

## **THE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICUM SEQUENCE Guidelines**

**Psychology 695: Practicum in School Psychology** (3 credit hours)

**Psychology 778: Advanced Practicum in School Psychology** (6 credit hours)

### **Purpose of Practicum:**

The purpose of practicum is to provide opportunities for students to practice, under supervision, the application of the knowledge and skills needed to become competent school psychologists.

The practicum courses are designed to be a sequence of supervised experiences. They begin as a part of coursework class assignments during the first semester and continue throughout the program, and formally take place in both the public schools and the JMU Shenandoah Valley Child Development Center; other additional sites may be used as well, such as mental health clinics, residential or private schools, or specialized educational settings.

Students are required to complete a minimum of 400 clock hours of practicum experiences prior to beginning their internships. Practicum should be viewed as a continuous series of applied experiences associated with coursework while at JMU. During the first year, fall and spring semesters, practicum experiences may include a “shadowing” experience, clinic and classroom observations, screening for the Head Start Program, and interviews with educational and mental health professionals for a total of approximately 40 hours. During the summer session practicum (PSYC 695) and the second year practicum (PSYC 778) students can expect to devote approximately 15 hours per week to these experiences, including at least 2 hours per week of group supervision on campus.

### **Course Objectives for PSYC 695/778:**

The course objectives are to provide students with:

1. An introduction to understanding children within a systems frame work including the family, school, community and culture;
2. An orientation to psychological service delivery models and technology;
3. Individual psychological and educational assessment for intervention within a multidisciplinary framework;
4. Individual and group counseling;
5. Behavior management, and other solution focused interventions; and
6. Collaboration/consultation with school professionals and families regarding the learning and social/emotional needs of children/adolescents

## **Distribution of Hours**

Practicum experience is divided into direct service, preparation/professional development, observation, and supervision. The following guidelines are minimum expectancies to insure a broad range of experience in enhancing skill development as well as personal growth and integration:

- 50% Direct service: Case-related activities
- 15% Preparation/Professional development
- 10% Observation
- 25% Supervision.

**Direct service** is defined as all case-related activities including all forms of data gathering (assessment, classroom observation, intake, file review, collateral contacts) consultation, counseling, other interventions, and report writing (limit 4 hours per case).

**Preparation/Professional** development includes literature or test review, seminars, workshops, process group and case staffing not associated with supervision.

**Observation** is defined as a live or tape review of another professional's work.

**Supervision** is received from a variety of sources including practicum class, group seminars, CDC team meetings, and individual meetings with the course instructor or site supervisor.

All students are required to maintain a log of their practicum experiences. This log should contain a daily listing of activities with the corresponding time commitment to each activity. (Log sheets are included in back of this handbook, however sites may have their own forms for you to use instead.) At the end of each practicum, students must submit their logs (signed by the site supervisor) to the course instructor. These logs will be kept in the student's file. It is the responsibility of the student to retain copies of logs in a personal file.

## **Supervision**

Most supervision involves a combination of activities. These may include didactic instruction, case discussions, review of audio or videotapes, role plays, direct observation of sessions, joint assessment/therapy, and opportunities to observe the supervisor. An opportunity to process the affective experiences associated with becoming a professional takes place with your supervisor as well. Students participate in group sessions during the second year to discuss issues such as stress management, personal growth, and interpersonal relationships.

Practicum supervisors act as mentors to students by helping them acclimate to the school or clinic and by modeling professional behaviors, as well as providing feedback. Student's are expected to be prepared to learn new skills and respond positively to constructive feedback.

Evaluation is a shared responsibility of the student, site supervisor, and course instructor. Knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors are evaluated using the instruments developed for this purpose. (e.g., supervision videotape.) Students will also have an opportunity to complete evaluations of their site and supervision.

**PSYC 695: Introductory Practicum in School Psychology (Clinic Based)  
First Year (Summer Session) - 3 credit hours**

While students have the opportunity to observe and interact with children, and become acquainted with schools throughout the fall and spring semesters, the first clinical practicum (PSYC 695) takes place during the summer of the first year of the program, after completion of 24 credit hours of coursework.

This practicum experience includes two closely supervised assessment/consultation cases at the JMU Child Development Center (CDC). The CDC is a multidisciplinary clinic that provides psychological services to the community, serving as a training site for students in psychology, and other disciplines including special education, nursing, and social work.

As part of their practicum experiences, students may visit the child's school to conduct classroom observations and gather information from school records, interview significant others, administer, score, and interpret tests, develop recommendations for intervention, and provide written and oral reports to parents at informing meetings. This practicum takes approximately 100 clock hours toward the total of 400 hours.

See the syllabus for PSYC 695 for specific course requirements, including readings, assignments, etc. Students will meet regularly as a group with the clinic supervisor and course instructor, as well as participating in individual supervisory sessions.

**PSYC 778: Advanced Practicum in School Psychology (School Based)  
Second Year (Fall & Spring Semesters) - 6 credit hours**

This practicum experience takes place during the fall and spring semesters of the second year in the same site. During the school based practicum, the student usually spends one full day in the schools each week. Students meet weekly for two hours as a group with the university course instructor as well as meeting individually with the instructor. Also, the student meets weekly with their site supervisor at the school. The checklist of activities and evaluation forms (included in this handbook) are reviewed with the supervisor at the beginning of the practicum to set goals and clarify expectations, and at the mid-point and end of the experience to assess progress. This practicum (Fall and Spring combined) involves approximately 300 clock hours toward the total of 400 hours.

## **Expected Student Outcomes (PSYC 778)**

Expected student outcomes include successful completion of the following tasks:

1. A minimum of 10 (cumulative over practicum sequence) comprehensive psychological evaluations for intervention using traditional and alternative methods of evaluation, with feedback provided to teachers and parents.
2. One individual counseling case.
3. One co-led group counseling experience.
4. One behavioral management case/consultation.
5. One consultation case involving teachers and parents.

Experience with children/adolescents should be across the age span of pre-school through adolescence, with a variety of learning and/or emotional/behavioral needs from a diversity of cultural backgrounds.

Additionally, students will have the opportunity to grow personally and professionally, with expectations for:

1. effective oral and written communication skills;
2. effective interpersonal relationships;
3. professional and ethical responsibility;
4. flexibility and creativity in data based problem solving;
5. initiative and resourcefulness;
6. dependability;
7. emotional maturity and increased self awareness; and
8. sensitivity and respect for human diversity

## **Evaluation (695 & 778)**

A "Satisfactory" grade is awarded upon successful completion of course requirements and demonstration of professional work characteristics as evaluated by the site supervisor and course instructor, using the practicum *Field Experience Checklist* and other evaluation criteria.

Students who do not successfully complete a practicum may be required to participate in additional practicum experiences, or an additional practicum, in order to be recommended for internship. An individual plan will be developed for the student to facilitate a successful outcome. A grade of "Unsatisfactory" may lead to termination from the program.

## **Practicum Sites**

In addition to the CDC, the School Psychology Program maintains on-going practicum arrangements with a number of school divisions in Virginia. They have included:

Harrisonburg City Schools  
Staunton City Schools  
Shenandoah County Schools  
Waynesboro City Schools  
Greene County Schools  
Head Start Program  
Albemarle County Schools