Practicum Handbook

MISSOURI VALLEY COLLEGE

Master of Arts in Community Counseling

Revised December 2012
The process of training counselors includes gaining theoretical knowledge and understanding. Just as important in this process is the inclusion of experiential learning to apply the knowledge and to develop the skills necessary to be an effective counselor. The purpose of this practicum and internship experience is to achieve integration of theory into practice, solidify clinical skills, and allow students to have experience with the profession of counseling.

While both the practicum and internship involve actual on-site counseling experience, each differs in its scope and purpose. The practicum is designed to give the student a limited experience in a specialized area of counseling and is supervised by both a designated on-site supervisor and a faculty supervisor. The internship provides the student not only with counseling experience but also with experience in all aspects of professional functioning, (e.g., referral, assessment, staff presentations, and use of community resources). Both practicum and internship students are required to attend on-campus seminars and group supervision.

Early planning for practicum and internship experiences is extremely important. Students must be admitted into candidacy before enrolling in their initial field experience (Practicum). A description of candidacy can be found in the Student Handbook. It is important for all students to note that there will be no exceptions to this requirement. The practicum experience is a minimum commitment of 7 hours per week of on-site time for one semester. The internship experience is a minimum of 20 hours per week commitment of on-site time for one semester. The possibility exists for interested students to increase the number of hours of internship per week based on desire and feasibility. Additionally, students who successfully complete Internship I may choose to take a second semester of internship.

Students should begin the process of arranging a practicum or internship at least one semester prior to the beginning of the semester in which they plan to complete the practicum or internship. To arrange a practicum or internship placement, a student should begin by contacting the Practicum Coordinator, who will be available for consultation regarding the various types of practicum experiences available. In addition, the Practicum Coordinator will recommend agencies that can provide training appropriate for the student’s interests and level of skill. Students should be aware that they are competing for placements with other students from Missouri Valley College as well as students from other colleges and universities.
Ethical and Legal Standards

Students are expected to have a working knowledge of and abide by the ethical standards that govern professional practice throughout their fieldwork experiences. These include the American Counseling Association (ACA) ethical standards as well as applicable state and federal laws. Should any specific concerns with regard to appropriate behavior under specific circumstances arise, students are to immediately contact their faculty supervisor. Any violation of ethical or legal standards may result in termination from the Counseling Program. When a concern does not warrant dismissal, a remediation plan must be developed (See the Student Handbook).

Liability Insurance

The best way to avoid involvement in litigation is to adhere to professional ethical standards as well as to demonstrate high standards of personal and professional conduct. Professional and ethical practice minimizes the risk of litigation but does not eliminate it. Therefore, the vast majority of professionals, including the Counseling Program faculty, consider professional liability insurance a necessity. The MACC program requires all students to purchase their own liability practice insurance at least one month prior to starting practicum and to maintain active coverage throughout their practicum and internship experiences. Under no circumstances will a student be permitted to begin a practicum or internship without documentation of required liability insurance. Specific insurance requirements include the following:

1. Purchasing liability insurance. For example, professional liability insurance is available from Healthcare Providers Service Organization (HPSO): www.hpso.com for approximately $30.00 per year.
2. Coverage dates beginning at least one month prior to starting practicum and continuing coverage through all practicum and internship enrollment.
3. Proof of $1,000,000/$3,000,000 in claims-made or occurrence-based coverage
4. A copy of the declarations page outlining liability insurance coverage.
5. This information must be included in the student’s practicum/internship proposal that is submitted to the Practicum Coordinator.

Supervision

Supervision is an important component of the students’ practicum experience. An agency on-site supervisor will provide the student with one hour of weekly individual supervision on day-to-day activities (e.g., case management, scheduling, etc.) at their practicum/internship site. Triadic supervision can be substituted for individual supervision only when the on-site supervisor is
unavailable because of illness or other emergency. Triadic supervision must not be used on a
regular basis. A licensed faculty supervisor will meet with the practicum student one and one-
half hours per week for supervision. At that time the supervisor will discuss theoretical and
certain technical activities (e.g., reviewing recordings of counseling sessions, case reviews, etc.).

The on-site supervisor is required to have a minimum of a master’s in counseling or a related
profession and to hold an active professional license. Students will be clearly notified of the
licensure of the prospective site supervisor. Students who intend to become licensed outside
Missouri are responsible for verifying whether the licensure requirements in that state allow an
on-site supervisor to be a licensed mental health professional in a field other that counseling
(e.g., Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Licensed Psychologist, etc.).

A wide range of methods may be employed to monitor practicum/internship objectives,
including, but not limited to:
- Video or audio-taping
- Live observation
- Case conferences and program meetings

**Responsibilities of the Licensed Faculty Supervisor**
1. Meet weekly for one and half hours with the practicum/internship students in a group
   setting during each semester.
2. Discuss any questions/concerns that a student may have in regards to the
   practicum/internship experience.
3. Maintain confidentiality of those clients whose counseling sessions are taped for
   purposes of student critique. The Faculty Supervisor will ensure that all aspects of the
   practicum and internship experiences meet ethical standards.
4. Provide supervisory seminars with students to discuss common problems and experiences
   and to assist students in case study presentations.
5. Meet with individual students during scheduled consultation sessions.
6. Review student logs detailing activities and hours spent at their site.
7. Review audio/videotapes of the student's counseling sessions.
8. Discuss with each student their progress, techniques, procedures, policies, and developing
   relationships with clients and interdisciplinary professionals.
9. Review student work and accomplishment of goals and objectives to ensure the student is
   progressing and completing the requirements on the site.
10. Intervene when the student is receiving limited or restricted experiences on site.
11. Maintain appropriate records for grading and completion of an evaluation of the student's
    overall performance, including feedback provided by the on-site supervisor.

**Responsibilities of the Practicum Coordinator**
1. Verify that each student is adequately prepared for the practicum and internship
   experience.
2. Determine the number of students to be supervised at each site.
3. Assist the student in selecting the site for their practicum and internship experience. The Practicum Coordinator will make the initial contact with the on-site supervisor.
4. Serve as liaison between Missouri Valley College and the practicum/internship site to facilitate communication.
5. Be available for consultation and intervention, as necessary.
6. Contact the on-site supervisor a minimum of one time during the term to ensure the student is completing the on-site experience. Make at least one on-site visit to meet with the student and the on-site supervisor (if possible). If possible and permissible, observe the student in a counseling session at the site.
7. Be responsible for following and enforcing confidentiality practices, including HIPAA regulations.

Responsibilities of the On-Site Supervisor
1. Show proof of current licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, or Licensed Psychologist.
2. Abide by the ACA as well as state ethical standards of the profession.
3. Have ongoing contact with the faculty Practicum Coordinator to assess the progress of the student throughout the on-site experience.
4. Orient the student to the agency. Arrange for appropriate working conditions as possible (e.g., privacy, designated setting for counseling). Acquaint student with staff members.
5. Define the student's responsibilities at the site, including expectations regarding holidays and breaks between semesters.
6. Arrange opportunities for the student to observe the on-site supervisor in appropriate activities, such as counseling sessions, consultation, and conferences.
7. Arrange for the student to be an active participant in staffing.
8. Assign appropriate readings.
9. Under supervision, familiarize the student with the administration of the assessment instruments that are used at the site.
10. Meet with the student at least one hour per week for on-site individual supervision. This supervision must include listening to case presentations, discussing client load, giving appropriate feedback, and observing the student provide services or reviewing tapes of sessions. Remember, the counselor-in-training is a student and relies on your expertise for growth as a helping professional.
11. Develop a plan for coverage of supervision when an emergency interferes with weekly on-site individual supervision.
12. Review student logs, accountability sheets and verify work completed.
13. Ensure that the student spends at least 40% of on-site time in direct client contact activities. Counseling activities should include one-on-one counseling, family counseling, or group work.
14. Provide opportunity for audio/videotaping sessions for critique by the college and on-site supervisor, or allow the Practicum Coordinator to directly observe sessions.
15. Complete the necessary evaluation forms, discuss them with the student, and send them to the Practicum Coordinator by the deadline for the semester.
16. The site supervisor who believes a student's behavior or skills are professionally unacceptable should bring this to the Practicum Coordinator. The Practicum Coordinator
will coordinate with the on-site supervisor as well as the faculty supervisor to determine appropriate action (Appendix J).

17. The student should be allowed to have a variety of experiences as determined by the student's goals and objectives of the site. Examples of such activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Involvement (as appropriate) with staffing and related meetings
- Consultation (as appropriate) with staffing and related meetings
- Intake interviews
- Individual Counseling
- Group counseling (co-facilitating and facilitating)
- Family counseling
- Addictive disorders counseling
- Interdisciplinary team consultation
- Psycho-education activities (e.g., outreach, parenting classes, seminars, public relations activities)
- Report writing (e.g., records, treatment plans, case summaries)

**Practicum and Internship Enrollment**

Given that there is limited enrollment in practicum and internships, students are required to notify the Practicum Coordinator at least **ONE SEMESTER PRIOR** to the term in which the course is to be taken. The student contacts the Practicum Coordinator to verify that all prerequisites have been completed. All counseling practicum placements must be approved by the Practicum Coordinator before students begin any fieldwork. Site selection is determined by each student’s professional goals, past experience, and level of expertise. A current listing of approved practicum and internship sites is available from the Practicum Coordinator.

Agencies are not required to accept students for practicum or internship experiences. Therefore, the counseling program cannot guarantee that an agency will accept students. However, Missouri Valley College and the program have well-established working relationships with local agencies. It is increasingly common that agencies require students to be interviewed. Many agencies accept applicants for practicum and internship on a selective and competitive basis. Students should prepare for these interviews in the same way they would prepare for job interviews. If a student chooses to engage in a practicum/internship at a site not previously used for a practicum or internship by Missouri Valley College counseling students, the student (after receiving permission from the Practicum Coordinator) will arrange for a meeting between the prospective on-site supervisor and the Practicum Coordinator to determine the appropriateness of the placement.

After the student has been offered a placement by an agency, the student must develop and submit a proposal to the Practicum Coordinator (Appendix B). The proposal will provide information about the agency and the student’s on-site supervisor. It will include a description of the activities that are to be part of the practicum/internship experiences, as well as a statement of
student learning goals for the practicum/internship. The proposal must be approved and signed by the Practicum Coordinator before the student begins any practicum/internship work. The practicum/internship site agreement must also be completed by the on-site supervisor prior to the student beginning any practicum/internship work (Appendix C).

Expectations regarding practicum and internship hours are described below. If a student does not meet the minimum number of practicum/internship hours within a semester, an incomplete grade will be recorded and the student must successfully complete the remaining hours before registering for Internship I or Internship II. Under such circumstances, late enrollment will be allowed for Internship I or Internship II up to the deadline identified in the Academic Calendar.

**Student Expectations and Responsibilities**

The Master of Arts in Community Counseling (MACC) Practicum Student/Intern has the responsibility to read and understand the following documents prior to practicum and internship placement:

- Practicum Handbook
- Responsibilities of the Student (page 1)
- American Counseling Association’s Code of Ethics and the Missouri statutes pertaining to Licensed Professional Counselors, and rules of the Missouri Committee for Professional Counselors
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) policies of training site
- Policies provided by training site related to documentation, paperwork, and professional expectation

**Responsibilities of the Student**

1. Adhere to the American Counseling Association’s Code of Ethics, the Missouri statutes pertaining to Licensed Professional Counselors, and rules of the Missouri Committee for Professional Counselors.
3. Initiate contact with the established site supervisor only after approval has been granted by the Practicum Coordinator.
4. Be at the site on agreed upon days and BE ON TIME!
5. Fulfill the minimum numbers of hours required by the program.
6. Negotiate an agreement with the on-site supervisor regarding responsibilities during holidays and breaks between semesters.
7. Maintain a professional appearance (e.g., dress, hygiene, tattoos, piercings, etc.) that is in accordance with the on-site policy.
8. Develop a set of goals and objectives, both personal and professional: define what you wish to get from the practicum and internship experience.
9. Negotiate with the on-site supervisor developmentally appropriate goals and objectives. On-site experiences may include one-on-one counseling, group counseling, attending staffing, completing assigned readings, participating in in-service meetings for professional development, and organizing and conducting special training sessions for parents and interdisciplinary professionals.

10. Attend all supervision sessions, meetings, scheduled didactic activities, and any scheduled treatment team or other educational opportunities as outlined by the specific training site.

11. Be adequately prepared for supervision sessions.

12. Be respectful of and open to all appropriate critiques from supervisors, mentors, professionals representing other disciplines, and all other individuals serving in a supervisory capacity.

13. Seek feedback relative to general involvement and performance of responsibilities. Meet as required with the site supervisor for critique of work, including direct and indirect service.

14. Keep a daily log of client contact hours, indirect service hours, and supervisory hours in accordance with the supervisor's guidelines.

15. Secure appropriate liability insurance as outlined in Liability Insurance.

16. Obtain written consent from all clients in individual and group counseling before treatment begins. Obtain written parent/guardian consent for all clients under the age of 18 years.

17. Meet with the on-site supervisor and Practicum Coordinator for a final evaluation of the practicum and internship.

Grading

All students are required to obtain at least a “B” in every practicum/internship course (CN 521-Practicum, CN 522 Internship I, CN 523 Internship II) or the course must be repeated. Practicum must be successfully completed before enrolling in Internship I, and Internship I must be completed before enrolling in Internship II.

The on-site supervisor will submit a written appraisal of the student counselor at mid-term and at the end of each term (see Student Evaluation Form, Appendix A). Recommendations for course grades and credit will be provided by the on-site supervisor after the completion of the experience. The licensed faculty supervisor will make the final decision regarding course grades.

The on-site supervisor will rate the student on the following, each domain being worth five points:

- Attendance
- Professional and ethical conduct
- Participation in supervision
- Timely submission of required documentation
Record Keeping

Students are required to keep records of practicum/internship work and to submit documentation of their work at the end of each term to the faculty supervisor according to the established time frame set in the group supervision course. Failure to submit properly completed documents in a timely fashion may result in loss of practicum/internship credit for the term or in a grade reduction.

Students are responsible for keeping copies of all the practicum/internship forms and records that they submit to the faculty supervisor.

The faculty supervisor is the professor assigned to teach the Practicum/Internship Course. The faculty supervisor will oversee the student during the practicum/internship experience. Please see Responsibilities of the Licensed Faculty Supervisor (above) for further information. The Practicum Coordinator will work with the student prior to practicum/internship placement to ensure that the student has met the qualifications to begin the experiential experience. Please see Responsibilities of the Practicum Coordinator (above) for further information.

Video and Audio Taping

Students are required to audio or videotape at least one counseling session in each of their practicum and internship experiences, pending the policies of each individual site and compliance with Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). These tapes are used for training and evaluation purposes. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain permission to tape any counseling sessions from his or her on-site supervisor and the client. In addition, the Client’s Consent Form must be completed for each individual client (Appendix D). Students will be required to process one of these tapes per term in group supervision and individually at the discretion of their group supervisor. If audiotape or videotape is not allowed at the practicum site, the student must notify the Practicum Coordinator prior to the start of the term. Under such circumstances, the Practicum Coordinator must directly observe the student on-site or develop an alternate plan.

Evaluation of Sites and On-site Supervisors

Practicum and internship sites and supervisors will be evaluated once each year (see Appendix E). Continuing as an approved site supervisor is subject to continued compliance with MACC requirements for practicum/internship, continued ethical and professional conduct, continued support to the professional philosophy of the program, and favorable student evaluations. The site evaluation will be composed of a formal student evaluation and information gained from the site visits. Following the evaluation, the Practicum Coordinator after consulting the Program Director may reassess the approval status of sites and supervisors.
Practicum and Internship in Conjunction with Current Employment
Students are not permitted to complete the counseling practicum at their place of employment unless, in unique circumstances, an organization has multiple office locations where an intern can be employed in one office location and complete a practicum/internship in an alternative office setting. It is important for practicum students and interns to be perceived by training organizations as individuals in training rather than employees in order to avoid situations where the status of student and employee does not create a dual or exploitative relationship. The roles and responsibilities of trainee and employee must be clearly differentiated. In those circumstances where a practicum student or intern completes training at a place of employment, students must be supervised by someone other than an employment supervisor. The possibility of doing the practicum at a designated place of employment must be approved by the Practicum Coordinator as well as the student’s place of employment. Students are expected to act in a professional manner and abide by all the ethical principles of the American Counseling Association (ACA).

Payment for Student Counseling Services
Practicum/internship sites are permitted to bill a nominal fee for student counseling services, but students are not allowed to receive these funds.

Practicum
Practicum is intended to provide students opportunities to begin practicing counseling skills at a variety of sites with varied clientele. The practicum is closely supervised by on-site and faculty supervisors who help the student counselor conceptualize client concerns and determine a strategy for working with the client.

Prerequisites for the first counseling practicum course are available from your advisor. These prerequisites include admission to candidacy, a grade of "B" or higher in CN501 Counseling Theory, CN502 Ethics and Professional Orientation, CN503 Relationship Dynamics, CN504 Human Lifespan Development, and CN505 Appraisal of the Individual. Students may not begin a practicum until having completed these courses, adequately responded to any remediation plans, removed any incomplete grades, and earned no grade lower than a "B."

Practicum Objectives
In the practicum, students will be expected to demonstrate a commitment to implementing and expanding the following areas:

1. Demonstrate effective counseling skills.
2. Establish and maintain a helpful and supportive counseling/therapeutic relationship.
3. Develop and apply appropriate individual counseling techniques.
4. Maintain client records, schedule client appointments, learn about and use community resources when appropriate.
5. Work effectively with supervisors and colleagues, including appropriate analysis and presentation of counseling sessions and case studies.
6. Continue development of professional behavior.
7. Display enthusiasm for and commitment to the counseling profession.
8. Express a willingness to learn.
9. Continue development of personal traits conducive to effective counseling, learning, and professional enrichment.

Practicum Requirements

1. The first 32 hours of practicum should be used for orientation and observation of direct services.
2. A minimum of 100 hours for one semester, with all hours occurring on-site with the exception of the weekly practicum group supervision class.
3. A minimum of 40 hours of direct service with clients is required each semester.
4. A minimum of one hour per week of individual on-site supervision. Individual supervision occurs when a student and on-site supervisor meet on a one-to-one basis to discuss the student’s work with clients. Triadic supervision may be substituted for individual supervision only in an emergency. Administrative supervision does not count towards this requirement. Students are encouraged to arrange for as much agency supervision as possible. Supervision is essential to the student’s development as a competent therapist.
5. Attend the practicum group supervision class, which meets 1.5 hours a week to review and discuss the on-site practicum activities with a licensed faculty member.
6. Any student who misses two group supervision classes receives an incomplete grade and will be required to complete additional practicum work the following term in order to receive credit. The student is expected to fulfill all obligations with the practicum site.
7. Purchase liability insurance while completing the practicum.

Documentation of Practicum Hours

For the purpose of student organization, the Practicum/Internship Record Checklist must be turned in with appropriate materials at the end of the semester (Appendix F).

Practicum hours should be recorded in the student's hours log (Appendix G).
On-site supervision hours should be recorded in the Record of Individual Supervision Hours Log (Appendix H).

At the end of each practicum term, the Practicum/Internship Verification form should be completed by the on-site supervisor (Appendix I).
Distribution of practicum hours—Students should record the following hours:

- Direct service: Client contact (providing or observing therapy; providing or observing assessments; and providing or observing other direct patient care tasks): MINIMUM of 40 hours

- Individual supervision with on-site supervisor: 1 hour/week provided on a regular schedule throughout the practicum: MINIMUM 15 hours in Fall and Spring terms and 12 hours in the Summer term.

- Group supervision with faculty supervisor: 1 and 1/2 hour/week during the semester: MINIMUM 22.5 hours in Fall and Spring terms and 18 hours in the Summer term.

- Additional hours in staff meetings, case presentations, in-service training, documentation, transcription and analysis of audio/videotapes or other activities approved in advance by students’ supervisors: MINIMUM 22.5 hours

Minimum Total Hours Per Semester: 100

Note: If a student does not meet the minimum number of hours within a semester, an incomplete grade will be recorded, and the student must complete the remaining hours within the next semester. Students will be allowed to enroll in Internship I only after satisfactorily completing the Practicum.

Internship

The internship is a supervised experience in Community Counseling and is the most important and comprehensive professional experience for graduate students in counseling. Designed to allow application of skills and knowledge gained in a supervised setting, the internship is comparable to a professional work experience. The student is required to remain at the internship site for a minimum of one semester. Prerequisites for Internship courses are the following:

1. Completion of the Practicum (CN521) with a grade of A or B.
2. Approval of an internship site by the Practicum Coordinator.
3. A written contract between Missouri Valley College, the internship site, and the student (Appendix C).
Internship Objectives

1. To provide opportunity for practicing competencies developed throughout the graduate training program.
2. To acquaint the student with organizational structure, protocol, relationships, processes, and working conditions at the internship site.
3. To encourage the formation of and identification with the role of the professional counselor.
4. To provide an awareness of the process of community organization to meet the needs of the client.
5. To instill high standards of professional ethics and provide experience in actual interpersonal relationships involving ethical decisions.
6. To provide experiences with the everyday realities of agencies or institutional employment and introduce the student to the challenges of maintaining a regular counseling schedule.

Internship Requirements

The activities in students’ internships may vary from site to site. However, the following guidelines for the structure of the internship should be observed. Students are required:

1. To spend a minimum of 300-clock hours (per 3 credit-hour internship experience).
2. To have a minimum of 120 total direct or face-to-face direct service hours on-site.
3. To have at least 1 hour per week of individual supervision with an on-site supervisor. Triadic supervision may be substituted for individual supervision only in an emergency.
4. To have 1.5 hours of group supervision per week with a licensed faculty supervisor. Any student who misses two group supervision classes will receive an incomplete grade and be required to complete additional internship work the following term in order to receive credit.
5. To fulfill all obligations with the internship site.
6. Internship requirements are normally completed at the same site for consecutive semesters when a student chooses to take an additional semester of internship.
7. To purchase liability insurance while completing internship.
8. To adhere to all policies of Missouri Valley College and those of the on-site internship placement.
9. To develop counseling skills by keeping records, recording sessions, and critiquing sessions.
10. To seek opportunities to develop skills in each of the following areas:
    a. Individual counseling
    b. Group counseling
    c. Record keeping and accountability
    d. Consultation
e. Professional development
f. Program development

Note: If the student’s internship placement does not afford the direct opportunity for any one of the above activities, the student is expected to consult with the faculty supervisor concerning alternative means to develop the needed skills.

11. The student will keep logs of all internship activities (Appendix G).
12. The student is expected to share their logs with their on-site supervisor regularly for comments and suggestions. The logs will be submitted to and evaluated by the licensed faculty supervisor at the end of the semester.
13. The student is required to complete all assigned readings.

By the end of the one semester of internship, the student is expected to demonstrate theoretical competency in advanced skills as outlined above.

**Documentation of Internship Hours**

For the purpose of student organization, the Practicum/Internship Record Checklist must be turned in with appropriate materials at the end of each semester (Appendix F).

Internship hours should be recorded in the student's log (Appendix G).

On-site supervision hours should be recorded in the Record of Individual Supervision Hours Log (Appendix H).

At the end of each internship semester, the Practicum/Internship Verification form should be completed by the on-site supervisor (Appendix I).

**Distribution of internship hours** – Students will spend at least one semester in internship. Each semester students should record the following hours:

a. Direct service: Client contact (providing or observing therapy, providing or observing assessments, and providing or observing other direct patient-care tasks): MINIMUM of 120 hours per semester.

b. Individual supervision with on-site supervisor:
   1 hour/week: MINIMUM of 15 hours per semester in Fall and Spring terms and 12 hours in the Summer term.

c. Group supervision with faculty supervisor:
   1.5 hours per week: MINIMUM of 22.5 hours per semester in Fall and Spring terms and 18 hours in the Summer term.
d. Additional hours in staff meetings, case presentations, in-service training, documentation, and transcription and analysis of audio or video tapes or other activities approved in advance by students’ supervisors: MINIMUM of 142.5 hours
Total Minimum Hours Per Semester: 300*

*Note: If a student does not meet the minimum number of hours within a semester, an incomplete grade will be recorded, and the student must complete the remaining hours within the next semester. Students will be allowed to enroll in Internship II only after satisfactorily completing Internship I.