



University of West Alabama Clinical Experiences Handbook for Students & Site Supervisors

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The purpose of this manual is to familiarize students and Site Supervisors with the essential elements of a Practicum/Internship experience in either Clinical Mental Health or School Counseling through the University of West Alabama. This manual is intended to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the student, the university, the university instructor, and Site Supervisor as required by the national accrediting organization, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

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Introduction to Practicum and Internship

Practicum and Internship courses are one of the primary training experiences received by counseling students in the counseling program. Practicum and Internship courses allow students to apply the knowledge and skills they have gained through academic study and training to the real world as the students develop as effective and professional counselors.

Required Hours for Practicum

Completion of required Practicum experience is a total of 100 hours. Students complete the experience over two academic terms (16 weeks). During the Practicum experience, students focus on developing basic individual and group counseling skills learned in their academic coursework.

- For Clinical Mental Health students, 100 total hours are required. 40 of these hours are direct contact.
- For our School Counseling students, 50 hours are in P-6 with 20 direct contact hours and 50 hours in 7-12 with 20 direct contact hours.

The Practicum Hours Log provides information regarding what types of experiences are considered direct and indirect experiences for Practicum. In addition, Practicum students are required to complete a minimum of 1 hour of individual supervision with their Site Supervisor and 1.5 hours of group supervision with their University Supervisor each week.

Required Hours for Internship

The Internship courses require a total of 600 hours of experience, with 240 hours of this experience involving direct client contact hours. Students have one calendar year to complete their hours.

- Clinical Mental Health students can complete all 600 hours within one approved placement.
- School Counseling students must complete at least 100 hours in P-6 (40 direct contact) and 100 hours in 7-12 (40 direct contact). The remaining 400 hours (200 direct contact) can be split according to the student's preference.

All Internship students are required to complete a minimum of 1 hour of individual supervision with their Site Supervisor and 1.5 hours of group supervision with their University Supervisor each week.

Site Supervisor Qualifications

School Counseling Site Supervisors:

- Hold a master's degree in Counseling
- Hold a School Counseling Certificate
- Have at least three years of experience as a School Counselor and is currently practicing as a school counselor.

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Site Supervisors:

- Hold a minimum of a master's degree
- Hold relevant certifications and/or licenses. All supervisors must be licensed within the discipline they are working in, e.g., Licensed Professional Counselor, Licensed Psychologist, Certified School Counselor, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Licensed Social Worker, Licensed Addictions Counselor, etc.)
- Have a minimum of two years of pertinent professional experience in the specialty area and is currently practicing in that specialty area.

Responsibilities of the Site

1. The site shall provide orientation for the student regarding site's purpose, function, and administrative procedures.
2. The site shall provide a HIPAA compliant environment in which student can provide counseling in a private and confidential setting.
3. The site shall be responsible for the assignment and administrative supervision of tasks within the student's capabilities which allows him/her to use and further develop her/his counseling knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills. This may include direct work with clients, relationships with staff and other agencies or schools, and attendance at staff meetings.

4. The site will provide space, equipment, and supplies as needed by the student to carry out site assignments.
5. The site will allow the student to gain a variety of supervised experiences.
6. With written permission of the site and the clients involved, the site will allow the student to obtain audio and/or videotapes for supervision of the student's interactions with clients. If video or audio recording is not allowed by the site, the student should notify the program who can arrange for other opportunities for students to record work with clients. Not allowing audio or video recordings, while not ideal, does not mean a site is excluded from being a student's Practicum or Internship site.
7. The site will be provided adequate informed consent documents to clients regarding their treatment related to student interns.

Responsibilities of the Site Supervisor

1. The Site Supervisor will orient the student to the site and specific duties as well as include protocol for maintaining privacy and confidentiality at the site.
2. The Site Supervisor will meet with the student one hour weekly, supervise the student's performance, and sign the student's weekly log.
1. The Site Supervisor will provide a mid-term and final written evaluation of the student's knowledge, skills, and personal and professional development during each term of the Practicum and Internship experience, using forms located in Tevera. The Practicum or Internship grade will reflect the evaluation of both the on-site and University Supervisor, with the University Supervisor having the final responsibility for grade assignment.
2. The Site Supervisor will provide students with the opportunity to lead or co-lead a counseling or psychoeducational group.
3. The Site Supervisor will review recordings of the student's individual, small group/ and large group and complete evaluations. If recording is not an option, Site Supervisors will complete live observations.
4. The Site Supervisor is expected to initiate contact with the university instructor, or Practicum and Internship Coordinator as soon as there are any questions or concerns regarding the student, expectations, or responsibilities.

5. The Site Supervisor must be on site when the student is seeing clients. If the supervisor is off site, there must be another licensed or responsible individual who can be available for the student if needed.
6. The Site Supervisor will complete Site Supervisor Orientation and training as needed.

Responsibilities of the University and University Supervisor

1. Provide a handbook describing the specific Practicum/Internship requirements.
2. Provide an average of 1.5 hours of weekly group supervision for Practicum and Internship.
3. Provide additional experiences and resources including professional seminars, audio/videotaping, live supervision, and referral source information for client and student intern needs as appropriate.
4. Review and discuss mid-term and final evaluations completed by Site Supervisor.
5. Provide opportunities for supervision training for Site Supervisors.
6. Maintain periodic contact with the Site Supervisor to discuss the student's progress, each term by a university Practicum and Internship supervisor for the purpose of meeting with the Site Supervisor.
7. Ensure students are covered by professional liability insurance and have completed the any necessary verified background check required for students in the program.
8. Provide virtual office hours for Site Supervisors to drop in with questions or concerns.
9. Provide free monthly CEU trainings for Site Supervisors relating to common supervision issues.

Responsibilities of the Student

1. The counseling student is responsible for working with the Practicum/Internship placement coordinator and following the counseling program's procedures regarding contacting sites and securing a Practicum/Internship site.
2. The student is responsible completing all assignments, both in Tevera and in Blackboard as described in the course syllabus.
3. The counseling student is responsible for securing professional counseling liability insurance that will remain in effect for the duration of the Practicum and Internship experiences. The student will be at the agreed upon location at times scheduled by the Site Supervisor and student.
4. The student will fulfill assigned duties and responsibilities as agreed on by the student, Site Supervisor, and the University Supervisor.
5. The student will attend an average of 1.5 hours of weekly group supervision meetings with the University Supervisor.
6. The student will attend minimum of one hour of weekly supervision with Site Supervisor.
7. The Practicum student will remain at the Practicum site for the duration of two terms, even if the student has accumulated the required hours for the course.
8. The student will ensure that protocol for maintaining privacy and confidentiality both at the site and in supervision.
9. The student will read and use the ACA and ASCA Codes of Ethics as guides for ethical and professional practice.

Timeline of Activities for Site Supervisors

The Practicum/Internship student is responsible for knowing requirements and ensuring that all Practicum and Internship requirements are met, and procedures are followed.

The Term Before Practicum/Internship is to Begin

1. Consider prospective students to be placed in your site.
2. Inform student of training, background checks, or other requirements they will need to complete prior to beginning their Practicum/Internship.

Before or Immediately upon Practicum/Internship Experience Beginning

Complete required forms in Tevera (see below). The student is responsible for initiating and sending all required forms to the Site Supervisor.

During Practicum or Internship Experience

1. Assist the student in creating goals for their Practicum/Internship.
2. Assist the student in creating a timeline for Practicum/Internship experiences.
3. Meet with the Practicum/Internship student weekly for individual supervision.
4. Verify student time logs in Tevera.
5. At mid-term Site Supervisors will complete, review with the student, and sign the Mid-Term Evaluation of Practicum/Internship form in Tevera.
6. Consult and collaborate with the student's university instructor.

At the Conclusion of Practicum/Internship

1. At end of the term Site Supervisors will complete, review with the student, and sign the Final Evaluation of Practicum/Internship form in Tevera.
2. Consult with the University Instructor about the Final Evaluation.
3. Verify the final student time log in Tevera.

Supervisor Training

The counseling program at the University of West Alabama provides a required orientation for all Site Supervisors. This training is on-line and provided free of charge to supervisors. Site Supervisors must complete the orientation prior to the supervision of students. For supervisors who have not had prior supervision training, UWA also offers that as needed. It is also offered online. You can find more information on the [Site Supervisor's Webpage](#).

Tevera

Tevera is the online software program UWA uses to track Practicum and Internship paperwork. As a Site Supervisor, you will work with your student to create goals, approve hours logs, & complete evaluations.

For more information about using Tevera, take the [Tevera Field Instructor Journey](#).

Liability Insurance

Litigation involving practitioners in the professions represented by programs in the department has increased dramatically in recent years for many reasons; the result is that every practicing professional is a potential target for litigation. Adherence to professional ethical standards, as well as to high standards for personal and professional conduct, is perhaps the best ways for professionals to avoid involvement in litigation. Nevertheless, since there is no "foolproof" way to avoid litigation, most practicing professionals now consider insurance to be a necessity. It is highly recommended that Site Supervisors maintain their own professional liability insurance.

All students in School Counseling Practicum and Internship must have a current membership in The American School Counseling Association (ASCA). ASCA provides complimentary professional liability insurance to ASCA's Master's Level Students. Students must keep their membership current until they graduate from the program.

CMHC students must have a current membership in The American Counseling Association (ACA). ACA provides complimentary professional liability insurance to ASCA's Master's Level Students.

Professional Development

Students are encouraged to join and maintain membership in professional counseling organizations. Such memberships offer students additional learning opportunities and allows the students to be introduced to the professional world of counseling. Through engagement with professional counseling organizations, students will be exposed to professional issues and leaders in the counseling profession. Membership in some professional counseling

organizations offer students the opportunity to join list serv that provide access to job postings as well as access to job fairs and/or interviews at annual conferences. Below is a list of names and websites of different professional counseling organizations:

Alabama Counseling Association (<http://www.alabamacounseling.org/>)

American Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (<http://acesonline.net/>)

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (<https://www.aamft.org/>)

American Counseling Association (<http://www.counseling.org/>)

American Mental Health Counseling Association (<http://www.amhca.org>)

American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (<http://www.arcaweb.org/>)

American School Counseling Association (<http://www.schoolcounselor.org/>)

NAADAC The Association for Addiction Professionals (<https://www.naadac.org/>)

Southern Association of Counselor Education and Supervision (<http://www.saces.org/>)

**Each state has its own counseling association. It is recommended that counseling students join the professional counseling association of the state they intend to pursue certification/licensure.

Student Retention and Dismissal Policy

University of West Alabama Counseling Programs

This policy applies to all students enrolled in the Counseling Programs in the College of Education.

As part of meeting the program objectives set forth in the Department of Counseling Program Student Handbooks and Graduate Catalog, students are expected to conduct themselves in an ethical, responsible, and professional manner. This process is to ensure students demonstrate appropriate progress towards developing the necessary behaviors, attitudes, and professional competencies to practice as a counselor-in training. Student progress is routinely monitored and discussed during faculty meetings and in consultation with other faculty members.

At the onset of their academic program, students are directed to review these standards and seek clarification when needed.

In order to successfully complete the program and be endorsed for any relevant certifications or licensure, students must demonstrate academic performance meeting or exceeding department standards in all settings, including classes, advising sessions, clinical sites, and all verbal and written communication, including:

1. Follow all academic requirements as outlined in the Graduate Catalog
2. Demonstrate fitness in their interactions with others as measured on the *Counseling Student Evaluation*

Standards, which include the following competencies:

- Follows ethical and legal considerations
- Displays multicultural competence
- Open to new ideas
- Aware of own impact on others
- Responsive, adaptable, and cooperative
- Receptive to and uses feedback
- Responds to conflict appropriately
- Accepts personal responsibility
- Expresses feelings effectively and appropriately
- Dependable in meeting obligations

3. Conform to the codes of ethics of professional associations in counseling and all related national and state licensure and certification boards.

The Evaluation Process:

Students' competence is evaluated using the *Counseling Student Evaluation Standards* and documented with the *Counseling Students Evaluation Form*. All students will be reviewed by individual faculty using the Standards during CO 509, Pre-Practicum in Counseling, CO 548/558, Practicum, CO 579/589, Internship, and as necessary throughout the program.

Admission to the program does not guarantee fitness to remain in the program. In addition, a review may be initiated on any student at any time if a faculty member, staff, course instructor, program mentor, or field supervisor believes the student has displayed behavior which suggests the student does not possess sufficient competency on one or more criteria. Faculty also may initiate a review at any time for:

- 1) Students who engage in illegal or unethical behaviors,
- 2) Students who present a threat to the wellbeing of others, or
- 3) Students who violate the UWA Student Code of Conduct, or any other applicable UWA policies or procedures, or any other Counseling Programs policies or procedures.

In such cases, depending upon the circumstances, the evaluation process may result in the student being dismissed from the Counseling Program without the opportunity for remediation. Faculty members, staff, course instructors, program mentors, and field supervisors may evaluate all students according to these standards. Students will have the opportunity to participate and respond at each step of the process. Performance on the standards will be rated on a scale of 1 (Unacceptable) to 3 (Target) as described in the Standards. A rating of 2 or 3 on all standards will indicate competence. The Evaluation Form then will be shared with the student. A rating of 1 on any of the standards will initiate the following procedure:

1. The student will be contacted to schedule a meeting to review the Evaluation Form. The meeting will be held with the issuing faculty member, unless the process was initiated because the student engaged in illegal or unethical activities, presented a threat to the wellbeing of others or violated the UWA Student Code of Conduct (in which case, the meeting will be held with a faculty review committee, as outlined in Step 3 below). The student has five business days to respond to the request to schedule a meeting. If the student does not respond by the close of business on the fifth business day, the matter will proceed to step 3 below.
2. At the meeting, the issuing faculty will review the Evaluation Form with the student and discuss a remediation plan. Within ten business days after the meeting, the issuing faculty will provide a final copy of the remediation plan (incorporating any changes agreed upon at the meeting) to the student for review and signature. The student will

have five business days to review, sign, and return the remediation plan. Failure of the student to sign and/or return the remediation plan by the close of business on the tenth business day will not impede the process and may be considered during the process.

The remediation plan may include:

1. Specific competency(ies) from the Standards which require(s) remediation,
2. Specific recommendations to achieve remediation,
3. Specific requirements to demonstrate remediation efforts have been successful, and 4. A specific deadline for subsequent monitoring to evaluate progress.

Both the student and issuing faculty may retain copies of the signed Evaluation Form and remediation plan. At any time during the remediation process, the issuing faculty member may refer the student to a faculty review committee.

(3) A faculty review committee will be convened if:

- a. The process was initiated because the student engaged in illegal or unethical activities, presented a threat to the wellbeing of others, or violated the UWA Student Code of Conduct,
- b. A student fails to respond to the issuing faculty's request to schedule a meeting to review the Evaluation Form,
- c. A student fails to show reasonable progress in the remediation plan, or
- d. A student receives more than one Evaluation Form rated 1 during his or her Program of Study.

The committee will be comprised of three core faculty including the program coordinator, the faculty mentor, and one other member appointed by the program coordinator.

The student will be required to meet with the faculty review committee in accordance with the procedures described in #1 and #2 above. The faculty review committee may consult with any of the full Department of Counseling faculty regarding the development of alternative remedial strategies and/or evaluation of the student's fitness for continuation in Counseling Program. The faculty review committee will monitor the student's progress on the remediation plan. If at any time the student is determined not to be making satisfactory progress, the faculty review committee may either modify the remediation plan or dismiss the student from the program.

(3) All faculty review committee decisions for a student's dismissal from the Counseling Programs will be forwarded to the Department Chair. The Department Chair will forward the committee's decision to the Academic Dean. The student may make a first appeal of the committee's decision to the Department Chair. Should an additional appeal be requested, a final appeal can be made to the Academic Dean of the College of Education. The final decision will be forwarded to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Student Dismissal:

The following circumstances constitute some cases of “unsatisfactory” performance and will result in dismissal from the program without an opportunity for remediation or improvement.

- If a student’s GPA remains a 3.25 GPA by the end of the online term or campus semester in which the student was placed on Academic Probation per the policies of the UWA Graduate School.
- A student earns a D and/or F or WF in the same course two times
- A student earns three grades of W, WP, and/or WF
- Failure to successfully meet all requirements of the student’s improvement plan
- Any serious ethical violation or unprofessional behavior as determined by the governing laws, professional codes of ethics.

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Academic Standing Policy

GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING: Graduate students at The University of West Alabama must maintain an overall grade point average of 3.0 (master's level) or 3.25 (M.Ed. in Instructional Leadership, Ed.S, and Ed.D. programs) to be considered in "Good Academic Standing." No grade below a "C" will be accepted for graduate credit. Students are responsible for monitoring their own compliance and student status as stated in this policy. The School of Graduate Studies is not required to officially notify a student of a change in his/her academic status.

*Specific programs may require a higher GPA than what is required for Good Academic Standing for the School of Graduate Studies. Check carefully the completion GPA required for graduate educator preparation programs.

ACADEMIC WARNING: After completing 12 semester hours, a student will be placed on "Academic Warning" if he/she does not meet the required overall grade point average specified in his/her program. Academic Warning may be removed if the student raises the overall grade point average to a 3.0. (master's level) or 3.25 (M.Ed. in Instructional Leadership, Ed.S, and Ed.D. programs) by the end of the online term or campus semester in which the student was placed on Academic Warning.

ACADEMIC PROBATION: A student on "Academic Warning" who fails to raise his/her grade point average to a 3.0 will be placed on "Academic Probation." The student will be removed from Academic Probation if the cumulative GPA is raised to a 3.0. (master's level) or 3.25 (M.Ed. in Instructional Leadership, Ed.S, and Ed.D. programs) by the end of the online term or campus semester in which the student was placed on Academic Probation.

IMPORTANT: A student on academic probation or dismissed from UWA may not use credit earned at another institution for clearing his/her academic probation for meeting degree requirements for graduation from UWA. Any credits earned by a student at another institution while he/she is on probation or dismissed will not transfer back to UWA.

Federal Regulations limit the number of times a student may repeat a course and receive financial aid for that course. Questions about these regulations should be addressed to the UWA Financial Aid Center.

ACADEMIC DISMISSAL: A student on academic probation who again fails to earn the required overall grade point average required in his/her program will be dismissed from the School of Graduate Studies after the probationary period. In the following circumstances a student will be dismissed regardless of whether or not he/she has been placed on Academic Warning or Academic Probation:

1. A student earns a D and/or F or WF in the same course two times
2. A student earns three grades of W, WP, and/or WF
3. Students within the MBA program must exhibit a cumulative 3.0 graduate GPA to graduate. Any awarding of an F or D grade results in immediate dismissal from the

graduate program. A maximum of two C grades is allowable; however, the awarding of a third C grade results in dismissal from the MBA program.

4. Students within the MS in Experimental Psychology program (all tracks) must exhibit a cumulative 3.0 graduate GPA to graduate. Any awarding of an F grade results in immediate dismissal from the graduate program. A maximum of two C grades is allowable; however, the awarding of a third C grade results in dismissal from the MS in Experimental Psychology program (all tracks).
5. Students within the Ed.D. program must exhibit a cumulative 3.25 graduate GPA to graduate. Any awarding of an F or D grade results in immediate dismissal from the graduate program. A maximum of two C grades is allowable; however, the awarding of a third C grade results in dismissal from the Ed.D. program.

A student who is preregistered for courses for a subsequent online term or campus semester and is dismissed will be dropped from his/her preregistered courses.

Degree requirements and academic performance standards outlined in this section are the minimum required. Satisfying these general requirements and standards does not imply that all degree and program requirements have been met. Some departments and colleges establish additional GPA requirements for their programs.

* A minimum GPA of 3.25 for master's level programs and 3.50 for education specialist programs is required for program completion of any graduate student enrolled in educator preparation programs in the College of Education.

PROCEDURES FOR ACADEMIC APPEAL: One on campus semester or two online terms after dismissal, the student may appeal to the Graduate Appeals Committee for readmission. A student who wishes to appeal for readmission must submit a written request to the Graduate Dean, who will present it to the Graduate Appeals Committee.

1. The appeal must be based on extenuating circumstances which may have caused the student to have academic difficulties for a particular online term or campus semester.
2. Documentation of circumstances which led to dismissal is encouraged. Supporting documentation from professionals providing assistance in the student's attempt to overcome challenging circumstances may include applicable official reports (e.g., police reports, hospital records, medical notes, death notices, travel documents, etc.). Factors generally not accepted for an academic appeal include, but are not limited to such things as poor academic performance in class, personal time management problems, work or family commitments, and lack of awareness of University policies or deadlines.
3. The appeal must also provide adequate evidence of ability, maturity, and motivation on the part of the student. Appropriate letters of support from faculty or employers may be included. Notification of denial or approval of the appeal will be provided to the student within ten (10) business days after the decision of the Graduate Appeals Committee. The decision of the Committee is final and not subject to negotiation or further appeal.

4. Readmitted students must maintain satisfactory academic progress in all subsequent terms or semesters until degree completion. Should a readmitted student achieve less than a 3.0 grade point average (3.25 for Instructional Leadership and education specialist programs) in any subsequent term or semester, the student will be academically dismissed without the possibility of readmission.

Course grades will be included in the overall grade point average, even when the required time period to obtain a degree has expired. However, course grades over 9 years old cannot be used to determine hours for program completion.

This information is also located in the Graduate Catalog:

<https://catalog.uwa.edu/content.php?catoid=44&navoid=2017>

Credentialing and Employment Policy for Counseling Program

Students may request an endorsement (i.e., a verbal or written recommendation) from program faculty in order to gain employment or credentials.

Students in Counseling Programs will be endorsed by counseling faculty only for positions or credentials for which they have been adequately prepared. Students should seek endorsement only for employment and credentials that are appropriate given their training, coursework and supervised experience.

Before giving an endorsement, faculty will first check student records (e.g., GPA, program requirements, graduation status) to ensure that students are endorsed for employment or credentials for which they have been adequately trained.

Students should seek this endorsement from their faculty mentor or supervising faculty member who oversaw their Practicum or Internship supervision.

Once students have completed their program of study and they are eligible to graduate from UWA Counseling Programs, the Counseling Programs faculty will provide a credentialing or licensure endorsement or formal recommendation for employment when the following requirements have been met:

- Completed all coursework listed on the program of study with the minimum required GPA for graduation.
- Maintained satisfactory student progress on the *Counseling Students Evaluation Form*, for your concentration throughout the program of study.
- Completed all field experiences (Practicum and Internship) with satisfactory evaluations and proficiency on the *Counselor Competencies Scale – Revised (CCS-R)* from Site Supervisors.
- Satisfactorily passed the comprehensive exam required for your program of study.
- Have applied for graduation or have officially graduated from UWA.

For graduates seeking endorsement relative to professional opportunities, faculty will only endorse their preparation and competence relative to their specific training and areas of skill (e.g., School Counseling graduates will be endorsed for school related professional opportunities, etc.). Methods of endorsement will include but not be restricted to written/verbal recommendations and commentary solicited and approved by graduates seeking

professional employment, professional certification/licensure status, or related positions of opportunities.

Graduates should seek endorsement from the faculty member most familiar with their clinical skills and academic competencies. Typically, a graduate would reach out to the supervising faculty member who oversaw their Internship supervision. If this person is no longer available or if there are extenuating circumstances; graduates would be encouraged to reach out to other faculty members in the following order: 1) Faculty Mentor; 2) Clinical Experiences Coordinator for the appropriate program of study; 4) Program Coordinator.