, with the assistance of the practicum coordinator, of a practicum site that will meet the university's expectations for a practicum site, as well as the needs of the individual student.

- **This site will not ordinarily be identical with the work site of the student.**
  - Approved practicum sites will provide a variety of counseling experiences;
  - Allow the student to function as a counselor; will provide practicum times so as to provide a realistic counseling experience.
- Time spent in the practicum must be extensive, consistent, and regular (For example, a school counseling practicum cannot consist solely of preparation periods and/or hours outside the regular school day).
- Final approval and confirmation of a site is a consensus decision made by the entire counseling program faculty, and it may involve a pre-practicum meeting of the potential supervisor and the university practicum coordinator. (Allow enough time for the approval of unique situations).

**5. Follow any specific instructions of a school district before approaching counselors in that district for practicum placement. Please work with the Practicum Coordinator when reviewing the updated list of school districts with specific requirements.**

6. **Submit Counseling Practicum/internship Agreement forms by December 1<sup>st</sup> or May 1<sup>st</sup>.** These require signatures of student, site supervisor, and university supervisor. Practicum hours may NOT be counted until this form is in AND the University Semester has begun.

7. Update personal and professional disclosure statements.

#### **IV. During the practicum semester, students must meet the following requirements:**

1. meet with all practicum students in seminar. School counseling students should register in COUN 781 Seminar in School Counseling for one credit for each two credit practicum course. Example: COUN 771 (2 credits), 772(2 credits), 773 (2 credits) plus COUN 781:02 (3 credits-three courses);

2. arrange, within the first two weeks of the practicum, a meeting of the student, the on-site supervisor, and the practicum coordinator. Arrange at least two supervision visits per semester;

3. School counseling students must complete 600 hours total; students are strongly advised to complete 200 hours per site; and

4. complete all forms/logs/seminar requirements detailed in the syllabus to be received at the first seminar.

5. complete the practicum hours during the UWRF semester (for example students who have met all requirements listed above may begin to collect direct contact and indirect contact hours on the first day of a semester. They may also collect hours until the last day of final exams).

**COUNSELING PROGRAM**  
**DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELING AND SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY**  
**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-RIVER FALLS**

The Counselor Education Program at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls prepares counselors for a variety of school and community settings. Initiated in 1968, the program has grown to include four full-time faculty members and approximately 35 full-time students. In addition, up to 100 part-time students are enrolled in coursework leading to a master's degree in counseling. Completion of the program results in a master of science in education (M.S.E.) degree. The UW-RF Counselor Education Program is founded on the following basic assumptions about counselor identity:

1. All counselors, regardless of setting, are mental health professionals.
2. All counselors, regardless of setting, are educators.
3. All counselors, regardless of setting, are community workers.

Consequently, the purpose of the UW-RF graduate program is to prepare competent, professional counseling practitioners in the field of counseling. The program provides a balance between didactic learning, research skills, and supervised clinical practice in the following competency areas:

1. Professional development
2. Personal development
3. Research, measurement and evaluation
4. Theoretical knowledge of counseling, behavior and development
5. Counseling and consultation skills
6. Ethical and legal standards

The master's program requires a minimum of 40 semester credits. Required of all school counseling students:

1. Introduction to Counseling
2. Counseling Theories and Skills
3. Techniques of Appraisal
4. Social and Cultural Foundations of Counseling
5. Group Counseling
6. Research and Evaluation
7. Career Counseling
8. Development Counseling Techniques
9. Advanced Educational Psychology

Students without teaching backgrounds also take courses in curriculum and meeting the educational needs of exceptional children.

**Malpractice Coverage for Student Counselors/Teachers/Interns**

**All University of Wisconsin System student counselors/teachers/interns are covered for personal injury and property damage under the State of Wisconsin Insurance Fund. The following areas are included in the policy:**

1. Personal injury
  2. Property damage (includes intangible properties such as defamation of character).
  3. Libel and slander.
  4. Wrongful eviction (out of living quarters).
  5. Malicious prosecution (arrested in error).
  6. Wrongful entry.
  7. Assault or battery committed for the purpose of preventing injury.
  8. Corporal punishment of pupils.
  9. Automobile liability coverage in state cars. (Student Driver Authorization Forms must be completed for liability coverage by all non-payroll personnel. These forms may be obtained from your local university insurance coordinator.)
- Neither the U.W. System nor the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities carry health insurance for interns or student counselors/teachers. The student may, however, be covered by programs at the individual college or university. You may wish to join the Student Education Association in your major for additional benefit packages offered by those associations, i.e., WEA, MEA, etc.