

University of Houston Victoria

2017-2018

Psychology Practicum Handbook



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Mission of Practicum (Field-Based) Program Objectives

The purpose of field practicum is to give the counselor-in-training an opportunity for supervised practical experience and an opportunity to apply counseling theories and knowledge of psychological assessment to professional practice. The clinical experiences provide an opportunity to assess the professional growth and development of the psychology student prior to graduation from the program. The development of professional skills in the mental health profession begins during your practical experiences and is similar to an employed professional in training under direct supervision. Practicum students are allowed the opportunity to enhance their counseling and assessment skills/techniques, gain confidence as a mental health professional, and integrate knowledge obtained from the classroom to real-life experiences. In addition, it gives students an opportunity to cultivate professional relationships and facilitates the process of determining an area of specialty by working with different sites and populations. Practicum also helps students identify strengths and interests in the field prior to graduation.

General Practicum Information and Application Procedure

You must be officially accepted into the Counseling Psychology or Forensic Psychology Program and complete the prerequisite courses in order to be considered eligible for Practicum. You must submit proof of your Professional Liability Insurance along with your application.

At the beginning of the second year of the degree program (after the completion of approximately 20-24 credit hours, typically the 2nd Fall Semester) students should enroll in PSY 6303 Psychology Practicum course if you are in the Counseling Psychology program. If you are in the Forensic Psychology Program, then you should enroll in PSYC 6304, Practicum in Forensic Psychology. Enrollment in either course requires approval by the Program Director and Course Instructor. You will have to submit an application for practicum for every semester you intend to enroll in the practicum course.

An announcement regarding Practicum Applications availability will be sent via UHV email to all Psychology students the semester prior to your desired practicum start date. If you fail to get an email then it is your responsibility to contact the Practicum Coordinator to obtain an application and to submit the application before the deadline.

Below are the practicum application deadline dates for the 2017-2018 Academic Year:

Practicum Application Deadline Date	Practicum Start Date
November 20, 2017	Spring 2018
April 16, 2018	Summer 2018
July 23, 2018	Fall 2018

Practicum Pre-requisite Requirements

There are several requirements that you must meet before you will be allowed to enter your first practicum. These include that you must have passed your final project for Personality Assessment and

for Techniques in Psychotherapy (see below). In addition, you must take and pass with a **B or better** the following courses:

PSYC 6321 Psychopathology I
PSYC 6330 Life-Span Development
PSYC 6333 Ethics and Professional Practice
PSYC 6335 Techniques in Psychotherapy
PSYC 6337 Personality Assessment
PSYC 6338 Group Psychotherapy

Practicum Students will also be asked to purchase liability insurance, beyond what the university is able to provide. This insurance is generally available at a minimum cost for graduate students. Information about insurance can be obtained from the Practicum Course Instructor or the Director of the Forensic or Counseling Psychology Programs.

Pre-Practicum Evaluations

Pre-practicum competency evaluations are recommended in core areas to determine readiness for practicum, in response to practicum site supervisors' comments. The final projects in two of the core classes (Personality Assessment and Techniques of Psychotherapy) are being used as the pre-practicum competency evaluation at this time. If a student is unable to pass the final projects with a satisfactory grade, they will not be allowed to begin practicum until they can satisfactorily complete the projects. These two courses were chosen because they are the advanced level courses for many of the skills needed for practicum. In addition, Psychology faculty members are asked to complete a practicum readiness form for students when they apply for practicum. Practicum students are also asked to identify one UHV faculty member to serve as a recommendation for practicum.

Practicum Requirements

Practicum experiences will generally be obtained through contact with local community mental health agencies and practitioners. Students will be exposed to various clinical/counseling populations during their practicum experiences. Each practicum will require a minimum of 150 clock hours. For the practical application of coursework, students are required to complete 9 semester credit hours of Psychology Practicum field experience prior to graduation, which should meet or exceed the 450-clock hour requirement for the LPA licensure. Two practicum semesters will be in Counseling practicum, which should meet or exceed the required 300-clock hour requirement for LPC licensure. The remaining 150-clock hour practicum will be in psychological assessment (testing practicum), which meets the Texas State Requirement for Licensed Psychological Associates (LPA).

The nature of counseling and clinical experiences is such that the total weekly time spent on a particular practicum experience may vary greatly. Students engaged in these practicum experiences must be prepared to remain flexible about their time schedules in order to be able to address a particular clinical need in a professional and ethical manner. As representatives of UHV and as professionals in the field of Psychology, students will be expected to fulfill their professional roles in a manner that is consistent with the ethical guidelines of the American Psychological Association and the American Counseling Association. Students will be expected to present themselves in a highly professional manner in both dress and demeanor. Students should recognize that the clinical supervision process is critical to not only their individual professional development, but also an integral part of the success of their efforts in working with clients. Students may be required to

complete several assignments outside of their clinical activities (e.g., library research) in preparation for these activities, and will be expected to be prepared for their supervision sessions.

Student's Objectives, Responsibilities, & Evaluation

1. Students are required and expected to adhere to the Ethical Standards for Counselors as set forth by the [American Counseling Association \(ACA\)](#) and the [American Psychological Association \(APA\)](#) code of ethics. Please familiarize yourself with these standards. *Each practicum site will have its own set of policies and procedures. It is your responsibility to obtain and understand these procedures.*
2. Students are expected to inform all clients of his/her status as a practicum student/counselor in training under supervision of a licensed professional.
3. Students should discuss the limits of confidentiality with clients and inform clients that their case will be discussed with their primary supervisor while adhering to the limits of confidentiality. **The decision to breach confidentiality is never to be made on your own accord and should be discussed with practicum on-site and faculty supervisor.**
4. Students are expected to maintain professionalism at all times at the practicum site. In addition, you are expected to work within the appropriate chain of command within the practicum site and with the UHV's practicum coordinator.
5. Students interested in practicum are required to fill out an application for practicum, and receive approval for practicum prior to beginning any practical field based experience. In addition, you will need to have a supervision agreement signed by you, your site supervisor, and practicum coordinator prior to beginning any practicum work at designated site (see end of handbook for sample Practicum Agreement form; you will receive the agreement form from the practicum coordinator). You must also provide proof of liability insurance to the Practicum coordinator at UHV prior to beginning any work.
6. You are expected to read the Practicum Handbook and have knowledge of all practicum requirements to ensure successful completion of practicum.
7. If a problem should arise at your practicum site, you are to notify the UHV practicum coordinator immediately.
8. You must maintain a practicum log sheet to properly document your training hours.
9. At the end of every semester, practicum students will undergo an evaluation by their site supervisor, as well as, complete a self-evaluation at the end of each practicum.

Recent Practicum Site Opportunities

A list of forensic and counseling practicum placements will be posted online on the UHV Forensic Psychology webpage, or will be emailed to students at the time that applications are sent out. This site list will be updated as new sites become available. Additionally, students can seek out sites which are not currently on the list, but these sites must be approved by the Course Instructor.

Psychology Practicum Class Requirements

To successfully pass practicum, you must fulfill the requirements of both the Practicum Class (PSYC 6303 or PSYC 6304) AND you must fulfill the requirements of your Practicum Site.

Practicum Site Requirements

Each practicum student will be assigned a university supervisor who is a faculty member of the Psychology Program and who holds an appropriate credential of Licensed Psychologist or Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). University supervision will occur both at the practicum site and at the university or at any other mutually agreed upon place. The practicum student will be responsible for documenting for the university supervisor the duties s/he has performed. The university supervisor may also consult or confer with the field-based supervisor at any time regarding the practicum student's progress, and the university supervisor may request a formal evaluation if deemed appropriate. This option for formal evaluation may also be requested by the student or field-based supervisor. The university supervisor will serve as a consultant in mediating any difficulties and as a resource regarding technical information, ethics, standards procedures, rules and regulations, etc.

Practicum Course Requirements

In addition to the requirements of the practicum site, students are required to adhere to the following:

1. Students must complete 450 hours total, with 150 hours of direct client contact over the course of your three practica. Each semester you will be required to attend your practicum site for a total 150 hours. **50 of those hours must be direct contact with clients.**
2. Students must attend the online class every week in the Adobe chatroom. A link to the chatroom and the time for meeting with the professor and other students will be posted in Blackboard and on the syllabus.
3. Maintenance of a training log, which includes a discussion entry for every day of work at the practicum site, summarizing your daily activities. Logs are submitted twice during the semester. They are submitted at Mid-term and at the end of the semester/practicum. The practicum log should **DOCUMENT** what work you completed at the site.
4. Students are required to complete two treatment plan papers each semester that they are enrolled in at a Treatment-Focused practicum. Requirements for the treatment plan paper are indicated in the course syllabus.
5. Students are required to complete **TWO** assessment reports during the semester that they are enrolled in an Assessment-Focused practicum. Requirements for the testing reports are indicated in the course syllabus.
6. Adhere to any course requirements set forth in the PSYC 6303 or PSYC 6304 Syllabus and course instructor requirements.

Note: Specific details for the above-mentioned course requirements will be included on the course syllabus. In addition, the grading scale for the practicum course is included in the course syllabus on Blackboard.

Professionalism

1. Please dress appropriately and professionally at practicum site. You should not wear sport, casual, un-kept, and/or provocative clothing. If you are unsure of what to wear, please use your best judgment and speak with your on-site practicum supervisor and/or faculty supervisor.

2. Show a pattern of reliable attendance in classes, completion of class projects on time, good effort when working on university tasks and a pattern of accepting responsibility for mistakes.
3. Show a pattern of respect for others and sensitivity to others.
4. Do not engage in a pattern of offensive practices.
5. Do not act in a hostile manner- name calling, intimidation, abusive or threatening behavior, sexual harassment, attempts to humiliate or ridicule others, repeated expression of racist, sexist or other prejudicial attitudes.
6. Show ability and potential to develop appropriate professional etiquette

Professional Liability Insurance

Practicum Students are asked to purchase liability insurance, beyond what the university is able to provide. This insurance is generally available at a minimum cost for graduate students. Students are asked to purchase student liability insurance through the American Psychological Association (APA) Insurance Trust. You no longer have to be a student member of APA to purchase the insurance. You will need to purchase the \$1,000,000/\$3,000,000 liability insurance policy.

Information about the Trust Insurance can be obtained from the Practicum Course Instructor or the Director of the Forensic or Counseling Psychology Program. You may also find information regarding The Trust-APA Student liability insurance at www.apait.org/apait/products/studentliability/. Below are some FAQ provided by APA regarding liability insurance:

Why do I need Liability Insurance? Doesn't the University already cover me?

UHV protects itself, like any business does. Anyplace you work in the future will have a similar policy. You need to have liability insurance to protect yourself! As a student, it isn't much money. But it could save you a lifetime of debt.

What does the Trust Student Liability Policy cover?

The Student Liability Policy covers students involved in school-sanctioned activities. Common examples are internships, practicum, and externships. Some schools encourage students to go beyond the required hours and enter other school-sanctioned/supervised programs. These programs are often covered under this policy.

Do you have to be an APA member to qualify for coverage?

Yes, the Trust Student Liability Policy, like all Trust policies, is a member benefit.

Do all students studying psychology qualify for coverage under the Student Liability Policy?

Being a student should not be the only criteria for selecting the Trust Student Liability Policy. Your selection of appropriate insurance will depend on your specific activities. For example, if you are in an internship, practicum or other program sanctioned by your university, you should consider the Trust program. If you are working in a program independent of your school or practicing under another license (LCSW or MFT), then you should consider an alternative professional liability policy outside of the Trust.

What if I continue to work at an internship after my internship is over?

If the program is no longer affiliated with your school, you have entered into independent or professional work. This is true even if you are volunteering. For any activities independent of your school, you should obtain a professional liability policy.

Does it matter if I receive pay?

No. It does not matter if you receive pay. All that matters is that your school sanctions the program.

What if I graduate?

The Trust Student Liability Policy will only cover you if you are still working toward graduation. Occasionally, a student is conferred a degree prior to completion of his or her internship hours. In these rare cases, the student policy would still provide coverage. Once you graduate and enter into post-doctoral work, you should purchase the Trust Professional Liability policy (and take advantage of the new graduate discount for such supervised activity).

SAMPLE: Application For Practicum

APPLICATION FOR PRACTICUM

I am applying for (Please Circle One): **PSYC 6303** **PSYC 6304**

Applications for practicum must be turned in to Dr. Todaro (todarod@uhv.edu) by email no later than 5 pm on the designated deadline date. Below are the practicum application deadline dates for the 2017-2018 Academic Year:

Practicum Application Deadline Date	Practicum Start Date
July 14, 2017	Fall 2017
November 20, 2017	Spring 2018

You must be officially accepted into either the Counseling Psychology Program or the Forensic Psychology Program and you must have completed the prerequisite courses in order to be considered eligible for Practicum. You must submit proof of your Professional Liability Insurance along with this application.

Name: _____

Student ID Number: _____

Application for Practicum Semester: Fall
 Spring Year: _____
 Summer

This is your 1st 2nd 3rd Practicum (circle one)

Previous Placements: 1st _____ Assessment/Treatment

2nd _____ Assessment/Treatment

Anticipated date of graduation: _____ Cumulative GPA: _____

No. of Credit Hours completed: _____ Year/Semester Entered the Program: _____

UHV Email: _____

(this is the email I will be using to contact you)

(You must provide a valid UHV email address or you will not be considered for a practicum.)

Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Indicate one Psychology professor that would recommend you for practicum:

What city or area do you want to do your practicum: _____

Are there any particular sites or type of sites that are of interest to you? If yes, then briefly describe:

1st Choice: _____

2nd Choice: _____

3rd Choice: _____

Describe the types of clientele/population (ie. Age, issues, topics) you would like to work with:

MASTER OF ARTS IN COUNSELING AND FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY
PRACTICUM VERIFICATION OF COURSEWORK
(Must have a grade of B or higher in these courses)

Required Course	Semester/Year	Grade
PSYC 6321 Psychopathology I		
PSYC 6330 Life-Span Development Psychology		
PSYC 6333 Ethics and Practice of Psychology		
PSYC 6335 Techniques of Psychotherapy		
PSYC 6337 Personality Assessment		
PSYC 6338 Group Psychotherapy		

Approved course substitution or reasons for not completing any pre-requisite course:

Student Signature

Date

Applicants must complete all course prerequisites and be in good academic standing to be considered for Practicum. Permission from Practicum Coordinator is required for enrollment in PSY 6304 or PSY 6303. Student liability insurance is required. Refer to the UHV catalog or contact the Practicum Coordinator for more information.

For Office Use Only:

Student Name: _____

Approve _____ Deny: _____ (Reason for Denial of Application _____)

Insurance on file? **Y or N**

Student notified: **Y or N** Date of Notification: _____

Student Practicum Placement:

Name of Site Supervisor: _____

Practicum Coordinator Signature

Date