

University of Delaware School Psychology Handbook

APPENDIX B: PRACTICUM GUIDELINES

Revised: Fall, 2014

Practica are integral and essential components of the school psychology training program. They provide opportunities for students to gather knowledge and skills most appropriately learned in the field and to demonstrate and refine their skills under supervision. Practica experiences are a direct extension of specific training activities. Although more limited than an internship in regard to the range of cases and problems to which students are exposed, practica challenge students to resolve individual, group, and system-level problems. Practica requirements are consistent with the University's conceptual framework for teacher training, which provides the goals and outcomes for the candidates in professional education programs. The University prepares educators with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are required to fulfill the responsibilities of an uncompromised commitment to serving the needs and interests of students, families, and communities. The candidates in our programs will implement best practices and recognize students and adults as whole persons who are developing across the cognitive, social, emotional and physical domains within families, communities, cultural, and economic contexts. Candidates will embody three qualities as they move on their trajectory to become professionals: knowledge and skills, leadership, and commitment to equity.

CHARACTERISTICS AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- Specialist students are required to complete three practica, each comprising 3-credit hours. Doctoral students take an additional practicum during the fourth year of the program.
- At least two practicum replacements are to be in public school settings and are to take place during the school year. One other practicum may be completed during a summer session and/or in an approved non-public school setting. However, in practice, nearly all specialist students complete their placements in public school settings; doctoral students are more likely to complete their fourth practicum in a more specialized setting. Past settings have included: Delaware Autism Program, Sterk School (for students with hearing impairments), the Option Program (alternative program), Terry Children's Psychiatric Center, Meadowood (program for students with severe disabilities), and the College School (program for students with learning disabilities). Exceptions may be approved by the University's program coordinator and the practicum supervisor.
- Supervision is jointly shared with the on-site supervisor and the University practicum supervisor. However, principal responsibility for the student typically rests with the University supervisor.
- Practicum placements are made by faculty.
- At least 450 hours of combined practica experiences are required prior to the full-time internship (which occurs during the third year of the program for specialist students and in the fifth year for doctoral students). In practice, most students attain far more

than the minimum number of hours. Students are expected to be on-site for two full days a week during each semester of practicum.

- Up to 150 clock hours of practica may be waived for those students with previous experiences directly related to school psychological services. Decisions regarding the waiver of practicum hours must be approved by the student's advisor and the school psychology program coordinator and be based on the student's demonstration of skills expected of a student at the level of practicum to be waived.
- Supervision shall be provided by program faculty or other supervisory personnel who possess background, training, and credentials appropriate to the practicum experiences. As such, supervisors of school practica must be certified school psychologists. Supervision must be available to students in sufficient amounts of time (a minimum of two hours per week).
- In addition to the completion of field activities, practicum students are required to participate in University class meetings held concurrently with their field placements. These group supervision meetings are designed to increase students' skills as reflective practitioners. Students share and discuss field experiences, critique and discuss assigned readings and new instruments in school psychology, offer feedback on their colleagues' work, and complete other activities related to their practica experiences.
- Completion of all monitoring components of field experiences (i.e., the checklist, interim, and final reviews, etc.) is the responsibility of the student. Failure to complete and return such forms to the University supervisor could result in a failing grade.

IMPORTANT NOTES

- All local schools require that you present evidence of a recent PPD Tuberculin test and complete a criminal background check before entering the schools. **These must be updated annually.** Please consult the Office of Clinical Studies website for up-to-date information on requirements
- It is recommended that students obtain professional liability insurance. Such insurance is relatively inexpensive for members of NASP (which students should join).

FIRST PRACTICUM (Spring Semester of Year 1 for specialist students)

Prior to the first practicum, students should have completed the following courses: EDUC 817 (Individual Intelligence Testing), EDUC 618 Introduction to School Psychology, EDUC 744 (Educational Measurement and Progress Monitoring), EDUC814 (Psychological Assessment), EDUC623 (Human Development) and EDUC 663 (Counseling Skills Lab). Concurrently with the first practicum, most students will be taking three other courses, including Consultation and Intervention: School Discipline (EDUC830) and Instructing Elementary/Middle Schoolers with Mild Disabilities (EDUC679). A major purpose of the first practicum is to orient students to the educational process and to give students the opportunity to practice diagnostic assessment skills.

In light of their limited prior experience in assessment, it is recommended that first-year practicum students be assigned to reevaluations, and not initial evaluations, unless the cases appear to be simple. The number of assessments will depend largely on their comprehensiveness and the extent to which the student is engaged in other functions. However, students generally assume primary responsibility for 3-5 cases. It should be expected that first-year practicum students will require greater supervision than second-year students.

Objectives of First-year Practicum

1. Students will develop their knowledge of the organization and operation of school systems, including the roles and functions of personnel from varying disciplines and the operation of both regular and special education programs. Specifically, students will learn the processes by which children become eligible for special education services and the processes districts use to monitor children's progress in preparation for statewide assessment. **Domain 10: Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice**
2. Students will develop assessment skills through planning and implementing psychoeducational assessments as assigned at their sites. Students will develop their skills in using multiple methods to gather data, in interpreting and reporting data, and in use of technology in assessment. Specifically, students will practice the skills obtained through course work in psychological and educational assessment -- i.e., planning the assessment based on the referral question; administration, scoring, and interpretation of standardized and curriculum based measures; observation; interviewing teachers, parents, and children; integrating assessment data; devising evidence-based recommendations; and reporting assessment results clearly). **Domain 1: Data-Based Decision Making and Accountability**
3. Students will develop their understanding of the implications of individual student's sociocultural and family background in planning and implementing assessment activities. They will develop their ability to utilize a social justice framework to analyze and intervene with school-based challenges. **Domain 8: Diversity in Development and Learning**
4. Students will develop an understanding of how effective instruction is delivered in the classroom setting through observation and analysis of exemplary practices. Students will increase their understanding of the relationship between prevention efforts, such as effective instruction, and the special education referral process. **Domain 5: School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning**
5. Students will increase their understanding of the broader roles of school psychologists through observation of school psychologists engaging in consultation and intervention activities at their practicum sites. They will become familiar with the district and community resources that may be of value to the school psychologist. **Domain 2: Consultation and Collaboration; Domain 3: Interventions and Instructional Support to Develop Academic Skills; Domain 4: Interventions and Mental Health**

Services to Develop Social and Life Skills

6. Students will develop their professional behaviors and knowledge and implementation of professional ethics. **Domain 10: Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice**

Evaluation of Progress

Students should consult the practicum syllabus for detailed requirements. However, at a minimum, students will be evaluated using the Field Experience Checklist and Evaluation Form and one of their assessment reports will be evaluated using the Assessment Rubrics.

SECOND AND THIRD PRACTICA (Fall and Spring of Year 2 for specialist students)

Two semesters of practicum are taken in the second year of the program for specialist students. Students have now completed all assessment courses and should be able to apply assessment skills with minimal supervision. However, assessment skills will continue to be practiced and improved under supervision. Likewise, assistance in interpreting and presenting results to parents, teachers, etc. will be necessary. In addition to assessment, the practicum student should devote ample attention to linking assessment to intervention. Thus, learning and practicing direct and indirect interventions are now expected. Students are expected to serve as active problem- solvers working in partnership with other professionals at their practicum site.

During the first semester of the second year (concurrent with the Advanced Counseling Techniques course), the focus is on direct intervention with children and adolescents. Practicum meetings will include individual and group supervision (including feedback on students' work through video) as well as study of counseling theory.

During the second semester (concurrent with the Consultation and Intervention: Mental Health and Diversity and Family School Collaboration courses), greater focus is on indirect interventions with students through work with teachers and parents.

Objectives of Second and Third Practica

The objectives for second-year practica include those previously listed for the first-year practicum, plus the following:

- To practice skills obtained through course work in consultation and intervention -- e.g., consultations with teachers and other staff members regarding recommendations for children; the design, implementation, and evaluation of specific interventions. **Domain 1: Data-based Decision Making and Accountability; Domain 2: Consultation and Collaboration; Domain 3: Interventions and Instructional Support to Develop Academic Skills; Domain 4: Interventions and Mental Health Services to Develop Social and Life Skills.**
- To practice skills obtained through course work in counseling – e.g., providing individual and group counseling services using solution-oriented, cognitive-behavioral, and other positive approaches to intervention; organize and lead a social skills group. **Domain 1: Data-based Decision Making and Accountability; Domain 2: Consultation and Collaboration; Domain 3: Interventions and Instructional Support to Develop Academic Skills; Domain 4: Interventions and Mental Health Services to Develop Social and Life Skills.**

- To practice skills obtained through course work in other areas of training, including family-school collaboration, and research and evaluation -- e.g., provide staff members with a review and summary of research on a timely topic, design simple procedures to evaluate intervention programs for individual or small groups of students, develop resources for improving family-school collaboration activities. **Domain 1: Data-based Decision Making and Accountability; Domain 2: Consultation and Collaboration; Domain 5: School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning; Domain 6: Preventive and Responsive Services; Domain 7: Family-School Collaboration Services; Domain 9: Research and Program Evaluation.**

Evaluation of Progress

Student progress will be assessed using the Field Experience Checklist and Evaluation Form during both second year practica. In addition, the Assessment Rubric (Appendix E) will be applied informally to all assessment reports and formally at least once each semester. Students will submit a minimum of one counseling case (video and class notes) during the fall semester for evaluation using the Counseling Rubric (Appendix E). Students will submit a minimum of one consultation case (video and case notes) during the spring semester for evaluation using the Consultation Rubric (Appendix E). In preparation for internship, students are expected to evaluate the effectiveness of their interventions.

FOURTH PRACTICUM (PhD students only; generally 4th year)

In this practicum, doctoral students are expected to reflect on their training and practicum experiences to this point in the program and, based on this reflection, identify goals and objectives for this practicum. Thus, each student's plan is expected to be individualized and designed to enhance the applied skills that the student identifies as important for his/her continued professional development. The course includes two major parts: 1) two days per week field experience and 2) individual or small group supervision provided by the site supervisor and the University supervisor.

Objectives of Fourth Practicum

The specific course objectives will vary according to individual student's needs. However, it is anticipated that students will develop individualized objectives to enhance specific problem-solving, assessment, consultation, and/or counseling skills in the context of serving a diverse population of students, families, and colleagues.

Evaluation of Progress

Student progress will be assessed using the Field Experience Checklist and Evaluation Form. Internship rubrics will be used as appropriate given the student's individualized objectives and experiences.

GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS AND GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICA

1. The student will conform to the standards and policies of the local school district or clinic, and of the State of Delaware, and will strive to uphold ethical standards of the profession in the course of the training experience. Students are expected to know the ethical standards of the National Association of School Psychologists and abide by them in their field placements. Lapses in ethical and/or professional behavior may result in a failing grade, regardless of the quality of the remainder of a student's work.

2. The individual school district, or clinic, will determine what specific procedures to follow in obtaining consent from parents and/or children when the practicum student is involved in a case as observer or service provider. However, consent from parents is required for all cases for which the practicum student has primary responsibility.

3. Students are expected to protect the confidentiality of their clients at all times. It is essential that all test protocols, reports, documents, video and audio recordings that are used for training purposes at the University of Delaware be treated as confidential. Students will insure that all documents are protected while in their possession and properly filed with the school division when the case is completed. All video and audio recordings should be erased at the end of each semester.

4. The administration of personality tests or other types of measures specifically for training purposes may require special consent procedures. Furthermore, diagnostic decisions should never be based on tests administered specifically for practice, unless validity and reliability are attested to by the supervisor.

5. Psychological reports and other formal documents prepared by the student for the school district, or clinic, must be countersigned by both the on-site supervisor and the University supervisor, who in doing so, indicate that the work is acceptable. Students should sign work as "School Psychology Trainee," or "Practicum Student in School Psychology."

6. The on-site supervisor will meet with the student a minimum of two hours a week to plan and supervise training experiences. Three special sessions are to be arranged, as described later -- one at the beginning of the semester for initial planning, one at mid-semester for interim evaluation and feedback, and one at the end of the semester for final evaluation and feedback. The university supervisor will visit the site as needed.

7. The on-site supervisor should determine the level of direct involvement and of independence that is appropriate for the student and for the space provided. That is, the supervisor should assign activities at a level consistent with the competencies demonstrated by the student. A hierarchy of activities involving a particular skill might be devised, as in the examples below, so that an assignment may be matched to the student's expertise. The examples below pertain to all first-year practicum students and many second-year practicum students.

Example 1. Administration of a standardized test not previously given by the student.

- a. Student observes administration by supervisor.
- b. In response to questions by supervisor, student tells how he/she would administer a given subtest or respond to a given behavior.
- c. Student administers test to supervisor as simulation.
- d. Student administers test to child, observed by or taped for supervisor.
- e. Student administers test to child, summarizes in supervision.
- f. Student administers test to child; supervisor reviews test protocol and written report for points pertaining to administration.

Example 2. Teacher Interview

- a. Student observes interview by supervisor, shares impressions afterwards.
- b. Given details of a case, student outlines what he/she would ask about and how.
- c. Student role plays interview with supervisor.
- d. Student and supervisor interview teacher together.
- e. Student conducts interview, is observed or taped for supervision.

- f. Student conducts interview, reviews point by point (from extensive notes taken immediately afterwards) in supervision.
- g. Student conducts interview, reviews key point and general outcome in supervision.

Example 3. Classroom observation

- a. Student and supervisor discuss observational methods (including required form, when appropriate), and goals of observation.
- b. Student is introduced to teacher and observation session(s) is scheduled.
- c. Supervisor and student observe child and record observations.
- d. Supervisor and student review, compare, and discuss observations.
- e. Steps above are repeated, with student being the primary recorder of observations.
- f. Student conducts observations and reviews findings with supervisor.

Obviously (or hopefully!), not all activities will necessitate this type of attention from the supervisor.

DRESS CODE

Area school districts and early learning facilities require those working in their buildings to dress professionally. Here is an example of the guidelines used by a local district. Please follow these guidelines. As adults in the school building you will be modeling appropriate attire for the students.

- Professional attire includes: dresses, skirts (no more than 3" above the knee), blouses, polo shirts, sweaters, jackets, pant suits, suits, blazers, dress slacks/khakis, shirt and tie, leather or suede shoes or dress sandals.
- Unprofessional attire includes items such as: leggings; stretch pants; stirrup pants; spandex pants; denim jeans of any color; athletic wear such as sweat pants or sweat shirts; shorts; tank tops; t-shirts; bare midriffs; halter tops; short skirts; clothes with holes; clothes that depict images or texts; leisure sandals (such as flip flops and thongs); sneakers; clothing that reveals one's stomach, private areas or, or underwear- either when standing or kneeling/bending over or stretching; and see-through shirts or skirts.
- To signify that you are in a school building legitimately, schools require you to wear their id tags at all times.
- Since students are forbidden to chew gum it is a good idea to refrain from gum chewing while on school property.

FORMAL STRUCTURE OF PRACTICA

Prospective field placement experiences and specific outcome-based competencies are outlined on the Field Experience Checklist and Evaluation Form. This document serves as a systematic planning and evaluation tool for monitoring student progress throughout the program. In the first practicum, the student may have little or no experience in the Direct and indirect services sections and few of these activities will be conducted and evaluation. In subsequent semesters, this area should receive substantial attention.

Structure and accountability are also introduced through the arrangements described below. Note that asterisks indicate that something is to be written or prepared (these requirements

are summarized at the end of this document). Also note that the student is required to maintain an ongoing log of activities and time spent during practica.

A. Initial Planning

Use the Field Experience Checklist to help structure an initial meeting in which:

1. Student describes past experience and expertise relevant to school psychology services.
2. Supervisor and student plan field experiences for the semester using the Field Experience Checklist. Student will give a copy of this plan to the University supervisor. *

B. Interim Evaluation and Review with Supervisor

Supervisor and student are to meet during the middle of the semester to review progress to date and to plan for the remainder of the semester.

1. Supervisor completes the second column (i.e., evaluation column) of a copy of the Field Experience Checklist and Evaluation Form that was completed earlier for planning purposes. This is for interim feedback to the student, and is not submitted to the university.
2. Student and supervisor review Field Experience Checklist and Evaluation Form and identify those areas of need or of special interest in which future experiences can be arranged. Make specific plans for these activities at this time.
3. Student indicates what aspects of supervision have been most valuable for him/her, and suggests ways in which supervision could be made more valuable.
4. Student writes up a brief progress report that summarizes the key points and plans discussed in this meeting, including (a) areas in need of improvement, and (b) special experiences or interests that the student will be pursuing in the remainder of the semester. The report is co-signed by the student and supervisor and given to the University supervisor.*

C. Final Supervisor's Evaluation

1. Using the original Field Experience Checklist and Evaluation Form (Appendix A) that was completed at the beginning of the semester, the supervisor completes the second column and reviews his/her final evaluation with the student.
2. Student indicates on form whether he/she disagrees with any points in the evaluation, and signs form. Student returns form to University supervisor.*
3. Student completes Site Evaluation Form and submits it to the university supervisor.*

D. Ongoing Log of Experiences*

The student must maintain a daily log of practicum experiences. Be certain to document required supervision time. Entries into the log should summarize experiences and include:

- date and time spent
- brief description of tasks performed

- characteristics of student(s) (age, type of disability, behaviors)
- assessments and/or interventions used

For example, "Sept. 15. Observed a third-grade inclusion classroom, completed re-evaluation of a second-grade African-American student suspected of LD (WISC-IV, WIAT-II, CBA); teacher concerned about reading problems. Met with supervisor for 1 hour to review cases. Wrote report. 7 hours."

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

1. All reports must be approved by both the on-site and the University supervisor. Obviously, this will require some coordination and expediency on your part. Be sure you understand your supervisors' expectations regarding timelines, who reviews reports first, and other logistical details. If the two supervisors disagree, the on-site supervisor has the last word (unless, of course, an ethical violation exists). Disagreements over diagnostic decisions, preferred measures and interventions, report-writing styles, etc., should be expected. Such experiences represent reality in the field and are often educationally rewarding. Whenever these disagreements occur, however, defer final judgment to the on-site supervisor who is assuming responsibility for the case.
2. Consult the Assessment, Counseling, and Consultation Rubrics to guide your work.
3. Make sure that the University supervisor promptly receives a copy of your initial practicum plan, interim report, final evaluation, and log.
4. Attending practicum as scheduled is a high priority (in most cases, you should consider completing practicum requirements your highest priority). If on rare occasions you must change your schedule, inform your on-site supervisor and the school secretary. If you are sick and cannot attend a scheduled meeting that requires your participation, then it is your responsibility to insure that all parties involved in the meeting are notified and that other arrangements are made, when necessary (e.g., your supervisor might need your written report).
5. Treat this as your first job in school psychology! Impress upon your supervisors and co-workers that you are an energetic and responsible person who desires to learn and help. Dress and behave as a professional at all times. Introduce yourself to the staff and students, particularly to those with whom you will be spending the most time. Familiarize yourself with their concerns, interests, needs, etc. These suggestions might seem trite, but concerns about students' tardiness, late reports, not calling in when sick, unfriendliness, etc. are voiced almost every year by supervisors.
6. Don't always wait to be told what to do. Be proactive. That is, you should never have nothing to do. Don't expect your supervisor to schedule your entire day - supervisors are very busy people. Whenever you are not involved in a case, arrange for other learning experiences, such as:
 - Review special education guidelines and procedures.
 - Observe, and compare, regular and special education classrooms.
 - Interact with kids (read a book to kindergartners, play ball with elementary kids at recess, talk to students, etc.).
 - Talk to other professionals (e.g., reading specialist, nurse, counselor, educational diagnostician, etc.) about their roles.

7. Use your time wisely! Start the habit now of scheduling your day. Always arrive early and before classes begin. Use this time to schedule sessions for testing, consultation, counseling, classroom observations, etc. Teachers like to know in advance when a child has to leave the classroom or when someone is going to visit their classroom. Also, they do not like class interruptions. Respect this (and if it can't be avoided, apologize profusely). Plan accordingly and accommodate the scheduling preferences of teachers (if you and the teacher cannot agree on a time, see your supervisor).
8. Always let the school secretary know when you enter and leave the building. Check to see if you need to sign-in and sign-out. Always wear your identification.
9. Maintain a file (e.g., notebook binder) of ideas, references, resources, recommendations, policies, etc.

GRADING

Determination of the final grade for each practicum is the responsibility of the University supervisor. The grade is determined in consultation with the on-site supervisor and reflects the degree to which the student has achieved competency in skills on the Field Experience Checklist and the appropriate rubrics. Expectations will increase with each practicum. A student with "unsatisfactory" performance in any competency (including professional characteristics) during the third practicum will not be allowed to begin an internship. See each semester's course syllabus for additional details.

Summary of Planning and Evaluation Procedures

Week 1 or 2

- Supervisor and student jointly complete Field Experience Checklist and Evaluation Form (FECEF).
- Student forwards one copy to university supervisor, makes one copy for interim evaluation, and keeps original for final evaluation.

Mid-semester

- Student asks Supervisor to complete the evaluation component (i.e., second column of checklist) of a copy of the FECEF that was completed previously, modifies planned activities (if appropriate), and shares results with student.
- Student submits brief progress report to university supervisor.

End of semester

- Student asks Supervisor to complete evaluation component of the original FECEF (with modifications in planned activities, if appropriate) and forwards the form to the university supervisor.
- Student submits copy of Practicum Log to university supervisor.
- Student submits completed Site Evaluation to university supervisor.