

**Student
Practicum/Internship
Handbook**



**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
SAN ANTONIO**

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INTRODUCTION TO PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP

One of the primary experiences in the master’s program in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling, and Counseling & Guidance: School Counseling is the clinical coursework embodied in the Practicum and Internship courses. These courses require students to utilize the knowledge and skills gained in the classroom as they provide counseling services for clients. The primary objective of these courses is to provide experiences, consultation, and supervision to help students become effective counselors. The program is designed developmentally, allowing students to cultivate the requisite knowledge and skills to deliver effective and ethical counseling services for a variety of clients and client concerns.

The *Practicum/Internship Handbook* serves as a resource for all Practicum and Internship courses. A general syllabus (provided by your instructor) also provides information about broad requirements. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the information in this handbook and for abiding by the requirements, policies, and deadlines contained within it.

The *Texas A&M University –San Antonio Graduate Catalog* supersedes any information in this handbook.

Faculty & Staff Roles

Practicum/Internship Coordinator

- Coordinate A&M-San Antonio's Practicum/Internship courses
- Approve practicum sites
- Maintain practicum site list
- Oversee counseling practicum/internship policies
- Align course requirements with LPC academic requirements
- Coordinate and meet with counseling practicum instructors when necessary
- Maintain confidential storage of practicum student files
- Monitor courses/prerequisites prior to practicum/internship

Course Instructors

- Add specific requirements and course schedule to the general syllabus
- Provide group supervision instruction for practicum students
- Maintain student practicum files
- Evaluate student progress
- Maintain contact with practicum/internship site supervisors
- Complete a Fitness to Practice evaluation for each practicum/internship student
- Consult with the Practicum/Internship Coordinator regarding student or procedural concerns

Site Supervisors

- Represent an agency that delivers professional counseling services to clients
- Provide a learning environment, learning experiences, supervision and instruction to prepare students for beginning professional employment
- Provide thorough orientation and training regarding the roles and responsibilities of the counselor in the agency
- Provide ongoing evaluation of student performance
- Maintain contact with the practicum/internship instructors and the practicum/internship coordinator

PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP REGISTRATION

There are several steps that students must complete in Tevera in order to enroll in Practicum/Internship courses. Once these steps are completed, students will be placed in an available practicum/internship section. Each of these steps will be explained in more detail below. These include:

- Submission of current Degree Works plan
- Confirmation of intention to interview with sites and site supervisors
- Completion and submission of the Practicum/Internship Site Commitment form by the priority deadline
- Department approval

Pre-Requisites

Practicum/Internship courses are designed to be taken at the end of a student's graduate program after the completion of all core courses. Since the practicum/internship experiences provide the opportunity for students to utilize counseling knowledge and skills in a real-world setting, students must complete all pre-requisites on their identified degree plan (i.e., Clinical Mental Health, Marriage, Couple & Family, Counseling & Guidance: School Counseling) prior to entering practicum.

Students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better to enroll in a practicum/internship course.

Students with any of the following conditions will not be permitted to enroll in practicum/internship courses:

- Grade of C in any counseling course
- An open Fitness to Practice Remediation Plan

Regular advising meetings help to ensure successful progress throughout the course sequence.

Tevera

The Counseling Program utilizes Tevera to streamline the field placement process and store all of your field experience documentation securely. You can access Tevera by visiting tamusa.tevera.app and using the SSO login or by going to Blackboard, entering any one of your core courses, and going to the Syllabus page where a link to Tevera is provided. On the Tevera homepage, click on "Start Tutorials" to familiarize yourself with the application.

Requirements of Practicum/Internship Sites

Agencies and organizations that are practicum/internship sites for A&M-SA counseling students represent a broad spectrum of mental health delivery programs and services. To be an approved Counseling Practicum/Internship site, agencies must:

- Be approved by the Practicum/Internship Coordinator. A list of approved sites is available on Tevera. However, sites, site supervisors, and the contact people at those sites can change without prior notice, and the site list may not be up-to-date. Locating and securing a site is the sole responsibility of the student, as is confirming the site and site supervisor are approved. The site list is provided only as a guide and not as a guarantee of

approved site status. If you would like to request a site to be added to the approved list, please contact the Practicum and Internship Coordinator.

- Have opportunities for students to get a range of counseling experiences to include a minimum of 100 hours for the semester for Practicum (40 hours minimum of direct client contact) and 200 hours for the semester for Internship (80 hours minimum of direct client contact).
- Have a qualified person available to serve as the Site Supervisor (see below for requirements).

Note: Students may not complete their practicum/internship experience hours at their place of employment unless permission is given by the department and the practicum/internship coordinator.

Requirements of Practicum/Internship Site Supervisors

Approved practicum/internship site supervisors must:

- Have a master's degree in counseling or a related field and two years of relevant work experience.
- Be available to provide a minimum of one hour a week of individual or triadic supervision for each practicum/internship student.
- Always be on site whenever the practicum/internship students' work directly with clients/students or arrange for another staff member with a master's level degree in a counseling related field and two years of experience to be on site when the site supervisor is unavailable.
- Provide opportunities for students to audio/video tape counseling sessions for evaluation by the practicum/internship instructor.

Practicum/Internship Site Commitment Form

Students may begin scheduling interviews with potential sites one or two semesters before they plan to take practicum/internship. Eligible students review the practicum/internship site list on Tevera by click on "Site Placements" and then on "Add Placement." Click on the + sign next to a site to view their contact information. Students will want to select a site that provides experiences matching their professional interests and career goals. Contact the site to inquire about their practicum/internship application process and schedule an interview. During the interview, the site supervisor will determine whether or not the student is a good fit for this particular site and students will also determine whether or not they will be available to accrue hours during the days and times the site requires. If both the site supervisor and the student agree the site would be appropriate, the student completes the Site Commitment Form in Tevera. This can be done by clicking on "Site Placements" then on "Add Placement" and then select "Start" next to the site you have accepted. Click "Start" next to the supervisor who will be supervising you or select "Suggest a Supervisor" and complete the Site Commitment Form. If you are suggesting a new supervisor, then you will also need to send a request through Tevera for your supervisor to submit their resume.

The *Practicum/Internship Site Commitment Form* represents the student's commitment to complete his or her practicum/internship experience at that particular site. Site supervisors are selective when choosing students and often plan their schedules around the needs of the students.

Once students submit their completed Practicum/Internship Site Commitment Form to the counseling office, they cannot change sites without approval from the Practicum/Internship Coordinator. Students who submit their Practicum/Internship Site Commitment Form before the priority deadlines are guaranteed enrollment in a practicum/internship course for that semester. Students who submit their Practicum/Internship Site Commitment Form after the priority deadlines will be placed on a waiting list for an available course section. Students must upload a current copy of their current Liability Insurance to Tevera.

On occasion, some site supervisors may schedule interviews of potential practicum/internship students after the priority deadline. In this case, students may submit a Practicum/Internship Site Interview Schedule form on Tevera. If this form is submitted by the priority deadline, the student will have until the 7th of the month to submit the completed Practicum/Internship Site Commitment Form and still be included on the priority deadline. Extension for late interview will not be granted for students who submit the Practicum Internship Site Interview Schedule form after the priority deadline. If the Practicum/Internship Site Commitment Form is submitted after the 7th, the student will be placed on the waiting list for a course section.

Priority Deadlines for Enrollment in Practicum/Internship	
Fall Semesters:	July 1
Spring Semesters:	November 1
Summer Semesters:	April 1

Placement in a Practicum/Internship Course Section

Once students have submitted their Practicum/Internship Commitment Forms, the Practicum/Internship Coordinator(s) will determine final approval of the practicum/internship sites and place students in an available course sections. Students will be released to enroll in available course sections based on the order they submitted their Practicum/Internship Commitment Forms. Students may only enroll in one practicum/internship course each semester. Student must also successfully complete the practicum course prior to enrolling in an internship course.

Students are encouraged to carefully consider their course load during the semester in which they enroll in a practicum or internship course. The practicum and internship courses place many demands on a student’s time, energy, support systems, and resources. To successfully complete these clinical courses, students need to be emotionally available and physically present for their clients and site supervisors. A demanding academic and/or work schedule is not grounds for absenteeism at the site or extensions on assignment due dates in practicum and internship courses.

Before the Practicum/ Internship Class Begins

Once students have been placed at a practicum/internship site, but before the semester starts, students must:

- Contact the site supervisor and schedule an initial supervision appointment to occur during the first week of the semester.
- Set up a supervision schedule with the site supervisor.
- Complete any background security checks or drug screenings the site may require. These

tasks must be completed before class begins to avoid delays in when students may start to accrue hours at their sites.

- Complete any preliminary training the site requires. Students may begin counting hours on the first day of the semester until the student's last class meeting of the semester. Training that occurs in between semesters cannot be counted as practicum/internship hours. However, waiting until the training is next offered during the semester might delay when the student can begin accruing hours at the site.
- Obtain Professional Liability Insurance. Students need to obtain liability insurance before the semester begins and upload to Tevera prior to the first day of class. Students may not begin their experience at their practicum/internship site until they have obtained and submitted verification of their liability insurance to their university instructor. Students may secure liability insurance from the following websites:
 - Texas Counseling Association website (membership + insurance):
<http://www.txca.org/>
 - American Counseling Association website (membership + insurance):
<http://www.counseling.org>
 - Healthcare Service Providers Organization website (insurance only):
<http://HPSO.com>

Between Semester Hours

A&M-SA practicum/internship students are not approved to accumulate “between semesters” hours at their sites. Practicum/internship students may begin accumulating hours at their sites on the first day of the semester and can continue until the student's last class meeting of the semester. Some sites may require students to continue volunteering at the site after the semester is completed. If the site requires this, the site supervisor will inform the student in writing of these expectations before the student signs the Practicum/Internship Site Commitment Form for the university. Student liability insurance does not cover students who volunteer between semesters and A&M-SA employees do not provide supervision for students in between semesters.

Site Attendance and Campus Holidays

Students are required to be at their site as per their agreement with the site supervisor. Many practicum/internship sites are open and provide services to clients on days that are considered holidays by A&M-SA. These days provide opportunities for students to gain additional hours at their sites. If students are regularly scheduled to be at their sites on a day that is an A&M-SA holiday, they are expected to be at their site based on their agreement with the site supervisor. It is the student's responsibility to share A&M-SA's academic calendar with the site supervisor early in the semester when developing the student schedule.

Time and Experience Requirements:

See below for a complete breakdown of the time and experience requirement for both practicum and internship courses.

Practicum	Internship
Students must complete supervised practicum experiences that total a minimum of 100 hours over a semester academic term.	Students must complete supervised internship experiences that total a minimum of 200 hours over a semester academic term.
Students must be actively engaged with their practicum site for a minimum of 80% of the weeks in the semester (i.e., 13 weeks of a 16 week fall/spring semester or 8 weeks of a summer 10 week session).	Students must be actively engaged with their internship site for a minimum of 80% of the weeks in the semester (i.e., 13 weeks of a 16 week fall/spring semester or 8 weeks of a summer 10 week session).
The practicum experience should be broken down with a minimum of 40% (40 hrs.) being in the form of direct client contact.	The internship experience should be broken down with a minimum of 40% (80 hrs.) being in the form of direct client contact, with a minimum of 5 hours of direct client contact in a group setting as the group facilitator/co-facilitator.
Weekly interaction that averages one hour per week of individual supervision from the site supervisor.	Weekly interaction that averages one hour per week of individual supervision from the site supervisor.
An average of 1.5 hours per week of group supervision which occurs during the practicum class meetings.	An average of 1.5 hours per week of group supervision which occurs during the internship class meetings.
The opportunity for the student to become familiar with a variety of professional activities and resources in addition to direct service (e. g., record keeping, assessment instruments, supervision, information and referral, in-service and staff meetings) at the practicum site.	The opportunity for the student to become familiar with a variety of professional activities and resources in addition to direct service (e. g., record keeping, assessment instruments, supervision, information and referral, in-service and staff meetings) at the internship site.
The development of program-appropriate audio/video recordings for use in supervision or live supervision of the student's interactions with clients.	The development of program-appropriate audio/video recordings for use in supervision or live supervision of the student's interactions with clients.
Evaluation of the student's counseling performance throughout the practicum, including documentation of a midterm formal evaluation and final formal evaluation after the student completes the practicum	Evaluation of the student's counseling performance throughout the internship, including documentation of a midterm formal evaluation and final formal evaluation after the student completes the internship

Professionalism

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner. This includes but is not limited to:

- setting and maintaining a consistent schedule
- following the field site's dress code
- being on time
- providing adequate notice if unable to be on site as scheduled
- maintaining a professional demeanor
- treating clients and peers as individuals deserving of respect
- completing all site-required case notes and other paperwork
- following all relevant ethical codes, including that of the American Counseling Association and Texas Administrative Code (681).

Students are required to complete their commitments with their sites and their clients regardless of whether they have completed the required hours for their practicum course. Students shall not neglect their responsibilities to their site before the end of the semester even if they have completed the required hours.

Students who are asked to leave a site for unprofessional or unethical behavior may be dropped from the course and/or receive a failing grade. In addition, such an occurrence may trigger other departmental proceedings such as an evaluation for fitness to practice.

Confidentiality

Students are expected to maintain confidentiality of all information related to clients, as well as all information related to cases presented in practicum/internship classes. Students are responsible to know and follow legal and ethical confidentiality practices of the field placement site, as well as applicable codes of ethics. In addition, students shall not use any client identifying information in any practicum/internship documentation. Students shall maintain recordings and other client information that may be necessary for classes in ways that are secure, legal, and ethical. Tapes, transcripts, case studies, or other client information used for class shall be destroyed in an appropriate manner as soon as they have been evaluated unless it is the policy of the site to maintain and secure all tapes. Any questions regarding confidentiality must be discussed with the university practicum/internship instructor as well as the site supervisor.

EVALUATION OF THE CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

Counselor Self Awareness

The Department of Counseling, Health & Kinesiology at Texas A&M University –San Antonio is strongly committed to the idea that the personhood of the counselor is a necessary component of the counseling process. Research continues to indicate that the relationship between the counselor and client is a primary contributor to effective outcomes in counseling. Thus, personal qualities, characteristics, experiences, and reactions of counselors are as important as knowledge and skills in working effectively with clients.

Personal development is a fundamental part of the A&M-SA counseling program. Much of the coursework in the department will require active engagement in self-reflection. This is

particularly true in practicum & internship. Students are expected to take the necessary emotional risks for personal growth and self-awareness as well as to be able to effectively utilize critiques from faculty, supervisors, and peers. Emotional safety of students is important to faculty and every effort to ensure that safety will be made; however, safety differs from comfort. Students are expected to stretch themselves by identifying biases and assumptions, participating in activities that encourage personal reflection and self-knowledge, receiving feedback from faculty and peers, and using feedback to address barriers to effective counseling practice.

Practicum/internship evaluation is an on-going process and consequently the final evaluation should not be a surprise to either the student or the supervisor. Ideally, evaluation will not only focus on exit level skills but also on student growth during the semester. A grade of A or B is required to pass practicum/internship.

Student Fitness and Performance Policy Statement

In order to complete the counselor preparation program at A&M-SA students must:

- Maintain scholastic performance meeting or exceeding department standards;
- Demonstrate the acquisition of an ability to apply counseling skills necessary to work effectively with persons having diverse needs, as generally accepted by practitioners in counseling;
- Demonstrate emotional and mental fitness in their interactions with others;
- Conform to the codes of ethics of professional associations in counseling and of the state of Texas.

It is the duty of faculty members in the Counseling program to evaluate all students according to these standards in all settings in which faculty members and students interact, in classes, in advising and counseling settings, and in personal conversations. Students are expected to respond to evaluations, formal or informal, in appropriate ways, in all cases, attempting to conform to standards as these are explained to them. Conformance with standards must be demonstrated by students, throughout the period of time spent in the program; events of non-conformance must be followed by faculty judgments that satisfactory adjustments have been made.

Admission to the program does not guarantee fitness to remain in the program to completion. Only those students who meet program standards will be allowed to continue in the program. If and when a student is judged not to meet program standards sufficiently to be allowed to engage in counseling others, that student will be removed from continuation in the program. The Fitness to Practice Policy is available on the department website.

Supervision Requirements

Practicum/internship students will receive an average of 1.5 hours of university-based group supervision each week during the semester. This supervision occurs during the scheduled class time.

In addition, practicum/internship students will receive a minimum of one hour of individual or triadic supervision from the site supervisor each week. Group supervision from the site supervisor does not supplant the requirement for individual or triadic supervision.

Evaluation Measures

Formal evaluation of student performance and progress will be measured by:

- Instructor's evaluation of the student tape and transcript using the Counseling Skills Scale
- Site supervisor's mid-term evaluation of student
- Site supervisor's final evaluation of the student
- Other measures selected by individual practicum instructors

Documentation

During the practicum and internship experiences, students' documents will be stored in Tevera, including:

- Student Contact Information
- Site Supervisor's Practicum or Internship Supervisory Agreement
- Documentation of liability insurance for each practicum/internship course
- Crisis Management Form
- Time logs
- Site supervisor's mid-term evaluation of student
- Site supervisor's final evaluation of student
- Student's evaluation of site supervisor
- Other information deemed relevant by the instructor

Students are responsible for ensuring that all documentation is completed correctly, signed by appropriate individuals, and provided to the university practicum/internship instructor in a timely manner. Students who do not provide documentation will not receive a grade.

POST-MASTER'S LICENSING INFORMATION

Students are advised to regularly check the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors website. A graduate of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program or the Marriage, Couples, & Family Program meets the academic coursework requirements to become a Licensed Professional Counseling Intern. However, licensing requirements also include a 3,000 hour post-master's supervised experience working with clients, as well as a passing score on the licensing exam. For more information, including application forms, refer to the LPC Board of Examiners' website: <https://www.bhec.texas.gov/texas-state-board-of-examiners-of-professional-counselors/index.html>

Students must complete the Practicum Documentation Form provided by the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors and submit to the Counseling and Guidance Program Administrative Assistant to begin the approval process.

FORMS



PERMISSION FORM TO VIDEO/AUDIO TAPE – ADULT

I _____, agree to participate in sessions led by the Counseling Student that will be video/audio taped for use in the Practicum/Internship in Counseling course at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. The sole purpose of the taping is for the supervision and training of the counseling practicum student.

I understand that the following procedures are part of this agreement:

1. All material will be kept confidential with the class
2. The participant will not be identified name
3. The tape(s) will be erased or destroyed at the end of the current university semester

Participant Signature Date

Student Counselor's Printed Name Date

Student Counselor's Signature Date



PERMISSION FORM TO VIDEO/AUDIO TAPE – MINOR

I give permission for my child, _____ to participate in sessions led by the Counseling Practicum Student that will be video/audio taped for use in the Clinical Mental Health Practicum in Counseling course at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. The sole purpose of the taping is for the supervision and training of the Counseling Practicum Student.

I understand that the following procedures are part of this agreement:

1. All material will be kept confidential with the class
2. The participant will not be identified name
3. The tape(s) will be erased or destroyed at the end of the current university semester

Parent/Guardian Printed Name Date

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Minor's Signature Date

Student Counselor's Printed Name Date

Student Counselor's Signature Date



**Texas State Board of Examiners of Licensed Professional
Counselors Subchapter B. Authorized Counseling Methods and
Practices.**

§681.31. Counseling Methods and Practices

The use of specific methods, techniques, or modalities within the practice of professional counseling is limited to professional counselors appropriately trained and competent in the use of such methods, techniques, or modalities. Authorized counseling methods techniques and modalities may include, but are not restricted to, the following:

**The following activities will be listed under “Direct Clients & Students
Counselor Activities”**

Individual counseling which utilizes interpersonal, cognitive, cognitive-behavioral, behavioral, psychodynamic, and affective methods and strategies to achieve mental, emotional, physical, social, moral, educational, career, and spiritual development and adjustment through the life span

Group counseling which utilizes interpersonal, cognitive, cognitive-behavioral, behavioral, psychodynamic, and affective methods and strategies to achieve mental, emotional, physical, social, moral, educational, spiritual, and career development and adjustment through the life span

Psychoeducation group counseling which uses a curriculum for the delivery of information and strategies to educate about mental, emotional, physical, social, moral, educational, spiritual, and career development and adjustment through the life span

Marriage counseling which utilizes interpersonal, cognitive, cognitive-behavioral, behavioral, psychodynamic, affective and family systems methods and strategies to achieve resolution of problems associated with cohabitation and interdependence of adults living as couples

Family counseling which utilizes interpersonal, cognitive, cognitive-behavioral, behavioral, psychodynamic, affective and family systems methods and strategies with families to achieve mental, emotional, physical, moral, social, educational, spiritual, and career development and adjustment through the life span

The following activities will be listed under “Problem/Topic”

Chemical dependency counseling which utilizes interpersonal, cognitive, cognitive-behavioral, behavioral, psychodynamic, affective methods and strategies, and 12-step methods to achieve abstinence from the addictive substances and behaviors by the client

Education counseling which utilizes formal and informal counseling methods and assessments and appraisal instruments for the purpose of determining strength, weakness, mental condition, emotional stability, intellectual ability, interest, skill, aptitude, achievement, and other personal characteristics of individuals for the selection of and placement in educational settings, preschool through postdoctoral study



Career development counseling which utilizes formal and informal counseling methods and appraisal instruments for the purpose of determining intellectual ability, interest, skill, aptitude, achievement, mental condition, emotional fitness, and other personal characteristics for occupational, vocational, and career selection and placement throughout the life span;

Referral counseling which utilizes the processes of evaluating and identifying needs of clients to determine the advisability of referral to other specialists, informing the client of such judgment and communicating as requested or deemed appropriate to such referral sources;

Psychotherapy which utilizes interpersonal, cognitive, cognitive-behavioral, behavioral, psychodynamic, and affective methods and strategies to assist clients in their efforts to recover from mental or emotional illness;

Play therapy which utilizes play and play media as the child's natural medium of self-expression, and verbal tracking of the child's play behaviors as a part of the therapist's role in helping children overcome their social, emotional, and mental problems;

Expressive modalities utilized in the treatment of interpersonal, emotional or mental health issues, chemical dependency, or human developmental issues. Modalities include but are not limited to, music, art, dance movement, or the use of techniques employing animals in providing treatment;

Assessing and appraising, in compliance with §681.43 of this title (relating to Testing), which utilizes formal and informal instruments and procedures, for which the counselor has received appropriate training and supervision, in individual and group settings for the purposes of determining the client's strengths and weaknesses, mental condition, emotional stability, intellectual ability, interests, aptitudes, achievement level and other personal characteristics for a better understanding of human behavior, and for diagnosing mental problems; but does not permit the diagnosis of a physical condition or disorder

The following activities will be listed under “Indirect Student Counselor Activities”

On-site training from the site

On-line training from the site

Professional growth workshops

Writing case notes

Preparing psychoeducation groups

Staff meetings

Observation or shadowing of the site supervisor or other counseling staff

Other activities may be included with the approval of both your site supervisor and your practicum instructor