Graduate Program of Counseling

Practicum & Internship
Student Orientation
Welcome!

- We have developed this orientation to help you become familiar with the requirements and guidelines of our practicum and internship program. Please review the information before each field experience.

- Please feel free to contact the Practicum & Internship Coordinator at any time to discuss any questions or concerns.

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Field Experiences

- The Practicum and Internship experiences are critical pieces of Messiah’s program and give students the opportunity to develop their counseling skills and integrate professional knowledge under the direction of an experienced supervisor.

- Each student who is completing the Master’s in Counseling degree is required to complete one Practicum and two Internships.

- Know your code:
  - CMH – Clinical Mental Health Track
  - MCF – Marriage, Couple, & Family Track
  - SCH – School Counseling Track

- The following orientation will be divided into three sections:
The Practicum will be your first field experience and includes 100 hours on-site. Of these 100 hours, at least 40 hours need to be direct client hours (50 direct hours for MCF track).

During your Practicum, you will be under the supervision of both a site supervisor and a Messiah College Faculty Supervisor.

The Practicum will take place over the course of either 17 weeks (for a Spring or Fall Practicum) or 14 weeks (for a Summer Practicum) and will include live class time online Tuesday or Thursday evenings. Attendance is mandatory and missing class could result in failing the course.

The pre-requisite courses for Practicum are COUN 501, and COUN 520 and Foundations (track specific course 507, 508, 509).
Internship Overview

- Internship I and II take place after Practicum. Each Internship includes 300 hours on-site for a total of 600 Internship hours. Of the 300 on-site hours for each Internship, at least 120 hours need to be direct client hours (125 direct hours for MCF track).

- During your Internships, you will be under the supervision of both a site supervisor and a Messiah College Faculty Supervisor.

- Each Internship will take place over the course of either 17 weeks (for a Spring or Fall Internship) or 14 weeks (for a Summer Internship) and will include mandatory live class time online on Tuesday or Thursday evenings. Attendance is mandatory and missing class could result in failing the course.

- The pre-requisite courses for Internship are as follows:
  - CHM/MCF tracks: COUN 523, 532, 540, and Practicum, along with a minimum of 39 credits.
  - SCH track: COUN 532, 540, and Practicum with a minimum of 30 credits
  - Students must be in good standing and have a minimum GPA of 3.0
Each Practicum and Internship follows a full semester calendar according to the college calendar.

- **Fall and Spring:** 17 weeks
- **Summer:** 14 weeks

- Students are required to complete their hours on-site throughout the full semester specified for the Practicum/Internship course. (i.e. students may not front-load hours)

- Due to issues of liability and financial aid, students may not begin logging hours before the first day of the semester or between two semesters. Special requests for exceptions to this policy may be considered only for indirect hours including fixed training or orientation activities. Contact Amy Cook for more information.
Preparing for Practicum & Internship

- Please, please, please PLAN AHEAD! It is very important to begin your search for a site early in order to ensure that you are able to take Practicum/Internship during the semester you choose.

- First Steps:
  - Thoroughly read the Practicum/Internship Handbook and FAQs
  - Review the Practicum/Internship Planning Guide & due dates
  - Visit the Field Experience Site Database through MCSquare
    MCSquare>>Home Tab>>Self-Service Menu>>Student Tab>>Field Experience Site Database
  - Complete the pre-registration application form
  - Once your pre-registration form has been accepted, you will be invited to the Grad Counseling Field Experience Canvas site where the rest of the paperwork can be found and submitted.

The Practicum and Internship Coordinator regularly sends out reminders via the grad counseling listserv. Please be sure to review these messages as they contain important information about protocol, program changes, upcoming deadlines, and paperwork reminders. Students are required to check their Messiah.edu mail daily.
Finding a Site – CMH/MCF tracks

- Begin your formal search at least a FULL semester before the time you plan to start Practicum/Internship.

- Begin considering your field site options ASAP and create a list of potential sites.

- Visit the Field Experience Site Database on MCSquare
  - MCSquare >> Home Tab >> Self-Service Menu >> Student Tab >> Field Experience Site Database

- Contact sites to inquire about potential internship opportunities.

- When you find a potential site, we recommend that you schedule a time to meet with the site supervisor to get to know each other and talk about what types of activities you will be able to be involved with on-site. You may also use this time to discuss what your on-site schedule would look like, identify whether the supervision requirements could be met, and make sure the necessary credentials are in place. Bring a copy of your résumé to this initial meeting/interview along with the Practicum/Internship Handbook and Site Supervisor At-A-Glance document.
Finding a Site – SCH track

- In order to secure a site, please submit your pre-registration form listing the districts you are interested in working with in order of preference. The School Site Coordinator will then make the initial contact to each district on your behalf. After contact has been made, you will be contacted about proceeding with the next step. **Per school districts’ request, students are asked not to contact schools on their own until the coordinator has established contact unless you are employed there. Doing so could create unintentional barriers to the placement process.**

- Visit the Field Experience Site Database on MCSquare
  
  - MCSquare >> Home Tab >> Self-Service Menu >> Student Tab >> Field Experience Site Database

- Students may be asked to meet with a potential placement for an interview. We also recommend that you bring a copy of your résumé to this meeting along with the Practicum/Internship Handbook and Contract to review.
Once you have identified a site, you will need to have it approved. There are several required documents you will need to submit before you are permitted to register for Practicum/Internship. For a complete list of the items needed, please refer to your handbook and the Field Experience Canvas Site.

The following graphic gives a summary of the steps needed:

- Submit your Pre-Registration form
- Send site supervisor application link to your proposed site supervisor
- Once site is approved, complete contract
- Submit remaining practicum and internship documents
In order to ensure that all students have the necessary paperwork submitted in time, we require students to follow the due dates outlined in this chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>For Fall Semester</th>
<th>For Summer Semester</th>
<th>For Spring Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practicum/Internship Pre-Registration Form</td>
<td>May 1st</td>
<td>February 1st</td>
<td>September 15th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feb 1st for SCH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practicum/Internship Approval Documents: Checklist for Potential Site Supervisor and their résumé</td>
<td>July 15th</td>
<td>April 15th</td>
<td>December 1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All remaining Practicum/Internship documents (including contract)</td>
<td>August 1st</td>
<td>May 1st</td>
<td>December 15th</td>
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Please note that some of the Practicum items (personal counseling, clearances) can take a while to obtain. Please use the planning guide & plan accordingly.
Late Registration Policy

- Students who have not submitted all the required documents by the current advertised deadlines (August 1st for fall term, May 1st for summer term & December 15th for spring term) will be charged $100. The required documents are outlined in the Counseling Practicum/Internship Checklist for Students.

- Students must be registered for class one week prior to the start of the new semester.

- No students will be allowed to accumulate any on site hours until their liability insurance has been verified and all site-required background checks have been received by Messiah College.
Please see the clearances section of our website for a detailed overview of the clearances needed. This information is subject to change so please review it each semester.

All students must have the appropriate clearances before they are permitted to register for the course.

Clearances may be NO MORE than 1 year old when submitted to us. Once you have submitted them to us you will not need to resubmit them as long as you have been continuously enrolled in the program, however some sites may require newer clearances. It is your responsibility to check with your site’s policies regarding your clearances.

Original copies of clearances should be mailed directly to the Counseling Department Administrative Assistant.

Please keep copies of your clearances for your records and provide them to your site.
Practicum Details

Practicum

The 100 hours you spend on-site should include:

• 40 direct hours (50 for MCF Track) of individual and group counseling
• 10 hours of work with clients who have a cultural background different from your own (indirect or direct)
• 10 hours of work with clients with disabilities (indirect or direct)
• 1 hour per week of scheduled supervision with your site/clinical supervisor
• Any combination of indirect/direct service for the remaining hours

Also, outside of your 100 on-site hours, you will participate in the Practicum course which includes both group and individual supervision. This supervision will take place on a regular basis throughout the semester.
Internship I and II

The 300 hours you spend on-site should include:
- 120 direct hours (125 for MCF Track) of individual and group counseling
- 10 hours of work with clients who have a cultural background different from your own (indirect or direct)
- 10 hours of work with clients with disabilities (indirect or direct)
- 1 hour per week of supervision with your site/clinical supervisor
- Any combination of indirect/direct service for the remaining hours

Also, outside of your 300 on-site hours, you will participate in the Internship course which includes both group and individual supervision. This supervision will take place on a regular basis throughout the semester.

* Per the new CACREP standards (2016) This requirement can be satisfied during a student’s practicum if they have had COUN 532 Group Counseling prior to practicum
Direct vs. Indirect Hours

- **CMH/MCF:**
  - Direct service means “working directly with clients” in such a way that contributes to the development of counseling skills and includes *interactive* activities such as intake interviewing, individual/couples/family counseling, group counseling, assessment, etc.
  - Indirect hours include weekly meetings with the site supervisor, administrative work, staff meetings, in-services, treatment planning, observing sessions, and report writing.

- **SCH Track:**
  - Direct service means “working directly with students” and includes interactive activities such as individual counseling, group counseling, career counseling, classroom guidance, meetings with parents, new student orientation, etc.
  - Indirect hours include weekly meetings with the site supervisor, administrative work, staff meetings, in-services, planning, observing classroom guidance, and record review.

### Practicum On-Site Hours

- 60 Indirect Hours
- 40 Direct Hours

*50/50 split for MCF track*
While on-site, you will need to document your hours. You may use the Weekly Summary Log to keep track of where you are spending time on a daily basis.

At the end of the semester, you will be asked to complete a Semester Summary Log. This log will become part of your file and serve as official documentation.

Please keep in mind that your Internship must include some experience with leading groups*.

* Per the new CACREP standards (2016) This requirement can be satisfied during a student’s practicum if they have had COUN 532 Group Counseling prior to practicum.
During your time on site, it important that you dress and act professionally. For a helpful guide to developing professionalism, you may want to check out Michael True’s new book, “InternQube: Professional Skills for the Workplace”.

Michael True is the director of Messiah’s undergraduate Internship Center and has been working in the field of internships for over 20 years. His book addresses relevant topics all students should consider such as first impressions, email etiquette, networking, ethical behavior, conducting a meeting, and ending well.

To purchase a copy of “InternQube: Professional Skills for the Workplace”, go to www.INTRUEITION.com and click on the “Single Copy Purchase” link in the header.
At all times, students must follow the ACA Ethics code and protect client confidentiality.

Students creating recordings of counseling sessions and other course material that contains client/student information must maintain the confidentiality of these materials by doing the following:

- Avoid including any identifying client/student information on materials
- Using passwords for all devices
- Labeling videos “confidential” before submission to any server
- Submitting videos only to secure Messiah College servers including Canvas and Messiah College Video Server Drive
- Not e-mailing links or actual copies of video recorded sessions
- Erasing copies of all materials including videos at the end of the course
- Before meeting with and/or recording a client, the appropriate informed consent form must be signed in order to properly inform your client that you are a student, not a professional, and that you may be discussing their case in group supervision.
Over the course of the semester, students will be required to complete the following evaluations:

- Mid-Term Self-Evaluation
- Final Self-Evaluation
- Evaluation of Site
- Evaluation of Faculty Supervisor - anonymous

In addition, the site supervisors and faculty supervisor will each fill out a mid-term and final evaluation of your performance that they will receive via email. Please take time during individual supervision to review these evaluations with your Site/Faculty Supervisor.

Each of these evaluations must be submitted with the appropriate electronic signatures in order for you to receive a grade in the course.
FAQs

- Can I complete my Practicum/Internship at my current place of employment?
- Can all three of my field experiences be at the same site or school district?
- What credentials are my site supervisors required to have?

Complete answers to these and other questions can be found [here](#).
Thank you for taking the time to complete this orientation.

We look forward to hearing from you and assisting you with your journey towards success!