

UWRF Counseling Program

Student Handbook: Practicum Experiences

**Questions?
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COUNSELING PRACTICUM HANDBOOK
DEPARTMENT of COUNSELING and SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY
UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN-RIVER FALLS

Practicum is the culminating activity in the training of professional counselors. Practicum provides the counselor-in-training with the opportunity to integrate and to apply counseling theories, skills, and practices in schools under the supervision of a licensed school counselor.

You must complete 600 total clock hours of supervised practicum, with hours at primary, intermediate, middle level, and senior level school sites.

For the student, practicum provides the opportunity to:

1. practice and refine one's counseling skills;
2. integrate academic theory in actual counseling situations in K-12 schools;
3. experience counseling in a K-12 school setting;
4. build professional contacts with practicing school counselors and community resources;
5. gain confidence in one's ability to function as a professional school counselor;
and
6. begin to identify needs and to envision one's own contribution to the school counseling profession.

Questions or concerns about anything in this handbook should be referred to:

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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 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 must:

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, weekly 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;
5. be willing to complete a “Practicum Evaluation” of the student over the course of the practicum.

REQUIREMENTS:

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.

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.

Do not approach district coordinators within specified districts without following their procedures;

6. **Submit Counseling Practicum/internship Agreement forms by December 1st or May 1st.** 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.

8. Final department approval of all students registering for practicum is required.

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 781:02 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 three weeks of the practicum, a meeting of the student, the on-site supervisor, and the practicum coordinator. Arrange at least two supervision opportunities per semester;

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

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).

CHECKLIST OF STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

I. To be completed before beginning practicum

- ✓ Attend pre-practicum informational meeting;
- ✓ Complete core counseling courses;
- ✓ Removing any incompletes in core courses;
- ✓ Successfully complete program comprehensive examination;
- ✓ Apply to and interview at approved practicum site(s). **Follow specific procedures required by individual school districts**
- ✓ Submit Counseling Practicum Agreement forms by December 1st or May 1st.
- ✓ Register for COUN 771, 772, 773, Practicum [school] and COUN 781 Seminar in School Counseling.
- ✓ Prepare personal and professional disclosure statements;

II. To be completed during the practicum semester

- ✓ Meet with seminar group;
- ✓ Satisfactorily complete 600 school hours of supervised practicum experiences during the UWRF semester(s);
- ✓ Fulfill all seminar requirements (forms, logs, case studies, presentations, etc.);
- ✓ Arrange and engage in at least 2-3 supervision conferences per semester with both on-site and university supervisors; and
- ✓ Submit written supervisor evaluations from each site.

III. Counseling Practicum Agreements

- ✓ Once a site has been secured download Practicum Site Agreement Form from UWRF counseling web page <http://www.uwrf.edu/csp/2counselingprogram.htm>

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 carries 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.