

Counseling Psychology

Pre-Doctoral Practicum

Practicum is a central component of the graduate curriculum of Counseling Psychology. Successful completion of the practicum requirement is prerequisite to applying for internship and receiving the degree. There are two introductory practica (C6381, *Counseling Practicum I* and C6382, *Counseling Practicum II*) and four doctoral practica (P7365, *Doctoral Practicum in Counseling Psychology*). These experiences must be completed in pre-approved practicum sites. The practicum experiences are intended to provide a part-time, pre-professional experience for the counseling psychology student who has completed preparatory academic coursework at UCA. Under the supervision of an appropriately credentialed mental health professional, the student will perform many of the duties of a professional counseling psychologist including but not limited to individual counseling, group counseling, crisis intervention, consultation, behavior modification, assessment, outreach, and program development. Students should seek a variety of practicum experiences consistent with their individual interests and career goals. This includes obtaining both treatment and assessment experience. With only a few exceptions, practicum site placement is for one semester.

Procedures for Securing Practicum Placement

Students are responsible for securing a practicum site each semester and should work closely with their advisor to determine appropriate sites that meet their career goals.

The program has compiled a list of approved master's practica (C6381 and C6382). The program also has a list of doctoral practicum sites (P7365), available on the program website; however, students may develop other placements. Any additional placements must be approved by the Counseling Psychology Committee (see attached form). The student should begin the process of finding practicum sites early in the semester prior to the one in which each practicum is anticipated. Issues securing a practicum site should be discussed with the student's advisor and the Director of Training well before the beginning of the semester.

General Requirements

Practicum Sites - Sites are pre-approved by the Counseling Psychology Committee. Practicum sites tend to be in community or university settings such as community mental health centers, outpatient and inpatient treatment settings, medical hospitals, facilities for the developmentally delayed, schools, and university counseling centers.

Clock Hours – C6381 and C6382 each require a minimum of 100 hours. P7365 requires 150 hours each. Activities that count towards these 100 hours include:

- *Direct Service Hours (see below; must constitute at least 25%-35% of the 100 hours)*
- *Support Activities (see below)*
- *Supervision (onsite and supervision by UCA supervisor)*

(Students are required to successfully complete at least 800 total clock hours of supervised practicum. Note that we have established this 800 hours as its minimum for the certification of student readiness for internship. Most students will accumulate considerably more than the required minimum 800 total clock hours.)

Multicultural Counseling Experiences - Students are required to enhance their multicultural counseling competence through their practicum activities. Students should work with a variety of client populations and increase awareness of worldviews of their clients, obtain culture-specific knowledge associated with their client's identities, and improve their skills in counseling clients with various cultural and social backgrounds.

Practicum Activities.

Direct Service Hours – Refers to face-to-face intervention and assessment experience. This includes time spent in direct contact with clients providing individual/group/career/family/couples treatment sessions or administering and explaining assessment results. Direct service also includes conjoint therapy with another counselor, if the student actively participates (otherwise, it is considered observation). Time spent scoring and report writing should not be included in this category. These types of activities fall under “Support Activities.” Direct service hours should account for 25% - 35% of the total practicum hours for each practicum. **Students should be aware that these are minimal requirements. Many APPIC internships require more than the minimum number of direct service hours.**

Support Activities – Support activities include time spent gathering information about the client but not in the actual presence of the client (i.e., outside the counseling/therapy hour). Examples include: writing process/progress notes, reviewing charts, planning interventions, consulting with other professionals about a case, video/audiotape review, orientation/training, etc.

Supervision – A minimum of one hour of face-to-face on-site supervision is required per week. In addition to this regular weekly supervision, students should seek supervision and consultation from their supervisor or other qualified staff as necessary. The student must be able to contact the supervisor when needed, particularly when “in session” with the client(s). In most cases, on-site supervision will be provided by a licensed psychologist; however other independently licensed mental health professionals are acceptable (e.g., licensed professional counselor, psychological examiner, social worker). University supervision (three hours per week) will be provided by a licensed psychologist during practicum class.

Documentation

Documentation of Practicum Hours and Experiences - It is the student's responsibility to record his or her practicum experiences (hours devoted to the various activities in practicum). Students should use the **electronic practicum log** to document their practicum hours and experiences (see program website). Students are strongly recommended to document their practicum hours and experiences in a format that matches the APPIC Uniform Application Form, particularly if they are thinking of applying for an internship through the APPIC matching process. Students should keep a copy of their signed Practicum Logs for each practicum completed.

Evaluation - Students will receive written evaluations from their on-site and university supervisors at mid-term and at the end of the semester. Written evaluations should be reviewed jointly with the student and signed by the student, on-site and university supervisors. The student will likewise complete a practicum site evaluation form. All evaluation forms may be found on the program website.