



Practicum and Internship Manual

Clinical Mental Health Counseling and Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling

**Western Kentucky University
Department of Counseling & Student Affairs**

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The practicum and internship experiences are key parts of counseling students' planned programs in completing their degree requirements. As such, the department values its relationships with community agencies that fulfill the need for practicum and internship placements. This manual outlines the purpose and requirements of practicum and internship experiences, the roles and functions of site faculty and site supervisors, clinical setting requirements, the steps in being considered a clinical site, the documentation process, and requirements specific to the CACREP-accreditation of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) and Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling (MCFC) programs. The purpose of practicum and internship experiences are to develop diverse counseling skills and competencies applicable across client populations and cultures; provide for the application of theory and the development of counseling skills under supervision; and prepare students with a broad background of knowledge, skills, abilities and dispositions to function effectively as Professional Counselors.

Clinical Coordinator

The CMHC/MCFC Clinical Coordinator serves as the liaison between the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs and all CMHC/MCFC clinical sites during the practicum and internship experiences. The Clinical Coordinator communicates associated due dates and deadlines, facilitates site development, maintains clinical paperwork, and is the contact person for site supervisors, and for CMHC/MCFC students preparing for Practicum and Internship, as well as those currently placed.

Practicum

The Practicum Course (CNS 591) is the first supervised counseling experience students will have in a clinical setting. This course is offered only during the summer semester. *Students are responsible for completing the following steps by the respective due dates communicated by the Clinical Coordinator and/or in the Department's digital platforms (i.e., Supervision Assist).*

Practicum Enrollment Process

1. Successful completion (a B or better earned) of the following prerequisite courses: CNS 554, 555, 559, 560.
2. Attendance at the CMHC/MCFC Practicum and Internship during the spring prior to summer course registration.
3. Attendance at the Practicum and Internship Job Fair during the spring prior to summer course registration. Students will learn about and possibly secure potential practicum/internship or job opportunities, as well as best practices.
4. Apply for potential Practicum sites. Secure site by **March 1**. If Students are interested in a site that is not yet approved, they should follow the guidelines for establishing a new site noted later in this manual.

5. Submission of the *Site and Supervision Contract* to the Clinical Coordinator by **April 15 (or August 5)**. Specific details are listed directly on the form at [CMHC MCFC Practicum and Internship website](#). A completed contract indicates that both the student and Site Supervisor understand and have met the academic and professional requirements and prerequisites for practicum. The Contract must be submitted with the following documentation:
 - a. Copy of unofficial graduate transcript
 - b. Proof of professional membership (i.e., ACA, KCA, APT, KAPT, AMHCA, IAMFC, NASAP).
 - c. Copy of individual professional counseling liability (malpractice) insurance policy. Students must have their own individual insurance policy and submit proof. The insurance must be maintained throughout the practicum and internship experience and an updated certificate must be provided if coverage expires during the clinical experience. It can be purchased through professional organizations (i.e., CPH, HPSO).

Practicum Course Requirements

The Practicum course meets various CACREP-accreditation requirements that are incorporated through content, as well as experiential objectives and assignments. Students must earn an A or B to matriculate into CNS 596 Internship; course requirements include and may not be limited to:

1. Completion of supervised practicum clock hours:
 - a. A minimum of **100** total clock hours over at least **10** weeks. Students are required to complete a minimum of 8 (direct and indirect) hours on site every week during the entire semester. All indirect hours must be completed on site performing site-related activities appropriate to the student's program of study.
 - b. At least **40** clock hours of direct service with actual clients that contributes to the development of counseling skills (for MCFC students, at least 30% of direct service hours must be in a relationship modality). Any direct service provided on-line/digitally must be in accordance with all current legal/ethical requirements (HIPAA, FERPA, etc.).
 - c. Attending at least **1** hour of individual and/or triadic supervision by the site supervisor each week. Supervision provided through a digital platform must be approved by the Clinical Coordinator and must be in accordance with all current legal/ethical requirements (i.e., HIPAA, FERPA).
Supervisors are expected to review the student's recordings of clients during these meetings.
 - d. Attending a minimum of **1½** hours of synchronous group supervision with a faculty member or adjunct. Supervision provided through a digital platform must be approved by the Clinical Coordinator and must be in

accordance with all current legal/ethical requirements (i.e., HIPAA, FERPA).

- e. Weekly documentation and signatures of direct and non-direct clock hours on the Practicum Hour Log. See [CMHC MCFC Practicum and Internship website](#).
2. Attendance at **all** individual/triadic supervision and class meetings. If absent for supervision or class, students are not permitted to see clients until the next meeting. Students are expected to bring a video of their work with a client to every individual/triadic supervision meeting; videorecording of direct service provided to clients should be done and reviewed on a consistent basis throughout the clinical course experience. Students are responsible for understanding and articulating how their services, including those digitally delivered are in accordance with all current legal/ethical requirements (HIPAA, FERPA, etc.). If students need additional support understanding how their services meet legal and ethical requirements, they should contact their Site Supervisor immediately.
3. Successful completion of Case Presentations. See syllabus for details.
4. Submission of all documents noted in the syllabus by all by associated deadlines.
5. All documents must be uploaded and submitted by the Wednesday of Finals week. See [CMHC MCFC Practicum and Internship website](#) for details.

Internship

The Internship course meets various CACREP-accreditation requirements that are incorporated through content, as well as experiential objectives and assignments. Students must earn an A or B in CNS 591 to matriculate into CNS 596(1); and an A or B in CNS 596(1) to matriculate into CNS 596(2). Registration in two sections of CNS 596 at the same time is never permitted. *Students are responsible for completing the following steps by the respective due dates communicated by the Clinical Coordinator and/or in the Department's digital platforms (i.e., Supervision Assist).*

Internship Enrollment Process

1. Successful completion of CNS 591 [or CNS 596(1)].
2. Submission of the *Internship Site and Supervision Contract* to the Clinical Coordinator by **August 5 [or by January 5th for CNS 596(2)]**. If students are interested seeking placement in a new site and/or one that is not yet approved, they should do so in consultation with the Clinical Coordinator and by following the guidelines for establishing a new site noted later in this manual. Students may need to submit updated documentation of:
 - a. Proof of professional membership (i.e., ACA, KCA, APT, KAPT, AMHCA, IAMFC, NASAP).
 - b. Copy of individual professional counseling liability (malpractice) insurance policy. Students must have their own individual insurance policy and submit proof. The insurance must be maintained throughout the practicum and internship experience and an updated certificate must be provided if

coverage expires during the clinical experience. It can be purchased through professional organizations (i.e., CPH, HPSO).

Internship Course Requirements

The Internship course meets various CACREP-accreditation requirements that are incorporated through content, as well as experiential objectives and assignments. Course requirements include and may not be limited to:

1. Completion of supervised internship clock hours in roles and settings:
 - a. A minimum of **300** clock hours in each Internship (600 hours total over two semesters). Students are required to complete a minimum of 18 (direct and indirect) hours on site every week during the entire semester. All indirect hours must be completed on site performing site related activities appropriate to the student's program of study.
 - b. At least **120** clock hours of direct service (240 hours total over two semester) with actual clients that contributes to the development of counseling skills (for MCFC students, at least 30% of direct service hours must be in a relationship modality). *MCFC students who are interested in pursuing the Kentucky MCF Associate Credential are required to obtain an additional 20 hours of direct service across both internships. Any direct service provided on-line/digitally must be in accordance with all current legal/ethical requirements (HIPAA, FERPA, etc.)*
 - c. Attending at least **1** hour of individual and/or triadic supervision by the site supervisor each week. Supervision provided through a digital platform must be approved by the Clinical Coordinator and must be in accordance with all current legal/ethical requirements (i.e., HIPAA, FERPA). ***Supervisors are expected to review the student's recordings of clients during these meetings.***
 - d. Attending a minimum of **1½** hours of group supervision with a faculty member or adjunct. Supervision provided through a digital platform must be approved by the Clinical Coordinator and must be in accordance with all current legal/ethical requirements (i.e., HIPAA, FERPA).
2. Weekly documentation and signatures of direct and non-direct clock hours on the Hour Log. See [CMHC MCFC Practicum and Internship website](#)
3. Attendance at **all** individual/triadic supervision and class meetings. If absent for supervision or class, students are not permitted to see clients until the next meeting. Students are expected to bring a video of their work with a client to every individual/triadic supervision meeting; videorecording of direct service provided to clients should be done and reviewed on a consistent basis throughout the clinical course experience. Students are responsible for understanding and articulating how their services, including those digitally delivered are in accordance with all current legal/ethical requirements (HIPAA, FERPA, etc.). If

students need additional support understanding how their services meet legal and ethical requirements, they should contact their Site Supervisor immediately.

4. Successful completion of Case Presentations. See syllabus for details.
5. Submission of all documents noted in the syllabus by all by associated deadlines.
6. All documents must be uploaded and submitted **by the Wednesday of Finals week**. See [CMHC MCFC Practicum and Internship website](#) for details.

Expectations for Engaging in Direct and Indirect Hours

Direct Contact Hours

Direct contact is defined as providing counseling services to actual clients affiliated with the student's approved site in the following capacity: conducting initial intakes and assessments, individual counseling, group counseling, psycho-educational groups, and family or couples counseling. Direct contact involves a client-counselor interaction that is clearly articulated and agreed upon in a signed Informed Consent form.

Additionally, observing counseling sessions from behind a 2-way mirror, watching other students' videos, or consulting about a client does not count as direct contact/service. Students are expected to video record their counseling sessions and have them available for viewing in all individual and group supervision meetings. Students are responsible for understanding how their services, including those digitally delivered, are in accordance with all current legal/ethical requirements (HIPAA, FERPA, etc.).

Indirect Hours

Indirect hours include but are not limited to attending staff/faculty consultation, supervision and class; on and off-site service trainings; document and note taking, as well as other clinical-related administrative duties; observation, professional development activities approved by the Clinical Coordinator.

Individual Supervision Hours

Individual supervision includes time spent with faculty and/or site supervisors discussing development as a counselor and counseling interactions with clients at the site. Individual Supervision is conducted by the approved Site Supervisor and the instructor of the Practicum course and in a dyadic or triadic (one supervisor and two supervisees) face to face or zoom format. Supervision should include the viewing of videos on a regular basis (i.e., weekly); including addressing skill and professional identity development. Students are expected to plan, negotiate, and advocate at the site to receive these experiences; and should present program-appropriate video recordings throughout their supervised experience.

Group Supervision Hours

Time spent in the practicum or internship group supervision class.

Total Practicum or Internship Hours

The total number of hours includes the direct, indirect, individual supervision, and group supervision hours. Due to various circumstances students may not fulfill the required number of hours to satisfy practicum or internship course requirements. In such cases students should contact the Clinical Coordinator immediately. After which, the student may be advised to complete the *Plan of Action for Course Completion* form. See [CMHC MCFC Practicum and Internship website](#) for details.

While students may meet the course and accreditation hour requirement prior to the end of the semester, as a courtesy to their site and maintaining longevity of care to clients, they are expected to maintain both indirect and direct hours (approximately 20 hours/week) until the close of the semester.

Academic Breaks

Practicum students and Interns follow the WKU Academic Calendar. When class meetings [CNS 591, CNS 596(1) and (2)] are not being offered due to academic breaks (i.e., winter, transition from summer to fall), interns cannot engage in the counselor/client relationship and thus cannot provide direct contact with clients. Clients should be informed at the start of the counseling relationship that interns follow a university calendar and must be enrolled in a class to provide direct services. Sites are encouraged to include reference to this in the client Informed Consent document. Further, students and Site Supervisors should plan ahead for these breaks and should eventually discuss with clients what resources are available to them (i.e., other contacts/referrals at the site, wellness plans, emergency contacts). (Sites are ultimately responsible for the care and welfare of the clients interns provide services to, and per CACREP policies, faculty supervision is also required for interns to practice.)

Expectations and Evaluation of Students

Students are required to abide by the Department's expectations for student Academic and Professional Performance throughout their Practicum and Internship experiences. The criteria as outlined in the CSA Student Handbook are listed as follows, while also noting expectations specific to CNS 591 and CNS 596.

1. Respects divergent points of view
 - o Engages openly and respectfully in conversations in which divergent perspectives are being addressed
2. Awareness of diversity and non-discrimination
 - o Demonstrates competence in knowledge, attitudes, skills related to diversity through observable behavior and interactions with others
 - o Engages in opportunities to build multicultural competencies
3. Academic performance (in both face-to-face and digital platforms)
 - o Cumulative grade meets WKU Graduate School standards
 - o Demonstrates development of knowledge and skills in both face to face and digital class environments.

- o Meets course attendance and participation expectations (Timely attendance is required during all scheduled class meetings. Exceptions will be determined in consultation with the department head. Consequences for unexcused absences include receiving an "F" or "Incomplete" in the course; and will be determined in consultation with department head.)
 - o Students should be able to demonstrate that they are prepared for each class meeting (i.e., completed all required reading). They can expect to invest about 3-4 hours outside of class each week for each unit or credit of coursework they are enrolled in. During this time, they can spend time studying the required reading and researching additional sources to help improve their knowledge and skill base.
 - o Assignments are turned in on time
 - o Meets graduate writing standards. The Department of Counseling and Student Affairs requires students to follow the [Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association](#) (APA). Student should study the manual for guidance on paper format, tables and figures, in-text citations, references, mechanics of style, grammar, and use of bias-free language. Students should consult with [WKU's Writing Center](#) for further assistance and support.
 - o Is proactive about academic performance
4. Appropriate in-class behavior (in both face-to-face and digital platforms)
 - o Demonstrates ability to listen to others with patience
 - o Able to articulate content and able to offer analysis of content
 - o Tone of voice, verbal and nonverbal sharing are adequate, appropriate and respectful
 - o Professional Dress. Students (who represent the integrity and professionalism of the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs) are required to dress and appear professionally and/or appropriately at their clinical counseling sites.
 5. Collaboration, contribution to positive environment (in both face-to-face and digital platforms)
 - o During class and outside of class (i.e., internship sites, with faculty, in department student organizations)
 - o Works well with other students
 6. Reflective practice and personal responsibility
 - o Engages in thoughtful practice (i.e., about course and clinical work)
 - o Open to self-examination; reveals insights related personal successes and areas for opportunity
 - o Accepts personal mistakes; avoids blaming others
 - o Records sessions on a weekly basis and brings them to all individual and group supervision meetings
 7. Personal, interpersonal & professional growth
 - o Seeks development opportunities outside of the classroom
 - o Seeks consultation with faculty regarding growth and improvement
 - o Demonstrates growth over time and in response to PPR and other feedback
 8. Receives and integrates feedback

- o Invites and welcomes feedback from others
 - o Demonstrates having incorporated such feedback
 - o Students receive ongoing feedback from their Site Supervisor, course instructor, as well as peers and are expected to accept such openly, as well as apply the feedback accordingly.
 - o The Site Supervisor completes the *Evaluation of Student Performance* form at the mid-term and at the end of the semester in collaboration with the student.
9. Engagement in digitally delivered courses and programs
- o Demonstrates evidence of meeting technology requirements; expectations for attendance, participation, and presence; reaching out to WKU services as needed in order to be successful in any digitally delivered programming and courses. See CSA Student Handbook for expectations.
 - o Adheres to related ethical and legal requirements
10. Ethical and legal compliance (per respective profession)
- o Students are expected to adhere to their respective profession's ethical codes and standards of practice in multi-delivered course platforms and outside of the classroom.
 - o Security of Media. Some courses (technique and methods courses, practicum and internship) may require recorded (audio, video) of a student's application of course content with a volunteer. Students are responsible for (a) ensuring that the individual being recorded has been provided informed consent about the purpose of the recording, its use, who it will be shared with, and when it will be destroyed; (b) formatting the recording to the instructor's or supervisor's preference; (c) keeping the recording secure from any other source by means of password protection, lock boxes; and (d) are destroyed through appropriate means.
 - o Ethical practices related to video recording, sharing and deleting
 - o Digitally delivered supervision or counseling services provided by supervisors and/or students must comply with all current and related legal/ethical requirements at all times.

At any point if the site supervisor, faculty supervisor, clinical coordinator, and/or Department Head deem that the student needs additional support and/or believes that the student is not meeting the above forementioned, they can request to view additional video sessions, recommend and require the student to hold off on registering for the next internship course and/or require that the student change practicum or internship sites. Students may also be placed on a formal departmental student support plan, which can include being removed from CNS 591 or CNS 596 and/or the department. (See [CSA Student Handbook](#).) Further, passing Practicum or Internship courses is not entirely dependent on academic progression. A student's skill development as well as fit for the profession is also heavily weighted and determined by the Counseling Faculty.

Supervision

Faculty Supervisors

The faculty supervisor is the instructor of the CNS 591 or CNS 596 course. They are hired and/or full-time faculty members within the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs who oversees the group supervision class for practicum and internship students. Per CACREP-accreditation, the faculty supervisor/instructor has relevant experience, professional credentials, counseling supervision training, and when delivering supervision through digital platforms, does so with relevant training and in compliance with legal and ethical requirements.

1. Will develop and agree to a supervision contract developed for each student to define the roles and responsibilities of the faculty supervisor, site supervisor and student during practicum.
2. Will provide additional individual or triadic supervision for students on an as needed basis.
3. Will provide at least an average of 1½ hours per week of group supervision provided on a regular schedule throughout the practicum; and offers triadic supervision when needed.
4. Will observe a student's interactions with clients through audio/video recordings and/or live supervision.
5. Will provide regular feedback to students they supervise about their development as counselors.
6. During practicum, will consult with site supervisors regarding student progression and midterm and final evaluations. Faculty supervisors will discuss evaluations with the students and site supervisors and obtain site supervisors' and students' signatures on these evaluations.

Site Supervisors

The Site Supervisor is the primary point of contact at the site and serves as the individual supervisor for practicum and internship students. Per CACREP-accreditation, the Site Supervisor has: (1) a minimum of a master's degree, preferably in counseling, or a related profession; (2) relevant certifications and/or licenses; (3) a minimum of two years of pertinent professional experience in the specialty area in which the student is enrolled; (4) knowledge of the program's expectations, requirements, and evaluation procedures for students; and (5) relevant training in counseling supervision. When delivering supervision through digital platforms, does so with relevant training and in compliance with legal and ethical requirements. The Site Supervisor also:

1. Will have familiarized themselves with the Department and expectations by reviewing (a) the Practicum and Internship Manual to understand the practicum and internship expectations for the student, faculty supervisor, site supervisor,

and site; and (b) completing the *CNS Site Supervisor Orientation* in order to become knowledge of the program's expectations, requirements, and evaluation procedures for students. See [CMHC MCFC Practicum and Internship website](#).

2. Provide individual and/or triadic supervision for at least an hour every week while watching and reviewing videos, conducting live supervision, or participating in co-therapy with the student.
3. Provide regular feedback to students under supervision regarding their development as counselors.
4. Be available on site whenever students are seeing clients and accompany students all on home visits or any direct service outside of the agency.
5. When not on site, ensure that there is a fully licensed individual on site and available whenever students are seeing clients.
6. Sign and agree to the *Practicum/Internship Site and Supervision Contract* and other required clinical paperwork such as hourly logs and evaluations.
7. Complete midterm and final evaluations. Discuss evaluations with students and faculty supervisors upon request. Will consider the supervisee's feedback through their *Student Evaluation of Supervisor*, *Student Evaluation of Site*.
8. Serve as a resource and support person for the agency orienting students to agency policies and procedures.
9. Assist students in building an appropriately balanced case load within the first few weeks of the semester and provide regular feedback to students.
10. Take advantage of assistance, consultation, and professional development opportunities provided by the counseling program faculty as needed.
11. Provide students an opportunity to obtain their required direct service with clients and counseling-related indirect hours as indicated above.
12. Work collaboratively with the Clinical Coordinator and Faculty Supervisor; and will contact the Clinical Coordinator if and when any concerns/issues arise.

Digital Delivery of Supervision and Counseling

When providing supervision in a digital platform, practicum and Internship supervisors and course instructors must have relevant training in that platform and comply with all current legal/ethical requirements when using it. All practicum and internship students must adhere to all current legal/ethical requirements when providing clinical counseling in a digital platform. Supervisors, as well as students should follow the related expectations as noted in the Department's Student Handbook.

- Secure and maintain access to technology resources, including an internet connection when enrolled in digitally delivered courses and programs.

- Have a working knowledge of computers, internet use and Zoom; as well as consistent and reliable access to high speed internet, Wi-Fi, a Mac or Windows desktop or laptop, microphone, camera, webcam, and audio equipment (i.e., earphones, earbuds, headphones).
- Have administrative privileges associated with their computer in order to install and run software programs and/or updates required within the course or program.
- When providing or attending services, have videos on and have access to a microphone during the entirety of the meeting/session.
- Secure a setting free of distractions (i.e., busy places or noise, other people or needy pets) and attend in a professional manner (i.e., sitting at a table or desk; not dressed in pajamas or other inappropriate ways).

Approved Practicum and Internship Sites

The Clinical Coordinator approve and oversees the maintenance of approved sites according to the site's adherence to the following:

1. Providing ample opportunities for students to accrue required supervised direct and indirect hours. Those opportunities should be broad in scope and should not be limited to one activity (i.e., accruing all direct time conducting groups).
2. Assuring students opportunities for ongoing video recording with the understanding that such will be shared with the Site Supervisor, instructor of the course and during class meetings with peers.
3. Guarantee of supervision/clinical related requirements (including services provided through digitally delivered platforms) are met as noted throughout this manual.
4. Providing students with an orientation to the site that includes a review of the agency goals, functions, policies, and an introduction to personnel in the agency. It should be clear in this orientation that the site is committed to ethical practice. Trainees should also receive copies of all relevant policies and procedures and should be expected to read and become familiar with them as part of their training experience. This includes specific policies and procedures related to conducting home- and school-based counseling services, as well as those via telehealth. (The university will not assume responsibility for unethical practices or unclear policies related to these services.)
5. Ensuring that student safety is a top priority. Weapons of any sort should not be stored in counseling areas and work with potentially violent clients must be closely supervised.
6. Assurance of the scheduling and hosting of the Clinical Coordinator for an annual Site Visit.
7. Submission of the *Site Information Form* to the Clinical Coordinator upon any supervisor or agency changes.

Process for Seeking and Establishing a new Approved Site

1. The student seeks assurance from the potential Site Supervisor that the above expectations can be met. Pending the supervisor's agreement, they view the Site Supervisor Training video located on the [CMHC MCFC Practicum and Internship website](#).
2. After viewing, the potential supervisor and student agree to and complete the *Site and Supervision Contract* and submit to the Clinical Coordinator by the aforementioned respective due dates.
3. After reviewing the form, the Clinical Coordinator will follow-up with the potential Site Supervisor. Only after the Clinical Coordinator communicates that the site has been approved can the student begin work at the site.

Paid Employment at Approved Sites

Students may be employed by their practicum and internship site with the following stipulations:

- All indirect and direct clock hours logged must be consistent with the master's level internship requirements. (Bachelor level activity cannot be logged as indirect or direct time.)
- The student's Site Supervisor must not be the same individual as their employment administrative supervisor.
- Some agencies provide paid employment for graduate practicum and internships; this may include a 12-month contract.

Changing Practicum and Internship Sites and Supervisors

If students desire to change sites and/or Site Supervisors, they should first seek consultation with the Clinical Coordinator while keeping in mind the aforementioned respective deadlines. After which, the student may be advised to complete the *Petition for Change in Practicum or Internship* form; and/or begin the process to seek placement at another site. See [CMHC MCFC Practicum and Internship website](#) for details.