Texas A & M University – San Antonio
Field Practicum in Counseling
Frequently Asked Questions

FIELD PRACTICUM IN COUNSELING
EDCG 5356
GENERAL INFORMATION

Your Field Practicum in Counseling course is the capstone of your Counselor training. It is your opportunity to put your knowledge into practice. The program is designed developmentally. This allows you to cultivate the requisite knowledge and skills in order to deliver effective and ethical counseling services to a variety of clients and client concerns. In the Field Practicum course, you will have both a course instructor and a site supervisor. They will work collaboratively to assist you in this critical stage in your training.

Students on the Licensed Professional Counseling (LPC) track, are required to complete two Field Practicum courses.

NOTE: If any of your questions are not answered here, please contact the advisors at (210) 784-2521.

FIELD PRACTICUM SITE

1. Do the Practicum Instructors or the Clinical Coordinator place students at Practicum sites?

   The Practicum Instructors and the Clinical Coordinator do not place students in their practicum sites. Finding a practicum site is each student’s responsibility. A list of approved practicum sites is available in the counseling office, room 122, or from the Clinical Coordinator. However, contact names and numbers for participating practicum sites change frequently and students may need to follow up on a particular site.

2. How do I Find a Practicum Site?

   It is imperative that students are proactive and explore potential sites early in the semester before enrolling in the practicum course. After reviewing the list of approved sites, contact someone from that site and schedule an interview with either the director, or the potential site supervisor. A&M –SAs Counseling program is one of several in the San Antonio area. There may be many students competing for the same practicum sites.

3. What if I find a Practicum Site that is not on the approved Practicum Site list?

   If you are interested in a site that does not appear on the approved Practicum Site list, contact the Clinical Coordinator, Dr. Peters, at scott.peters@tamusa.tamus.edu. The Clinical Coordinator will make contact with the potential site and conduct a site visit to determine whether or not it is an appropriate practicum site.
4. The site I’m interested in has some qualifying conditions. What if I can’t meet those conditions?

Different sites may have qualifying conditions for practicum students. You will need to ask your potential site supervisor about any conditions they may have and be able to meet those expectations before committing to a site. If you cannot meet their conditions, you will need to select a different site. Examples of qualifying conditions include but are not limited to:

a) Requiring a completed background check before beginning to work at the site. You need to complete this before the semester begins.
b) Requiring a 6 month (2 consecutive practicum courses) commitment from practicum students.
c) Requiring extensive training from the site that may only be offered during certain times or days.
d) Requiring that practicum students already have 50 or more direct hours in a previous practicum setting. These sites will only accept students during their 2nd practicum course.

QUALIFICATIONS OF PRACTICUM SITE SUPERVISOR

1. What qualifications does a site supervisor need to have?

A practicum on-site supervisor must have a minimum of a master’s degree in counseling or a related profession with equivalent qualifications, including appropriate certifications and/or licensures, a minimum of 2 years of pertinent professional experience, and knowledge of the program’s expectations, requirements, and evaluation procedures for students. The site supervisor or another staff person with the same qualifications as the site supervisor must be on site whenever the student is seeing clients. Practicum students may not see clients when the site supervisor is not on site. The site supervisor must sign an Internship/Practicum Counseling form, as well as a Supervisory Agreement Form. Signing this form indicates that the site supervisor will provide opportunities for students to meet all the requirements for the practicum course.

REGISTERING FOR A FIELD PRACTICUM COURSE

1. Every time I try to register for practicum, I get a message that there is a hold on my registration.

The advisors determine if students are eligible to enroll in practicum by verifying that they have completed all the pre-requisite courses and are in good standing at the university. After the student has completed and submitted the Practicum/Internship Clearance Form, and the site has been approved for that student, the advisor will place a student in a course section. Each practicum instructor is assigned to work with specific practicum sites and students will be placed with the instructor who has been assigned to their sites.
2. **What are the pre-requisite courses for the Field Practicum?**

Field Practicum courses need to be taken during the student's last two semesters in the master's program in counseling. Since the practicum provides the opportunity for students to utilize counseling knowledge and skills in a real world setting, students must complete all required courses on the Mental Health Track of the Counseling and Guidance degree plan prior to entering practicum.

3. **Can I enroll in other courses while I complete the Field Practicum?**

The Field Practicum course is an intensive training opportunity for students. Enrollment in this course places high demands on students’ resources of time, energy, support systems, and self-care. Students must complete all the core courses before they can enroll in the Field Practicum. Students may enroll in one elective course during the same semester they are taking the Field Practicum course.

4. **What is the time frame for completing the Field Practicum course?**

Students are to complete their practicum experience of 150 hours within the semester they are enrolled. Incomplete grades are not given for not completing the required number of hours in practicum. It is important that students discuss with potential site supervisor the necessary requirement (including hours needed) to see if this is a realistic goal at that practicum site.

5. **Why do I need liability insurance and where can I obtain coverage?**

You will be working with clients who are seeking counseling services from the agency that is providing your site supervision. While we take every precaution to insure that your practice is ethical and beneficial, there is always the possibility that a client may file suit against you or claim that you caused harm. Liability insurance protects practitioners from such claims. You must bring a hard copy proof of your liability insurance to your first practicum class meeting and it will remain in your practicum file. You cannot start getting practicum hours at your site until your practicum instructor has received the hard copy of your liability insurance. You may secure liability insurance from the following websites:

   a) Texas Counseling Association website: [http://www.txca.org/tca](http://www.txca.org/tca)
   b) American Counseling Association website: [http://wwwaca.org](http://wwwaca.org)
   c) Healthcare Service Providers Organization website: [http://www.hpsocom](http://www.hpsocom)

6. **When do I turn in the Site Supervisor Agreement form?**

Your practicum instructor will give you this form during the 1st class session. You must return it during the second meeting of your counseling practicum class. You cannot see clients at your site until your instructor has a copy of the Site Supervisor Agreement form signed by your site supervisor.
7. **How many hours are required for completion of a Field Practicum?**

The field Practicum in counseling course requires a *minimum* of 150 clock hours. A minimum of 50 hours must be direct hours. During a regular semester of 15 weeks, this means a time commitment at your site of a minimum of 10 hours a week. During summer semesters of 10 weeks, you must commit to a minimum of 15 hours a week at your site. Counseling practicum is a developmental process. Therefore, your hours must be roughly distributed evenly throughout the semester. It is not acceptable to complete all your hours in a few weeks and then stop going to your site.

All practicum students must have a minimum of 10 individual counseling hours and a minimum of either psychoeducation or process group hours. No more than 5 of the 50 direct counseling hour contact with clients may be intake hours.

*Note: You may accrue up to 400 additional hours at your site that may count towards the 3,000 internship clock hours required for LPC licensure. For additional information, see the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors’ website: [http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/counselor/default.shtm](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/counselor/default.shtm)*

8. **Can I take two Field Practicum courses in one semester?**

The Field Practicum in counseling is an experiential and developmental process and is meant to allow time for students to experience growth in their professional identities as counselors. Each practicum course must be taken separate semesters.

9. **Can I use my place of employment as my Field Practicum site?**

Students may not complete their Field Practicum in Counseling course at their place of employment.

10. **Can I have more than one practicum site in the same semester?**

Students may only have one practicum site each semester. The Practicum Supervisory Agreement form signifies a student’s commitment to provide services to the clients and site supervisor at that particular site.

11. **How are the hours documented and accrued?**

Your practicum instructor will describe this in more detail during your first class meeting. No hours can be counted before the first day of the semester or after the last day of the semester. In general, hours can be counted as follows:

Indirect Hours can include:

- Meeting with your site supervisor for supervision and consultation
- Individual supervision or class time with your practicum instructor
• Writing case notes
• Preparing psycho-education groups
• Attending training and workshops
• Developing materials for the agency
• Other – check with your practicum instructor

Direct Contact Hours can include:
• Individual counseling sessions
• Group counseling sessions
• Family counseling sessions
• Initial interviews
• Crisis intervention
• Consultation with parents
• Other – check with your practicum instructor