

Guidelines for Becoming an Approved Practicum/Internship Site for Georgia State University's Mental Health Program

Thank you for your interest in becoming a clinical partner of the Mental Health Counseling program at Georgia State University. Our 60 credit hour CACREP accredited program provides the training required for students to be skilled licensed professional counselors and prepares them to be leaders in the field mental health counseling. We are excited that you would like to join us in providing a truly exceptional training experience for our students.

The process for becoming an approved practicum/internship site is set by Georgia State University and involves multiple steps. The purpose of this flyer is to provide you with a general overview of the process for becoming an approved clinical site and to share with you some of the expectations that our program has for sites where our students complete their practicum and internship. It is important to note that this document may not fully covered the requirements and the process, but it will give you a framework for the relationship between your site and Georgia State University's Mental Health Counseling program.

Steps to becoming an approved site:

1. Solicit applications for the internship at your site by sending a full description of your site and the expectations for the intern position to Dr. Jonathan Orr, Program Coordinator and Clinical Coordinator, jorr@gsu.edu.
2. Conduct a pre-practicum interview with potential interns to determine a match.
3. Participate in an on-site interview between the agency administrator and the GSU Clinical Coordinator to talk about administrative and clinical needs for the agency and the university.
4. Make a formal offer to a GSU student for internship placement.
5. Once the offer is accepted by the GSU intern, then the university will issue to the site a formal three-year contract between the Department of Counseling and Psychological Services, Georgia State University, and the Board of Regents. Contracts are standardized but can be altered to accommodate specific needs of the site or special services offered by the site. The contract states that it may be broken at any time with a 90 day notice by either party.

In subsequent years while the site is under contract, it is added to a list of approved sites that is publicized for students seeking internship placements. Approved sites are also invited on campus each year to recruit potential interns.

To be a practicum-internship site, an agency must be willing to

- assign to the intern a clinical supervisor who agrees to meet **one hour** each week with the intern. The supervisor is responsible for instructing the intern about the functions and objectives of the agency as well as providing clinical oversight for the student's interactions with clients.

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- keep the Counseling and Psychological Services Department updated on any changes at the site which would be important to the students at the site or to new interns making contact.
- provide enough clients for individual and group counseling in order for the student to meet direct service hours.
- have a place and procedure to ensure the confidentiality of all client records.
- allow for sample work behaviors (audio and/or video recording) to be shared with the Georgia State University supervisor. The university supervisor must be aware of the intern's professional growth to be in a position to attest to the intern's clinical abilities on the application for licensure.
- host site-visits from GSU supervisor and/or Clinical Coordinator during the time that students are working at the site.

To be an approved site supervisor, a professional clinician must

- hold a Master's degree or higher in a helping field (counseling, psychology, social work, rehabilitation counseling, etc.).
- hold a license and/or certification in counseling or related discipline.
- have a minimum of two years of professional clinical experience.
- have training and experience in clinical supervision.
- follow the GSU program expectations, requirements, and evaluation procedures for students. The intern will make these requirements and procedures available to the site supervisor during the first week on site.
- commit to giving a minimum of **one hour** of individual supervision per week during the entire 2 semester (9 month) practicum-internship experience. *Group supervision provided by the agency, though very beneficial does not replace the individual supervision required.*
- provide feedback to the intern on a regular basis (strengths as well as improvement areas), and provide overall support for the clinical experience while at the agency.
- provide the intern with the opportunity to attend staffing and training offered by the agency.

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- provide the intern with the opportunity to both counsel individual clients and lead group counseling sessions.
- train the student in agency procedures to guarantee confidentiality to clients.
- assist the intern with opportunities to counsel a number of clients throughout a process of change. This includes the intern's meeting with some clients for multiple sessions.
- allow the student to audio and/or video record individual client sessions in order to provide samples of clinical behaviors for on-site and GSU supervisors.
- be available on-site while the intern is counseling clients. If the agency supervisor must be away from the site, an established procedure should be in place to identify who will be responsible in the absence of the supervisor. The designated person is to be identified by the agency and must have the same (or more) qualifications as the supervisor. At no time should the intern be left at an agency to conduct counseling without a supervisor on site.
- inform the intern of ethical and legal mandates and the policies of the agency in critical care issues such as harm to self or others.
- inform and train the intern about all agency safety procedures (e.g., code names, buzzer systems, furniture placement, seating arrangements, etc.) and tips about safe parking and moving in and out of the agency facilities safely.
- host an on-site visit early in the year by the Georgia State University supervisor for purposes of intern support, feedback, and evaluation.
- participate in periodic consultation with the GSU supervisor.
- call the GSU supervisor if there is a need to take corrective action with the student. Working in the best interests of the clients and the student, the agency and university can work together to make sure that the intern is prepared. Sometimes the student may need assistance learning procedures, working in the best interests of the clients, and adjusting to the training and the site.
- give evaluations of the intern's work using the GSU forms at the conclusion of each semester (forms are provided by intern). An on-site supervisor may also elect to write a letter. The evaluations should be processed by the on-site supervisor and the intern before returning them to the GSU supervisor.

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- give a brief evaluation of the GSU training program at the conclusion of the student's internship experience with the agency (form provided by intern).

To help the intern meet hourly requirements, the site must

- be able to allow the intern a minimum of 10 hours a week on site for Applied Practice (CPS 7660/7663). Practicum lasts 10 weeks, starting in late August and the intern must accumulate 100 clock hours on-site during that time. During the practicum experience, of those 100 clock hours, at least 40 hours must be in direct service to clients. The 60 remaining hours can be a combination of charting, staffing, learning about services of the center, and other clinical activities.
- help the student audiotape (or videotape) all counseling sessions in which the student is working alone with individual clients. The student must submit approximately 3 tapes per week during fall semester to the GSU supervisor for review.
- be able to provide the intern with a minimum of 25-35 hours a week for Internship I and II. During internship the student must accrue a total of 600 hours on site. Internship runs from the end of October until late April of the following year. The Internship is broken into two semesters, a 6 weeks mini-semester October and December and a full 16-week semester beginning January through April. By the conclusion of the internship the intern should have completed 240 direct service hours. The 360 remaining hours can be a combination of charting, staffing, learning about services of the center, and other clinical activities.