COUNSELING PROGRAM

PRACTICUM HANDBOOK
Students and Site Supervisors
COUN 614

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Counseling Practicum Handbook  
Department of Counseling and School Psychology  
University of Wisconsin River Falls  

WELCOME!

Practicum is the first field experience in the course sequence of the Counseling Program. You will:

- practice counseling skills with real clients in an authentic environment,
- focus on individual counseling,
- focus on small group skills, and
- conduct classroom lessons.

During Practicum, you focus on honing your counseling skills while learning about how to attend to the comprehensive duties of a school counselor. This Handbook provides students and site supervisors with information to support a successful and enriching practicum experience.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

*COUN 614: Practicum* is a 100-hour practicum placement that requires students to work with clients, under the supervision of program faculty and licensed counselors, to practice individual and group counseling skills. Audio/video tapes, live supervision, and written transcripts will be required to facilitate supervision. Pass/Fail.

Pre-requisites: COUN 610. Practicum occurs during your 2nd or 3rd semester in the program, after completion of no more than 4 core counseling courses.

Approximately 50 hours will be obtained at a site under the supervision of a licensed school counselor with 2+ years of experience with that developmental level. A list of approved sites will be provided to students the semester prior to enrolling in the course, so that students can practice securing a field placement site. The remaining 50 hours will be obtained through collaboration with River Falls School District at Greenwood Elementary School in the Kids Club after school program.

PREPARING FOR PRACTICUM

**Students:**

- In the semester before Practicum, students must attend a Pre-Practicum meeting. Here, you will receive handbooks, course information, and a list of sites that will host Practicum students. **DO NOT** start contacting sites until you have attended this meeting.
- Review and gather materials and prepare any questions you have. Create a plan for contacting sites and finding your placement. Update your resume and cover letter. Print copies of the handbook to share.
- Initiate your plan, and obtain signed agreements from the sites that agree to work with you. Make a copy of the agreement and submit the original to the Practicum Coordinator. Pay attention to deadlines.
- Meet with your site supervisors before the semester to get acquainted with the specific qualities of the site.  
  - Background checks may be required by your placement site, as well as name badges and other documents.

**Supervisors:**

- Students will get a list of approved sites, based on Practicum Coordinator discussions with schools and districts. If you question whether you are on or should be on the list, please contact the Practicum Coordinator. You must feel confident in your ability to provide the student the opportunities needed to fulfill the Practicum requirements, outlined below.
- Students will be contacting sites in fall and spring to secure placements for the following semester. They will be provided with system rules for obtaining placements. Please remind them to go through the appropriate channels if needed.
- A signed agreement must be submitted by the student. They will present that document to you for review and signature.
Please review the evaluation forms found in Appendix A and on the website. These will be completed periodically throughout the placement time.

Contact the Program Coordinator with questions or concerns.

PRACTICUM REQUIREMENTS
Practicum is a time for students to practice individual and small group counseling skills, as well as classroom curriculum with authentic clients. It is not a time for students to be involved with scheduling, test administration, data entry, and duties that comprise the cumulative duties of the counselor in each school.

Practicum sites must be able to provide a student with the following:
1. Opportunities to work with individual students from diverse backgrounds
2. Opportunities to participate in, plan, and execute small groups
3. Opportunities to participate in, plan, and execute classroom curriculum

Site supervisors must:
1. Have a master’s degree in counseling, and be a licensed counselor for the desired developmental level.
2. Have a minimum of 2 years experience in the desired developmental level
3. Understand the UWRFC Counseling Program’s expectations for students
4. Have relevant training and experience with supervision
5. Be willing to observe the student and offer regular, weekly feedback, averaging at least 1 hour each week the student is in the site. This will include providing information on special topics and signing off on case study supervision summaries, provided by the student.
6. Be willing to regularly consult with the University Faculty Supervisor about the student’s progress. This could include site visits, emails, and phone calls.
7. Be willing to complete regular evaluations of the student.

Students must:
1. Have completed COUN 610 and additional 600-level courses, and be in either their 2nd or 3rd semester in the program.
2. Conform to the policies of the district and the school.
3. Consult with site supervisors regularly, providing client information and progress.
4. Adhere to professional ethical and legal codes.
5. Contact site and/or university supervisors early and often with questions and concerns.
6. Maintain a regular schedule, in agreement with the site supervisor. This must occur over at least 10 weeks during the semester.

GREENWOOD ELEMENTARY KIDS CLUB
In addition to 50 hours in an external and approved site, 50 hours will be obtained weekly at Greenwood Elementary School Kids Club in River Falls, Wisconsin. Students will arrive on the designated night of class (currently on Thursdays), and will participate in and lead activities with students, collecting 1-2 hours of direct contact with students. These activities will focus on the 3 domains of comprehensive school counseling programs: academic, personal-social, and career. Students will complete a RFSD background check, will consult with Kids Club staff, and will be under the supervision of a UWRFC Counseling Program faculty member at all times. Further consultation with the school counselor, Olin Morrison, will occur regularly throughout the semester.

ASSIGNMENTS/TASKS
Students must complete the following assignments/tasks to successfully complete Practicum:

a. Attend a weekly seminar that will include supervised direct contact hours with students in an after-school program, and group supervision to process cases and practicum experiences. This time is crucial for your development as a school counselor, due to observation of peer activities, participation in skill-building and case presentations, and learning about special topics; therefore, absences are strongly discouraged. Missed time must be made up during the semester.
b. **Obtain 100 total Practicum hours. Of this, 40 hours must be direct hours** working with clients. Hours will be obtained during the weekly seminar as well as additional hours at your site (40-50 hours over 10-15 weeks).
   a. Hours must be completed during the official UWRF semester, but over at least 10 weeks.
   b. Maintain weekly hour logs that will be signed by the site supervisor and submitted during seminar. Copies must be kept by the student.

c. Complete and submit a self-evaluation with Appendix A.

d. Receive live supervision of counseling interactions with clients. Preferably, students will obtain permission to audio or visually tape counseling sessions for use in supervision. See Appendix B for example permission forms.

e. Present at least 3 case studies in group supervision. Each will need a write-up, with a focus on counseling skills. They must be spread out over the semester to show counseling student growth.
   a. Each case study must have either an audio/visual tape (with permission) or a transcript of the counseling session.
   b. Each case study will need a summary of supervision that occurs at the site. The site supervisor will need to sign off on this write-up.
   c. Copies for each group supervision member must be provided. No copies may be made at the seminar site.

f. Submit a complete-to-date Portfolio, which will require combining all completed coursework into reflections for related standards. The Portfolio will be finalized during Internship.

g. Research and share materials on special topics as outlined in the syllabus. Materials will be any information or documentation that you can share from your placement, and could include school crisis plans, classroom management, and mandatory reporting processes.
APPENDIX A

Site Supervisor Evaluation Form
Please review this with the student at the start of the placement. Formal completion and review with the student must occur at least twice during the placement time— at the mid-point and end. The original document is placed in the student’s file, and student and site supervisor should maintain a copy. Program Faculty rely on these evaluations to determine the student’s final grade.

Student’s Name: _____________________ Site Supervisor’s Name: _____________________ Date: ___________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Evaluation (Circle one)</th>
<th>Total Hours Completed to Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Term</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement needed- Concern warrants plan for remediation</th>
<th>Focus for growth- Does not merit plan for remediation</th>
<th>Developmentally appropriate</th>
<th>Advanced for developmental stage</th>
<th>Unable to assess- Not enough information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>NEI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PROFESSIONAL DEMEANOR

1. Treats others (e.g., colleagues, clients, staff, faculty) respectfully. 1 2 3 4 NEI
2. Is prepared, reliable, and shows an appropriate work ethic. 1 2 3 4 NEI
3. Completes assigned responsibilities. 1 2 3 4 NEI
4. Responsive to supervision and feedback. 1 2 3 4 NEI
5. Maintains poise under stress. 1 2 3 4 NEI
6. Exhibits ethical behavior and decision-making. 1 2 3 4 NEI
7. Engages in self-assessment and reflection. 1 2 3 4 NEI
8. Openness to culturally competent learning. 1 2 3 4 NEI
9. Works collaboratively with colleagues. 1 2 3 4 NEI
10. Displays effective communication with others. 1 2 3 4 NEI

COUNSELING SKILLS

1. Level I Skills- Initial Skill Sets
   • Communicates interest and attention in client 1 2 3 4 NEI
   • Demonstrates appropriate “Yes sets” (e.g., nodding head) 1 2 3 4 NEI
   • Sensitive to cultural preferences 1 2 3 4 NEI
   • Sensitive to developmental differences 1 2 3 4 NEI
   • Open body positioning and posture 1 2 3 4 NEI

2. Level II Skills- Advanced Listening Skills
   • Displays appropriate level of empathy 1 2 3 4 NEI
   • Reflects accurate feelings 1 2 3 4 NEI
   • Restates content 1 2 3 4 NEI
   • Hears underlying feelings and concerns 1 2 3 4 NEI
   • Does not unnecessarily interrupt client 1 2 3 4 NEI
   • Concentrates completely on the client 1 2 3 4 NEI
3. **Level III Skills - Connection and Introduction**
   - Utilizes opening that was inviting and set the tone for change 1 2 3 4 NEI
   - Finds common ground with the client 1 2 3 4 NEI
   - Self-discloses appropriately. 1 2 3 4 NEI

4. **Level IV Skills - Minimal Questions/Wrap up**
   - Uses furthering responses appropriately (e.g., “tell me more”) 1 2 3 4 NEI
   - Allows client to lead the conversation 1 2 3 4 NEI
   - Provides closure to the session, with future focus 1 2 3 4 NEI
   - Appropriately terminates with a client 1 2 3 4 NEI

5. Utilizes ethical, developmental, & cultural case conceptualization. 1 2 3 4 NEI

**COMMENTS:**

By signing the document, both student and supervisor acknowledge reviewing the progress, noting areas for growth. Submit the original to your Practicum/University Supervisor; keep copies for your files.

Printed names and **signatures** of site supervisor and student:

_______________________________________________ Date: _________________
Site Supervisor

_______________________________________________ Date: _________________
Practicum Student
APPENDIX B

Example consent form for taping- if using this you must rewrite for your specific site, consulting with your site supervisor throughout this process.

Your counselor is a counseling intern who has completed most of the required coursework for a graduate degree in counseling at the University of Wisconsin River Falls. Your counselor has successfully completed the coursework and training by national standard to be prepared to provide counseling services. The University of Wisconsin River Falls graduate program in counseling is accredited by the Wisconsin Department of Public instruction and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education; its faculty and students adhere to the American Counseling Association’s (ACA) Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. Standards require graduate students participate in on-the-job training internship during which experience licensed counselors supervise them. The ACA Code of Ethics and Standard of Practice require that persons receiving services from counseling interns are aware that the interns are being supervised. Counseling interns receive supervision by more experience counselors, both on-site and at the University of Wisconsin River Falls graduate training program. All records of counselor services are considered confidential professional information. Counseling interns are required to demonstrate their skills in interactions with clients by providing supervisors work samples in the form of recorded tapes (audio and video) of their counseling sessions. If you agree to be taped, these tapes are considered to be confidential and will be protected by the intern and supervisors of the counseling intern. The only time this confidentiality may be breached is at your request, or in instances of abuse or harm to self or others.

Consent to tape counseling sessions:

I ___do/ ___ do not (check one) grant permission to allow these counseling sessions to be taped. I understand that only counseling intern supervisors and counseling interns will be allowed to review these tapes, and that these tapes will be subject to the same standards of confidentiality as all counseling records as specified by the American Counseling Association’s Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, as well as the laws of the State of Tennessee. I understand that I may withdraw my permission to tape at any time.

________________________________________  ____________________________________________
Signature of Client       Date

________________________________________
Signature of Client’s Parent or Guardian     Date
APPENDIX C

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 of 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.).
APPENDIX D

COUNSELING PRACTICUM AGREEMENT

This agreement is between the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, located in River Falls Wisconsin, and the
_____________________________________ School district/agency, located in _________________________________.
The student, __________________________, will be placed in the counseling department/agency under the supervision of
____________________________, Licensed Counselor, for the period of ________________ to _________________.

THE UNIVERSITY AGREES THAT:

❖ The students will be deemed ready for practicum by the counseling program faculty.

❖ The university supervisor will consult with the student and supervising counselor regularly during the semester, by phone, email, or site visit.

❖ The counseling students will be provided with group Supervision by the university supervisor(s).

❖ The university supervisor will be available for on-site supervising, as needed, throughout the practicum.

❖ Within the extent and limitations of Sections 895.46(l) and 893.82, WI Statutes, the State will pay judgments for damages and costs against its officers, employees and agents arising out of their activities while within the scope of their assigned responsibility in the program at the facility.

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT/COUNSELING AGENCY AGREES THAT:

❖ The supervising counselor is licensed in the area of expertise sought by the practicum student and has at least two (2) years of experience as a counselor at the level they are supervising.

❖ The supervising counselor will meet with the student to establish mutual goals for practicum, including providing experiences with a diverse client population including ELL students.

❖ The supervising counselor will provide increasing opportunities for direct client involvement by the student.

❖ The supervising counselor will be available for regular feedback and consultation to the practicum student, and will complete case write-up supervision summaries with the student as required.

❖ The supervising counselor will consult with the university supervisor and the student on an on-going basis during the semester.

❖ The supervising counselor provides written evaluation of the student at the mid-point and at the end of the semester, as well as in case write-up supervision summaries.

THE STUDENT

❖ The student will function as a professional counselor, adhering to the site requirements as to attendance, demeanor, procedures for confidentiality, and mandated reporting.

❖ The student will cooperate with both university and on-site supervisors in matters of supervision, consultation, and evaluation.

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

University Supervisor/date       Supervising Counselor/date

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Student Counselor/date

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Practicum site: ______________________________________________________ Telephone: _____________________________

Address, City, State, Zip Code:  _______________________________________________________________________________

Email: _________________________________________________________________ Fax: ___________________________