



Department of Counseling and Student Affairs

**Counseling
Professional Practice Handbook**

Professional Practice, namely, 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. 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.

The **Director of Professional Practice** serves as the liaison between the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs and all those involved in the practicum and internship experience (i.e., students, instructors of the group supervision course, site supervisors). The Director assures that this experience meets the department's accreditation standards and curriculum expectations. Throughout the professional practice experience, students must follow and adhere to program policies and procedures outlined the *Counseling Student Handbook*.

Practicum

The CMHC MCFC Practicum course (CNS 591) is the first supervised counseling experience students will have in a clinical setting. Students prepare for Practicum by attending a mandatory orientation of which details are communicated by the Director of Professional Practice. Students are responsible for adhering to and completing the procedures outlined during this orientation. (There is not a make-up date for the orientation.) Other requirements are as follows:

1. Completion (a B or better earned) of the following prerequisite courses: CNS 554, 555, 559, 560; as well as consistently earning satisfactory ratings across all ten of the Department's Professional Performance Criteria. See the Counseling Student Handbook for a list of these criteria.
(https://www.wku.edu/csa/documents/csa_student_handbook_final.pdf)
2. Submitting documentation and meeting all communicated deadlines (i.e., applying for potential practicum sites). 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. For example, all application materials must be submitted in complete form as directed and by the due date communicated by Director of Professional Practice. Materials include but may not be limited to:
 - a. A completed contract that indicates that both the student and Site Supervisor understand and have met the academic and professional requirements and prerequisites for practicum.
 - b. Copy of unofficial graduate transcript
 - c. Proof of professional membership (i.e., ACA, KCA, APT, KAPT, AMHCA, IAMFC, NASAP)

- d. 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). If insurance coverage lapses, students must not engage in any professional practice experiences.

Practicum Course Requirements

The Practicum course meets various CACREP-accreditation requirements that are incorporated through content, as well as experiential objectives and assignments. In order to matriculate into CNS 596 Internship, students must earn an A or B to matriculate in CNS 591, as well as earn satisfactory ratings across all ten of the Department's Professional Performance Criteria. To earn a grade in the course, all documents must be uploaded and submitted by due date communicated by the Director of Professional Practice. Not doing so can result in not being registered for the subsequent course or graduating on time. Additional course completion 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 **8** 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). Students are responsible for assuring that direct 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.
 - c. Attending at least **1** hour of individual and/or triadic supervision by the site supervisor each week. Students are expected to bring a video of their work with a client to every individual/triadic supervision meeting; supervisors are expected to review the student's recordings of clients during these meetings. Supervision provided through a digital platform must be approved by the Director of Professional Practice and must be in accordance with all current legal/ethical requirements (i.e., HIPAA, FERPA).
 - d. Attending a minimum of **1½** hours of weekly synchronous group supervision (CNS 591) that includes supervision from the course

instructor. Students are responsible for completing all of the course requirements including presenting case conceptualizations and meeting assignment deadlines.

- e. Weekly documentation and signatures of direct and non-direct clock hours in an Hour Log that students file for the remainder of their professional career.

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); as well as earn satisfactory ratings across all ten of the Department's Professional Performance Criteria. Registration in two sections of CNS 596 at the same time is never permitted. To earn a grade in the course, all documents must be uploaded and submitted by due date communicated by the Director of Professional Practice. Not doing so can result in not being registered for the subsequent course or graduating on time. Additional course completion requirements include and may not be limited to:

1. If interested in pursuing a different approved site, students should do so in consultation with the Director of Professional Practice.
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.
 - f. 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). Students are responsible for assuring those direct 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.
 - g. Attending at least **1** hour of individual and/or triadic supervision by the site supervisor each week. Students are expected to bring a video of their work with a client to every individual/triadic supervision meeting; supervisors are expected to review the student's recordings of clients during these meetings. Supervision provided through a digital platform must be approved by the Director of Professional Practice and must be in

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

- h. Attending a minimum of 1½ hours of weekly synchronous group supervision (CNS 596) that includes supervision from the course instructor. Students are responsible for completing all of the course requirements including presenting case conceptualizations and meeting assignment deadlines.
- i. Weekly documentation and signatures of direct and non-direct clock hours in an Hour Log that students file for the remainder of their professional career.

Guidelines and Expectations for Engaging in the Professional Practice Experience

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. Beginning in the first CNS 596 Internship (fall) or sooner, interns must provide direct services to clients (rather than shadowing or co-leading individual sessions with internship site employees).

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 Director of Professional Practice.

Site and Supervision

If students miss weekly site supervision or group supervision (class), they may not engage in any professional practice experience (direct or indirect) until after attending the next scheduled supervision meeting. Both sets of supervision are required on a weekly basis and students are expected to have video recordings of clients to share at each both scheduled meetings.

Individual Site 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 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.

Course Group Supervision Hours. Students receive group supervision from a faculty member in a designated graduate course (CNS 591 or 596) that meets on a weekly basis. The Director of Professional Practice, along with department faculty determine the placement of students in designated course sections.

Any changes or updates at the site (i.e., policy changes) or site supervisor, must be communicated immediately to the Director of Professional Practice.

Total Practicum or Internship Hours

Due to various circumstances students may not fulfill the required number of hours to satisfy practicum or internship course requirements (which are also aligned with accreditation and licensure). In such cases students should contact the Director of Professional Practice immediately.

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. Practicum and internship students may not engage in the professional practice experience outside of the semester during which they are enrolled in CNS 591 or 596, and not during officially scheduled campus closures.

Site Supervisors, with students, are responsible for communicating to clients that students 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). In short, sites are ultimately responsible for the care and welfare of the clients interns provide services to.

When campus is closed for unplanned and/or emergency, the Director of Professional Practice will communicate and adjust plan for otherwise scheduled meetings to still take place.

Supervision

Faculty Supervisor

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 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. During which, will observe a student's interactions with clients through recordings and/or live supervision.
3. Will provide regular feedback to students they supervise about their development as counselors in and outside of the class meetings.
4. Per the direction of the Director of Professional Practice, will make contact with each student's Site Supervisor at least once during the semester. Faculty supervisors can at any time, discuss student, as well site supervisor evaluations with their students, site supervisors, the Director of Professional Practice, as well as full-time faculty.

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. Under no circumstances should the Site Supervisor relinquish what they agreed upon in the contractual arrangement (i.e., shifting supervision responsibilities to another employee). The Site Supervisor also:

1. Will have familiarized themselves with departmental expectations including the contents of this Handbook, as well as the respective website. They are also required to participate in an orientation provided by the Department.
2. Meet the supervision related requirements noted throughout this Handbook including providing 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. Regular feedback especially should be provided to students under supervision regarding their development as counselors during and outside of formal supervision meetings.

3. Be available on site whenever students see clients and accompany students all on home visits or any direct service outside of the agency. When not on site, ensure that there is a fully licensed mental health professional on site and available whenever students are seeing clients. Any changes or updates at the site (i.e., policy changes) or site supervisor, must be communicated immediately to the Director of Professional Practice.
4. Provide an orientation for students that includes policies and procedures. The orientation should include the following:
 - o Procedures related to providing telehealth services, as well as receiving digital supervision.
 - o Ways in which students can build an appropriately balanced case load within the first few weeks of the semester and provide regular feedback to students.
 - o Resources, such as additional consultation and professional development opportunities provided, especially when the site supervisor is not available.
5. Provide students an opportunity to obtain their required direct service with clients and counseling-related indirect hours as indicated above. Site supervisors are responsible for assuring that beginning in the student's first CNS 596 Internship (fall) or sooner, interns must provide direct services to clients (rather than shadowing or co-leading individual sessions with internship site employees). Site Supervisors are also responsible for communicating to clientele information about when students are not allowed to provide services (due to campus closure and university breaks).
6. Work collaboratively with the Director of Professional Practice and Faculty Supervisor; including completing and uploading required documentation through Supervision Assist by the deadlines; will contact the Director of Professional Practice if and when any concerns/issues arise.

Practicum and Internship Sites

For information about the following, visit the Department's Professional Practice website:

- The process for seeking and establishing a new approved site
- Paid employment at practicum and internship sites
- Changing Practicum and Internship Sites and Supervisors

Accreditation and Licensure Compliance

The Department is responsible for meeting CACREP-accreditation requirements. Our adherence to accreditation standards assures licensure in states where a CACREP program is required. Therefore, at any point, the Department may require confirmation from the Site Supervisor that contractual policies are being followed. This may involve a meeting including members of the Department and student. The Department reserves the right to remove sites, as well as site supervisors from approval status when ethical standards and/or contractual agreements have been breached. Additionally, faculty are committed to supporting the development of all students. When concerns arise as related to any of the Department's Professional Performance criteria, especially as it pertains to their professional practice, and due to the obligatory nature of being licensed gatekeepers, students may be provided with formal departmental support and/or on remediation (which can include being removed from their site). Students and Site Supervisors should review the respective content in the Counseling Student Handbook, https://www.wku.edu/csa/documents/csa_student_handbook_final.pdf.