

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

THE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP

PSYC 790: Internship in School Psychology (9 credit hours)

Overview of Internship Guidelines

The Internship in School Psychology is seen as that part of the training program which provides the student and supervisors a chance to evaluate the student's knowledge and skills in a controlled but real and practical setting. It is viewed as an opportunity for the student to develop a clear and professional identity and move toward assumption of full responsibility as a school psychologist. The Internship is seen as that point of training which integrates all previous training experiences by means of practical application in the schools and in some cases additional settings.

As per NASP guidelines, the internship is provided at the end of the formal training period (after the completion of at least 60 graduate course hours, including at least 400 supervised practicum hours, in both school settings and the JMU Human Development Center).

The internship occurs on a full-time basis over a period of one academic (10 month) year (minimum 1200 hours with at least 600 hours in a school setting) or occasionally on a half-time basis over a period of two consecutive years. It is designed to meet the specific training objectives of our program. Nine hours of credit are awarded with students registering for these hours over a three semester period.

Purpose of the Internship Experience

Students will collaborate with families and with community and school professionals in designing, implementing and evaluating prevention programs and interventions that respond to the educational and mental health needs of children and youth and will meet the following goals:

1. Apply knowledge and techniques in Psychology to provide direct interventions to children and their parents including assessment, counseling and consultation.
2. Provide indirect interventions to children, parents, teachers and other school personnel such as consultation, in-service training, and program development.
3. Demonstrate an orientation as a data-oriented problem solver/evaluator/researcher. This orientation is evidenced by significant activity in primary research and program evaluation.
4. Demonstrate an orientation as a facilitator/collaborator/planner in identifying and meeting the mental health and educational needs of individuals and systems.
5. Demonstrate an orientation as an advocate/catalyst for the development of human potential in children, parents, teachers and other school personnel within a multicultural context.

Specific Objectives

1. To provide a broad overview of public school organization, including school policies, personnel practices, and the various specialists employed by schools.
2. To provide orientation to the variety of school services subsumed under the department titles such as Special Education Services, Pupil Personnel Services, Special School Services, Child Study Services, and the like, as these services relate to the total school organization and to the community at large.
3. To provide special awareness of the relationship between special school services and community services and agencies.
4. To develop sensitivity to understanding of various cultures and to develop assessment and intervention skills with culturally diverse children and their parents.
5. To develop understanding and skill in working with teachers and other school staff.
6. To develop sensitivity for and knowledge of classroom interaction and factors which influence classroom atmosphere as well as overall school climate.
7. To develop an awareness of human growth and development as it relates to sequencing of social, emotional and academic skills and instructional materials and techniques.
8. To enhance the role perception of a school psychologist or a supporting school staff member who has the same commitment to the goals of education as do other school staff members.
9. To provide an opportunity for the intern to develop and refine skills in psychoeducational diagnosis, which comprises a comprehensive case study technique.
10. To develop awareness of the variety of sources of information in the comprehensive case study, i.e., the cumulative folder, community agency resources, parent conferences, and the like.
11. To assist the intern in distilling data for a written report and formulation of meaningful recommendations and/or follow-up case conferences and consultation.
12. To help the intern develop interview, consultation and counseling techniques.
13. To focus the intern's attention on the importance of a team approach and on the communication process among school-based specialists.
14. To develop a research frame of reference so that the intern is aware of opportunities and necessity for research in the schools.
15. To promulgate an attitude of professional ethics, responsibility, and growth in the intern.
16. To communicate effectively with parents and school personnel concerning the implications of psycho-educational information.
17. To be aware of efficient office procedures.

The internship experience is considered to be a cooperative venture among several parties; however, primary responsibilities rest with the JMU training program and the public schools. Other cooperating participants may be from a variety of field agencies. Open lines of communication among all those in the internship are essential to provide maximum benefit to the intern.

It is expected that the internship should be comprehensive and well balanced in roles and functions in school psychology. A *maximum* of 50 and a *minimum* of 20 psychological evaluations are permitted over a 10-month, full-time experience to ensure the intern's consistent involvement in other service delivery roles.

Site Selection

The primary consideration in intern placement is the adequacy of a school division as an intern training site, though the needs of the local system must also be taken into consideration. The James Madison University intern should **not** be seen as a primary means for the local district to gain assistance with psychometric work.

The following considerations provide general criteria for intern placement:

1. There should be one individual in the school division directly responsible for the supervision of the intern. The on-site supervisor shall be responsible for no more than two (2) interns. The university supervisor will be responsible for a maximum of twelve (12) interns per academic year. This on-site supervisor should be a school psychologist licensed or certified by the appropriate State Department of Education and/or licensed by the State Board of Psychology as a school psychologist. The James Madison University School Psychology Program Committee must approve this supervising psychologist. It is the responsibility of the school division to have the person asked to serve as the supervisor send a vita of training and experience, with a transcript of graduate credit to the program coordinator for approval prior to selection of the district as an internship site. These credentials will be on file with the program coordinator for review by accreditation teams. Once a supervisor is approved and credentials are on file, that person may serve as a supervisor on a continuing basis. Psychiatrists, social workers, counselors, or psychologists may assist with the supervision in the case of agency placements. The expertise and experience of the supervisor will be an important consideration in intern site selection.
2. Adequate facilities for supervisors and interns is an important consideration to ensure maximum efficiency in assessment, counseling, and other intern activities. Office, secretarial, and other professional support must be provided. The school division should provide professional materials and reimburse the intern for mileage and other professional expenses, in the same manner as other staff psychologists. The interns are usually awarded a stipend, which the school division forwards directly to James Madison University, who then distributes it on a monthly basis to the intern. A small percentage of the stipend is retained by the school psychology program to cover administrative costs.
3. Proximity of the intern site to James Madison University is encouraged so the university coordinator can make visits to the intern and field supervisor. Sites are preferred within driving radius of James Madison University, since the intern will participate in 4 on-campus seminars per year. The on-site supervisor will be invited to attend one of these seminars. Exceptions are made, however, when a student wishes to relocate to another state. Out-of-state placements must meet JMU guidelines for approval.

Specific Supervision: Responsibilities of Local Districts

It is assumed that the most highly qualified person available will serve in the capacity of supervisor. While academic degrees and years of experience do not necessarily correlate perfectly with professional competence, it is the best criteria at our disposal, and it is hoped that the school psychologist who is supervising will have the Ed.S., Ed.D., Ph.D., or Psy.D. degree and three years of experience. The supervisor is seen as an exceedingly important professional model, as well as one

who is responsible for the administrative welfare of the intern.

It is believed that the student provides a sufficient amount of service to the school district to justify the release of two hours per week of an internally employed supervisor from regular duties or case load. If a qualified internal supervisor is not available from the school district, the program coordinator will assist in locating a qualified supervisor who could be employed by the school district for that specific purpose. However, it is the school district's responsibility to obtain a supervisor acceptable to the program staff. Any fees for supervision must be paid by the school district.

The field supervisor will be invited to attend one professional seminar at James Madison University during each year he/she works with an intern. This seminar will involve formal presentations by the interns to the supervisors, JMU faculty, and school psychology students in training. The field supervisor also will serve as a member of the school psychology program's External Advisory Board.

Supervisory Personnel

Two persons have primary responsibility for internship supervision. They are the James Madison University Internship Coordinator (the school psychology trainer) and the field supervisor (the on-site supervising school psychologist).

I. The Internship Coordinator is the field representative of the School Psychology Program at James Madison University. He/she is the liaison person among schools and agencies, the School Psychology Program Coordinator, and the School Psychology Program faculty. The Internship Coordinator will assist students in obtaining appropriate internship sites. The responsibilities of the Internship Coordinator include the following:

- A. All internship contracts which are to be consummated with a school district or agency should be cleared with the Internship Coordinator.
- B. The internship site selection and arrangements are to be planned and implemented by the Internship Coordinator. He/she is responsible for:
 - 1. Making contracts for each intern placement with the school district or agency supervisor.
 - 2. Negotiating the remunerative plans between the intern and the school district or agency.
 - 3. Arranging for on-site supervision for the intern. If no acceptable on-site supervisor is available from the internally employed professionals, the Internship Coordinator will assist in locating a qualified supervisor.
- C. Provide internship guidelines for both the intern and the supervising psychologist and ensure that these arrangements are mutually agreeable to the supervisor, the intern, and the School Psychology Program Faculty.
- D. Discuss the intern's work with the supervising psychologist and other appropriate persons in the school district or agency.

- E. The coordinator plans his/her visits and phone conferences in advance and informs the intern and supervising psychologist of the nature and extent of his/her planned visit. At least one visit will be made by the Internship Coordinator for placements. The coordinator will communicate with the supervising psychologists via email, memos, and telephone.
- F. Designate the final grade (Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory) for the internship experience for the university records. However, this grade should be arrived at by mutual agreement with the supervising psychologist in the internship site. See *School Psychology Internship Evaluation* in this handbook.
- G. Plan the internship experience with the supervising psychologist and intern so that it is the most meaningful experience for the intern and, when possible, so that it also meets the on-site needs of the employing school district or agency.
- H. Critically evaluate the professional log of the intern. If areas of student improvement are needed, it is the responsibility of the coordinator to attempt implementation of these improvements with the student and the supervisor.
- I. If questions of professional ethics arise, the coordinator is expected to respond appropriately, and, if necessary, to seek the advice of colleagues in the School Psychology Program Faculty.
- J. Plan for and implement the seminars to be attended by the interns and their supervisors. These seminars will be held 4 times during the academic year.

II. The Supervising Psychologist is approved by the James Madison University School Psychology Program faculty. He/she must be certified by the appropriate state Department of Education for practice as a School Psychologist. Other personnel may work in a supervisory capacity with a James Madison University School Psychology Intern (psychiatric social workers clinical psychologists, special educators, and the like), but must be members in good standing in their respective professional organizations and certified by approving state agencies. The supervising specialist who assumes the responsibility for directing and supervising the school psychology trainee should be an individual of proven excellence in this field. He/she should be capable of guiding the graduate student successfully through the internship experience.

The supervising specialist will be expected to fulfill the following responsibilities:

- A. Coordinate the internship program with the public school administrators, or agency directors, and the James Madison University Internship Coordinator.
- B. In conjunction with the James Madison University Internship Coordinator, the supervising psychologist should provide the orientation period for the intern at the beginning of the internship experience.
- C. The supervising psychologist will have a minimum of 2 hours of direct supervision with the intern

each week. Some direct observation of the intern's activities at the beginning of the experience is expected.

D. He/she should provide the intern with as many of the activities described as essential for an effective internship experience as outlined under the section “Specific Objectives”, and all the requirements outlined in the attached *School Psychology Field Experience Checklist*.

E. Primary responsibility for dealing with skill areas in need of improvement rests with the supervising psychologist. This may take the form of formal or informal remediation plans.

F. Grade evaluation of the intern will be a joint effort between the coordinator and the supervisor and is based on competency in activities listed, on effectiveness in relating to school staff, and on development of an identity as a professional school psychologist. The supervisor should forward to the program a final written evaluation of the intern’s performance, including completion of the *Field Experience Checklist* and the *School Psychology Internship Evaluation*. Interns will be graded on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. The grade for each semester must include satisfactory progress on the Ed.S. project, i.e., proposal accepted by the end of the first semester.

In the event a student receives an unsatisfactory performance evaluation on any of the skill areas on the field experience checklist, this will constitute grounds for termination of the internship. This agreement may be terminated upon 30 days written notice by either the internship site or JMU.

Intern Responsibilities

A. In order to enhance his/her identification as a developing school psychologist, the student should conduct himself/herself so as to express the same degree of responsibility as to do regular employees of the system or agency. Likewise, as a representative of James Madison University he/she has an obligation to perform at the highest level of functioning at all times. The trainee has a responsibility to both the district/agency and to James Madison University.

The intern is required to write a log of his/her experience and submit this professional log weekly to his/her field supervisor. The intern must submit this log each semester to the program’s internship coordinator. The log will document intern experiences listed on the *Field Experience Checklist*. Reports and summarizations of the experience may be required to validate the intern experiences. The log, reports, and summary write-ups become a part of the permanent file of the intern and will provide documentation about the internship when required. The intern's conduct should be governed by professional ethical standards and guidelines as stated by the American Psychological Association and by the National Association of School Psychologists.

B. Requirements: The internship coordinator and the supervising psychologist will plan the program requirements for the student intern. The day-to-day responsibilities and the activities of the intern are described by the *Field Experience Checklist* and in the section below. The internship requirements will reflect a degree of flexibility dependent upon individual interns’ backgrounds and education.

C. Psychological Evaluation Procedures: The intern should be able to use a wide variety of methods and models linked to direct and indirect interventions.

D. Reports: The intern will be required to prepare and submit reports on cases to which he/she is assigned. The supervising psychologist will critically evaluate these reports. All supervisors will hold students to professional levels of writing excellence and a high level of integration and efficiency in report writing. Students in the program are indoctrinated with the philosophy that the competent psychologist uses tests and test results to stimulate and sharpen his/her thinking about the dynamic functioning of the child to develop appropriate interventions and to monitor progress. Tests provide information which must be verified by other data and by direct behavioral observation. The supervising psychologist should co-sign and date all reports submitted by interns.

Intern Activities

The coordinator and supervisor will determine a program of activities individually prescribed to suit the needs of the intern. The intern should be included in this planning process. Some supervisors may wish to prescribe in writing the required activities for the intern. Others may prefer to plan on the basis of informal agreements. In either case, requirements should be clear to the intern.

Supervising psychologists will wish to engage the intern in most of the following activities:

A. School Orientation: General Overview

1. Classroom observations (special education and regular classroom).
2. Professional teacher programs and meetings.
3. Administrator-staff meetings.
4. In-service training sessions.
5. Meetings of special services personnel (eligibility committees, screening committees).
6. IEP Committee meetings.
7. School Board meetings.
8. PTA meetings.

B. Orientation to Child Study or Special Services in the School and/or Community Agencies.

1. Informal interviews with special educators, principals, reading specialists, teachers, nurses, social workers, visiting teachers, speech therapists, guidance personnel, and other specialists.
2. Observations in special education classrooms and programs.
3. Involvement in case conferences with teachers and specialists.
4. Exposure to routine office procedures (record keeping, report writing, forms, bulletins, folders, file systems, correspondence, test supplies and orders, and the like).
5. Visits to special services (United Fund, State Employment Service, civic service organizations, big brother program, specialists in private practice, and the like).
6. Visits to relevant parent groups and organizations (Association for Retarded Children, Lions Club, Association for Children with Learning Disabilities, etc.).

C. Development Skills in Psycho-educational Diagnosis and Formulation of Recommendations.

1. Opportunity to observe and evaluate a variety of populations. (Upper limit - 50 individual assessments).
2. Opportunity to receive referrals and work with a variety of types of referral problems under supervision (class placement, admission or exclusion, learning/behavior problems, and the like).

D. Orientation to Classrooms.

1. Planned classroom observations across a range of school grades.
2. Conferences with curriculum specialists and supervisors of instruction.
3. Discussions with teachers.
4. Discussions with administrators.

E. Development of Skills in Interviewing, Counseling, and Consultation.

1. Supervised data gathering interviews with pupils, parents, and teachers.
2. Supervised interpretive interviews with pupils, parents, and teachers, involving communication or Psycho-educational findings, behavioral management and implementation of recommendations.
3. Involvement in formal and informal teacher and parent conferences and groups.
4. Supervised individual and group counseling of pupils.
5. Supervised participation in preparation of proposals for special education programs, mental health activities in the schools, in-service training programs, etc.
6. Development of effective and consistent follow-up activities to case work.
7. Discussion and implementation of findings at various professional groups (at teacher meetings, at case conferences, etc.).
8. Development of effective relations with community agencies for referral, placement and follow-up.
9. Development of awareness of the interrelation of special education, guidance services, and other child study specialists, each with a valuable contribution to make to the school setting.
10. Application of research skills when warranted.
11. Continuation of professional growth and responsibilities through participation in outside workshops, conferences, etc.

F. The Completion of PSYC 790 (Internship) Requirements

1. Submit one comprehensive assessment report to the Internship coordinator during the first semester of internship.
2. Submit one intervention report to the internship coordinator during the second semester of the internship.
3. Attend the on-campus seminars.
4. Participate in the JMU Graduate Symposium.
5. Participate in peer supervision and discussion via course Blackboard.
6. Take the PRAXIS II specialty exam in School Psychology and submit scores to the program.
7. Submit logs and evaluation in a timely manner.

G. The Completion of Psychology 800, Research Project in School Psychology.

Many students will design and implement their research project during the internship. Library work, data collection, and writing required for the project are legitimate internship activities. However, the time allowance for these activities during the school day should not be abused. The general guideline of 1/2 to 1 day per month for research is recommended.

Note Regarding Licensure by the State Board of Education:

Students who have completed all program requirements for the School Psychology Program (including their PSYC 800 research project) will be recommended for certification even though they have not yet graduated. Students who have not completed these requirements will not be recommended for licensure under any circumstances. Students who have not completed PSYC 800 requirements by the end of their internship will receive an "I" for PSYC 790. Failure to complete all requirements in a timely manner will result, at the committee's discretion, in the awarding of an "F" grade for both PSYC 790 and PSYC 800.

James Madison University
Psychology 790
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP GUIDELINES
Experiential Area Requirements

1. **ASSESSMENT FOR INTERVENTION:** Experiences will span the age range of pre-school through high school and with culturally and linguistically different children as reflected in the site. A range of 20 to 50 evaluations over a 10-month period to include the following populations:
 - Mild mental retardation
 - Moderate mental retardation
 - Social/Emotional/Behavioral disorders
 - Underachiever/Slow learner
 - Gifted
 - Learning disabled
 - Developmentally delayed (e.g., preschool)
 - Neuropsychological deficits
 - Other low incidence disabilities including severe and profound
 - Functional Behavioral Assessments
 - Threat assessment

2. **INTERVENTION EXPERIENCES:**
 - Crisis intervention
 - Child/Adolescent individual counseling
 - Implementation or case management of positive behavioral support or intervention plan
 - Participate in an educational intervention-curricula program (individual or group)
 - Co-lead or lead at least one psychosocial group experience
 - Curriculum-based assessment and progress monitoring
 - Preferred (not required): Parent/Family training or parenting group

3. **CONSULTATION:**
 - Parent/Family
 - Teacher/Classroom
 - Conjoint (preferred not required)
 - Participate on some level in a system wide consultation or intervention project (e.g., school wide PBS, RTI, conflict resolution/peer mediation program)
 - Offer presentation/In-service/Workshop to school faculty, parents, PTA, or other psychologists

4. **COMMUNITY SERVICES:**
 - Attendance or involvement in at least one community event with a wellness or mental health focus
 - Visit or communicate with at least one community service agency provider

5. **CONFERENCE EXPERIENCES:**
 - Participate in at least one home visit
 - Consistent participation in eligibility meetings/child study committees, IST, or RTI meetings

6. **RESOURCE EXPERIENCE: (USE OR VISIT)**

At least one agency contact beyond involvement through casework such as:

 - Community mental health agencies
 - Day care center
 - Sheltered workshop
 - Social services department
 - Mental health clinic
 - Area educational materials centers

7. **PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:**
 - Attendance at national convention, state conference or regional workshop
 - Attendance at school divisional in-service training if offered
 - Attendance at one school board meeting
 - Participation in a wellness program, stress-reduction activity or peer-support group
 - Update portfolio to include interventions and professional development
 - Take NCSP exam and submit scores to program
 - Presentation at JMU Department of Graduate Psychology Annual Symposium

8. **APPLIED RESEARCH: (one of the following)**
 - Involvement in research or program development (Ed.S. project)
 - Involvement in research or program evaluation (Ed.S. project)
 - Optional: involvement in school-based research specific to site

9. **OPTIONAL EXPERIENCES:**
 - Program development
 - Grant preparation
 - Submit presentations for regional, state, or national conference