

COUNSELING PROGRAM

PRACTICUM HANDBOOK

Students

COUN 614 (4 credits)

Questions?

Practicum Coordinator:

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The **Practicum Coordinator** is one of the core Counseling Program faculty members. Duties include:

- Responds to all inquiries about Practicum.
- Ensuring the Practicum meets all CACREP and DPI requirements.
- Recruiting approved school counseling sites and licensed school counselors for supervision and tracking supervisor training completion
- Collaborating with the College Teacher Education Field Experience Officer to ensure MOUs are current for all sites.
- Conducting a Pre-Practicum Meeting each semester for students to sign up for and learn about Practicum expectations and processes.
- Tracking pre-Practicum students during their search for a placement.
- Partnering with River Falls School District to work together at elementary school Kids Club programs each semester.
- Updating course forms including, but not limited to, the Practicum handbooks, training videos, site agreements, and course materials.
- Troubleshooting student or supervisor concerns.
- Coordinating with the Counseling Program Director and Practicum course instructors
- Managing student performance data from site and university supervisor evaluations and observations.
- Awarding of CEUs to each site supervisor at the end of the academic year

Counseling Practicum Handbook
Department of Counseling and School Psychology
University of Wisconsin River Falls

WELCOME!

The Counselor Education Program at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls prepares counselors as school counselors. Initiated in 1968, the program has grown to include three full-time faculty members and approximately 50 students. Completion of the program results in a Master of Science in education (M.S.E.) degree.

The mission of the UWRF Counseling Program is to prepare school counselors who exhibit excellence in counseling practice and leadership, respect human dignity and cultural diversity in the broadest sense and commit to lifelong personal and professional growth. Additionally, program learning outcomes require that upon graduation from the UWRF counseling program, students will be able to:

- Identify as professional school counselors through language and behaviors
- Implement and advocate for comprehensive school counseling programs
- Support student success by incorporating best practices through research, scholarly literature, and technology
- Consult, collaborate, and establish partnerships with stakeholders
- Apply ethical, developmental, and cultural practices in school counseling

The master's program requires a minimum of 60 semester credits. Required of all school counseling students:

1. Introduction to Counseling
2. Counseling Theories and Skills
3. Techniques of Appraisal
4. Social and Cultural Foundations of Counseling
5. Group Counseling
6. Research and Evaluation
7. Career Counseling
8. Human Development
9. Comprehensive School Counseling
11. 100-hour practicum experience.

Practicum is the first field experience in the course sequence required by the UWRF Counseling Program.

Students will:

- ✓ practice counseling skills with real clients in an authentic environment,
- ✓ focus on individual counseling,
- ✓ focus on small group skills, and
- ✓ conduct classroom lessons.

During Practicum, students focus on honing counseling skills while learning about how to attend to the comprehensive duties of a school counselor. This *Handbook* provides site supervisors with information to support a successful and enriching practicum experience. It is our practice to communicate regularly during a semester in which you supervise our students. Please always feel welcome to reach out with questions, concerns, or feedback.

Insurance:

CACREP requires that counseling student purchase liability insurance coverage. UWRF provides options and information. Written proof of liability insurance must be submitted by interns to UWRF faculty supervisors prior to beginning their internship experiences.

Neither the U.W. System nor the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities carry health insurance for interns or student counselors/teachers. Practicum students/Interns are strongly encouraged to secure health insurance.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

COUN 614: Practicum is a 100-hour practicum placement that requires students to work with clients, under the supervision of program faculty and licensed counselors, to practice individual and group counseling skills. Audio/video tapes, live supervision, and written transcripts will be required to facilitate supervision. Pass/Fail or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory. Pre-requisites: COUN 610. Practicum occurs during your 2nd or 3rd semester in the program.

Approximately 50 hours will be obtained at a site under the supervision of a licensed counselor with at least 3 years of recent experience and at least 1 year of recent experience with that developmental level. A list of approved sites will be provided to students the semester prior to enrolling in the course, so that students can practice securing a field placement site. The remaining 50 hours will be obtained through collaboration with River Falls School District in the Kids Club after school program.

PRACTICUM REQUIREMENTS

Practicum is a time for students to practice individual and small group counseling skills, as well as classroom curriculum with authentic clients. This should occur in partnership with the site supervisor. **Practicum students have taken only a few initial counseling courses and are not ready to be working completely independently.** It is not a time for students to be involved with scheduling, test administration, data entry, and duties that comprise the cumulative duties of the counselor in each school.

Practicum sites must be able to provide a student with the following:

1. Opportunities to work with individual students from diverse backgrounds
2. Opportunities to participate in, plan, and execute small groups
3. Opportunities to participate in, plan, and execute classroom curriculum

Students must:

1. Have completed COUN 610 and additional 600-level courses and be in either their 2nd or 3rd semester in the program.
2. Conform to the policies of the University, Counseling Program, school district, and the school.
3. Consult with site supervisors regularly, providing client information and progress.
4. Adhere to professional ethical and legal codes. Advocating for self is important around appropriate tasks for a school-counselor-in-training.
5. Contact site and/or university supervisors early and often with questions and concerns.
6. Complete 100 total field placement hours, at least 40 of which are direct work with clients.
7. Maintain a regular schedule, in agreement with the site supervisor. This must occur over at least 10 weeks during the semester.

Site supervisors must:

1. Have a master's degree in counseling and be a licensed counselor.
2. Have a minimum of 3 years recent experience as a licensed counselor, and at least 1 year of recent experience at the current developmental level.
3. Understand the UWRF Counseling Program's expectations for students.
4. Complete the short UWRF Counseling Program online supervision training module. Please contact the Practicum Coordinator for more information.
5. Be willing to observe the student and offer regular, weekly feedback, averaging at least 1 hour each week the student is in the site. This will include providing information on special topics and signing off on case studies, provided by the student.
6. Be willing to consult bi-weekly with the University Faculty Supervisor about the student's progress. This could include site visits, emails, and phone calls.
7. Be willing to complete regular evaluations of the student.

KIDS CLUB

In addition to 50 hours in an external and approved site, 50 hours will be obtained weekly at a River Falls School District Kids Club site in River Falls, Wisconsin. Students will arrive on the designated night of class (currently on Thursdays), and will participate in and lead activities with students, collecting 1-1.5 hours of direct contact with students each week. These activities will focus on the 3 domains of comprehensive school counseling programs: academic, personal-social, and career.

Students will complete a RFSB background check, will consult with Kids Club staff, and will be under the supervision of a UWRP Counseling Program faculty member at all times. Further consultation with the building school counselor will occur regularly throughout the semester.

PREPARING FOR PRACTICUM

Students:

- In the semester before Practicum, students must attend a Pre-Practicum meeting. Here, you will receive course information and a list of sites that will host Practicum students. **DO NOT** start contacting sites until you have attended this meeting. You will not be permitted to take the course without attending this meeting.
- Review the handbook, the site agreement, and what you will be expected to achieve during Practicum. Be ready to discuss this with potential sites.
- Review and gather application materials and prepare any questions you have for your desired site. Create a plan for contacting sites and finding your placement. Update your resume and cover letter. Print copies of the handbook and site agreement to share.
- Initiate your plan and obtain a signed agreement from the site that agrees to work with you. Make a copy of the agreement and submit the original to the Practicum Coordinator. Pay attention to deadlines.
- Meet with your site supervisors before the semester to get acquainted with the specific qualities of the site.
- Complete the River Falls School District online background check using the link emailed to you.
- Purchase liability insurance coverage to cover the semester and submit proof of coverage at the first class meeting. Two options to consider are ASCA membership which comes with liability insurance or HPSO.
- Consider personal and property safety. Participating in field experiences is at your own risk, so make sure you have made accommodations for this. UWRP does not provide health insurance or workman's compensation for field placements.

ASSIGNMENTS/TASKS

Students must complete the following assignments/tasks to successfully complete Practicum:

- a. Attend a weekly seminar that will include supervised direct contact hours with students in an after-school program, and group supervision to process cases and practicum experiences. This time is crucial for your development as a school counselor, due to observation of peer activities, participation in skill-building and case presentations, and learning about special topics; therefore, absences are strongly discouraged. Missed time must be made up during the semester.
- b. **Obtain 100 total Practicum hours. Of this, 40 hours must be direct hours** working with clients. Hours will be obtained during the weekly seminar as well as additional hours at your site (40-50 hours over 10-15 weeks).
 - a. Hours must be completed during the official UWRP semester, but over at least 10 weeks.
 - b. Maintain weekly hour logs that will be signed by the site supervisor and submitted during seminar. Copies must be kept by the student.
- c. Complete and submit a self-evaluation with Appendix A.
- d. Receive live supervision of counseling interactions with clients. Preferably, students will obtain permission to audio or video tape counseling sessions for use in supervision. See Appendix B for example permission forms.
- e. Present case studies in group supervision. Each will need a write-up, with a focus on counseling skills. They must be spread out over the semester to show counseling student growth.
 - a. Each case study must have at minimum a transcript of the counseling session. An audio/visual tape (with permission) is preferred if possible.
 - b. Each case study will need the signature of the site supervisor to indicate that a case discussion has occurred.
 - c. Copies for each group supervision member must be provided. No copies may be made at the seminar site.
- f. Submit a Portfolio, which will require responding to all 18 standards regarding the Practicum experience.
- g. Research and share materials on special topics as outlined in the syllabus. Materials will be any information or documentation that you can share from your placement, and could include school crisis plans, classroom management, and mandatory reporting processes.
- h. Additional assignments as required.

APPENDIX A

Site Supervisor and University Supervisor Evaluation Form Kids Club Observation Form

Please review this with the student at the start of the placement. Formal completion and review with the student must occur at least twice during the placement time- at the mid-point and end. The original document is placed in the student's file, and student and site supervisor should maintain a copy. Program Faculty rely on these evaluations to determine the student's final grade.

Student's Name: _____ Site Supervisor's Name: _____ Date: _____

Type of Evaluation (Circle one)	Total Hours Completed to Date
Mid-Term	
Final	

Improvement needed- Concern warrants plan for remediation	Focus for growth- Does not merit plan for remediation	Developmentally appropriate	Advanced for developmental stage	Unable to assess- Not enough information
1	2	3	4	NEI

PROFESSIONAL DEMEANOR

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|-----|
| 1. Treats others (e.g., colleagues, clients, staff, faculty) respectfully. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| 2. Is prepared, reliable, and shows an appropriate work ethic. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| 3. Completes assigned responsibilities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| 4. Responsive to supervision and feedback. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| 5. Maintains poise under stress. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| 6. Exhibits ethical behavior and decision-making. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| 7. Engages in self-assessment and reflection. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| 8. Openness to culturally competent learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| 9. Works collaboratively with colleagues. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| 10. Displays effective communication with others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |

COUNSELING SKILLS

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|-----|
| 1. <u>Level I Skills- Initial Skill Sets</u> | | | | | |
| • Communicates interest and attention in client | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| • Demonstrates appropriate "Yes sets" (e.g., nodding head) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| • Sensitive to cultural preferences | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| • Sensitive to developmental differences | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| • Open body positioning and posture | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| 2. <u>Level II Skills- Advanced Listening Skills</u> | | | | | |
| • Displays appropriate level of empathy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| • Reflects accurate feelings | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| • Restates content | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| • Hears underlying feelings and concerns | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| • Does not unnecessarily interrupt client | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| • Concentrates completely on the client | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|-----|
| 3. <u>Level III Skills- Connection and Introduction</u> | | | | | |
| • Utilizes opening that was inviting and set the tone for change | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| • Finds common ground with the client | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| • Self-discloses appropriately. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| 4. <u>Level IV Skills-Minimal Questions/Wrap up</u> | | | | | |
| • Uses furthering responses appropriately (e.g., “tell me more”) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| • Allows client to lead the conversation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| • Provides closure to the session, with future focus | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| • Appropriately terminates with a client | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |
| 5. Utilizes ethical, developmental, & cultural case conceptualization. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NEI |

COMMENTS:

By signing the document, both student and supervisor acknowledge reviewing the progress, noting areas for growth. Submit the original to your Practicum/University Supervisor; keep copies for your files.

Printed names and signatures of site supervisor and student:

_____ Date: _____
 Site Supervisor, printed name and signature

_____ Date: _____
 Practicum Student, printed name and signature

APPENDIX B

*Example consent form for taping- if using this you **must** rewrite for your specific site, consulting with your site supervisor throughout this process.*

Your counselor is a counseling student who has completed part of the required coursework for a graduate degree in counseling at the University of Wisconsin River Falls.

The University of Wisconsin River Falls graduate program in counseling is accredited by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Its faculty and students adhere to the American School Counseling Association’s (ASCA) Ethical Standards for School Counselors.

Accreditation standards require graduate students participate in field placements during which experienced licensed counselors supervise them. All records of counselor services are considered confidential professional information.

Counseling students are required to demonstrate their skills in interactions with clients by providing supervisors work samples in the form of transcripts and recorded tapes (audio and video) of their counseling sessions. If you agree to be taped, these tapes are considered to be confidential and will be protected by the counseling student and supervisors of the counseling student. Serious danger to the child will be a reason to break confidentiality.

Consent to tape counseling sessions:

I ___do/ ___ do not (check one) grant permission to allow these counseling sessions to be taped. I understand that only counseling student supervisors and counseling students will be allowed to review these tapes, and that these tapes will be subject to the same standards of confidentiality as all counseling records as specified by the American School Counseling Association’s Ethical Standards for School Counselors, as well as the laws of the State of Wisconsin. I understand that I may withdraw my permission to tape at any time.

Signature of Client Date

Signature of Client’s Parent or Guardian Date