

**QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY  
CLINICAL PRACTICUM GUIDELINES**

**Introduction to Practicum Placements**

**Clinical Training Goals and Objectives for Practica**

The general goals of practicum placements are:

- to allow students to apply theoretical knowledge obtained in lectures and seminars
- to give practice in meeting and dealing with patients or clients under the guidance of an experienced clinician
- to become familiar with practical problems that tend to complicate the direct application of psychological knowledge
- to experience working with colleagues in related professions.

**Administrative Structure and Clinical Program Requirements**

The practicum experiences occur during the second year of the program (M.SC.2) in PSYC 838\*, 839\* Introductory Clinical Practicum (15 hours per week for 12 weeks each term), during the third year (Ph.D.1) in PSYC 989\*, 990\* Advanced Clinical Practice (15 hours per week for 12 weeks each term), and during the fourth year (Ph.D.2) in PSYC 991\*, 992\* Advanced Clinical Practice (15 hours per week for 12 weeks each term).

Normally, these practicum experiences will take place in at least 4 different settings. The Ph.D.1 experience may be in one setting for 24-30 weeks or in two settings for 12-15 weeks each. The Ph.D.2 experience will often be in 1 setting for 24-30 weeks. The course requirements for each term of practicum placement are: 180 total practicum hours; tracking of hours and activities and satisfactory performance on the final evaluation. CPA Accreditation Standards (2011) require that students spend about 40% of their practicum time in direct service and 20% of their practicum time in supervision. While it is expected that the ratio of hours may differ depending on the level of training of the student and the placement, these guidelines should be considered when planning time at practicum.

In addition to meeting the course requirements, students must submit a Practicum Evaluation Form completed and signed by their Clinical Supervisor and themselves in order to receive a "Pass" for the course. Any rating of "Does not Meet Expectations" on the Practicum Evaluation Form will warrant a meeting with the Director of the Psychology Clinic/Practicum Coordinator and/or Director of Clinical Training to discuss options regarding remediation plans, and continuation in the Clinical Program. If a student does not pass the practicum (as with any course) this is grounds for dismissal from the Clinical Program.

The Psychology Clinic provides an opportunity for students in any year to arrange for clinical experiences that supplement the training in other practicum settings. The hours are necessarily more flexible than with other placements, but hours in the Clinic are recorded on the student's annual report and counted toward total practicum hours when it comes time for internship applications.

Students derive the remainder of their mandatory practicum experience from the first year assessment courses (805\*, 806\*) which have supervised clinical assessments and from the Advanced Intervention/Clinical Skills Course(s). The Clinical Program Professional Development sessions also provide an opportunity for discussing professional and clinical issues and case conceptualization practice. Students may also apply for other experiences to be counted as Program Sanctioned hours (See Program Sanctioned Hours Document at <http://www.queensu.ca/psychology/graduate-program/current-students/graduate-program-forms-and-policies>).

Occasionally, with the permission of the Director of Clinical Training, students may take an elective practicum (i.e., 7<sup>th</sup> practicum). In order to do so, please email the Director of Clinical Training once you

have completed your six practica with the name of the placement and supervisor, and reasons as to why this additional placement is considered necessary. Please note that you may not receive payment from the placement/supervisor for this 7<sup>th</sup> practicum. Students taking elective practicum will have last priority in the placement match process, when relevant. Payment cannot be accepted for practicum courses.

### **Procedure and time-line for practicum site matching**

January/February: Director of Psychology Clinic emails a site survey to all Clinical Supervisors requesting information about their availability for the following academic year.

February/March: Director of Psychology Clinic updates the Practicum Placement Descriptions List to include information about current practicum site availability and provides the List to all students who will be completing a practicum during the following academic year.

Students are encouraged to contact potential supervisors directly to meet to discuss the practicum site and “goodness of fit” regarding the student’s clinical training goals. Students are encouraged to coordinate with others in their cohort regarding preferences for placement to reduce the likelihood of supervisors being contacted by multiple students for few spaces and to facilitate the match process. However, the ultimate decision about placement match will be made by the Director of Psychology Clinic (see below).

Clinical Supervisors are invited to an annual Clinical Reception where they are thanked for their participation in training, invited to meet potential students, and to share information about their practicum site.

Supervisors are encouraged to contact the Director of Psychology Clinic with any questions, concerns, or changes in availability.

April/May: By May, students are asked to rank their choices for practicum placements using the form in Appendix A1.

Director of Psychology Clinic completes the matching process. This may include meetings with individuals or groups of students. Matching is completed in accordance with the Principles for Assigning Practicum Placements below.

Director of Psychology Clinic sends written notification to each supervisor and student about the matching, confirms the matches and then circulates the match list.

### **Principles for Assigning Practicum Placements**

1. Priority will be given to students who require the practicum in order to complete their degree requirements, with students with the fewest practicum experiences left to complete taking the highest priority and those with the most the lowest priority. Students who have been approved to take an elective practicum (i.e., 7<sup>th</sup> practicum) will have last priority.
2. There will be an emphasis on the diversity of experiences. Students are required to be placed in at least four different practicum settings.
3. There will be a matching process considering the students’ training needs, goals and interests and the settings. This matching process will include the level of student, the length of practicum offered, supervisor availability, type of experience offered by the setting, students’ previous experiences, students’ level in the program, diversity of students’ placements, students’ training goals, students’ career plans and long term goals.

4. Efforts will be made to consider students' first choice over the three years of practicum experiences. That is, for at least one of the practicum experiences students will receive their first choice.
6. Every student will have a placement in the Psychology Clinic during their first practicum year (typically M.Sc.2).

## **Supervision**

### **Responsibilities of the Supervisor**

As outlined in the College of Psychologists of Ontario Standards of Professional Conduct (Sept 2017), Clinical Supervisors assume responsibility and accountability for the actions and services of all supervised providers of psychological services.

Since the primary goal for the practicum placement is to provide clinical training, high quality clinical supervision is a primary responsibility for the supervisor. Supervision typically includes providing the student with comprehensive and ongoing feedback about clinical skills development, mentoring with regard to professional development, and helping the student to identify specific training goals and methods of attaining those goals within the practicum setting. It is also important to give students the opportunity to observe the supervisor providing clinical service.

Students are expected to complete 180 total practicum hours per term. In accordance with CPA Accreditation Standards (2011), students are expected to spend about 40% of their practicum time in direct clinical service and 20% in supervision, with the rest of their time in support activities. While it is expected that the ratio of hours may differ depending on the level of training of the student and the placement, these guidelines should be considered when planning time at practicum.

During the initial meeting between student and supervisor, arrangements for regular supervision sessions should be made. Live supervision and/or videotaped /audiotaped supervision are encouraged where possible as a comprehensive method of providing detailed feedback to students. Supervisors are encouraged to adapt the level and type of supervision to suit the student's training needs and experience.

In accordance with standards of the profession, all formal psychology reports should be reviewed and co-signed by the supervisor.

It is recommended that student and supervisor also discuss arrangements for substitute supervision when the supervisor may be away from the clinical setting. While such arrangements will vary according to the needs of the student and the setting characteristics, supervision should follow the Regulations, Standards of Professional Conduct, and Guidelines of the College of Psychologists of Ontario.

### **Expectations for Supervisor**

- Assist student in determining appropriate goals
- Provide information about site standards, protocols, responsibilities of student
- Develop appropriate caseload for student with student input where possible.
- Provide supervision of clinical work and adapt type and level of supervision accordingly.
- Promote discussion of clinical, ethical, research issues with student and direct student to appropriate literature
- Provide student with constructive feedback on an ongoing basis, an informal progress review is recommended at the mid-point of the first term of the placement
- Provide formal evaluation of student at the end of (each) term via Practicum Evaluation Form

- Contact the Director of the Psychology Clinic with concerns about the student's progress/competency and needs for remediation

## **Responsibilities of the Student**

Students are expected to act in a professional and ethical manner in practicum settings in accordance with the CPA Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists and College of Psychologists of Ontario Standards of Professional Conduct (Sept 2017). While Clinical Supervisors assume responsibility and accountability for the actions and services of all supervised providers of psychological services, this is shared responsibility – the student is independently responsible and accountable for his or her actions. It is very important, therefore, that students be familiar with these documents and clarify any concerns they have with their supervisor. While the student is not a member of the College of Psychologists, he or she will be held to College standards, allowing for the fact of being a learning practitioner. Since practicum are re- quired graduate courses in the Clinical Program, grossly unprofessional and unethical behaviour will lead to failure of the practicum course and can be grounds for dismissal from the program.

Students are expected to follow the guidelines and regulations of the practicum site and should keep the supervisor well informed about all aspects of a clinical case. Students are expected to be prepared for supervision, which includes having the materials needed to present or discuss a case, and identifying topics and questions to be discussed in supervision. Documentation, including client session notes and formal psychology assessment, intake and discharge notes should be completed promptly, with a draft provided to the supervisor within the expected time frames.

Students are expected to dress professionally in business casual attire while at practicum, and particularly when client contact is anticipated. This means no running shoes, no hoodies, and no transparent clothing.

### **Expectations for Student**

- Participate in goal-setting
- Active learning (readings, literature review, test practice)
- Learn & abide by site policies
- Adopt professional demeanour (punctual, reliable, prompt, appropriate dress)
- Be responsive to constructive criticism
- Establish appropriate relationships with clients and staff
- Provide supervisor with ongoing feedback

## **Professional Development**

### ***Goal-setting and determining areas for professional development***

The student and supervisor should identify specific goals for the practicum placement at the beginning of the placement. To aid in goal-setting, the student is encouraged to share with the supervisor feedback from previous clinical supervisors with regard to areas for professional development. Once goals have been agreed upon, they should be set out in writing in the first section of the Practicum Evaluation form (Appendix A2). However, goal-setting should be considered as an interactive, fluid process that evolves with the practicum. Ongoing discussion of goals and training needs is encouraged throughout the placement.

### ***Self-care***

Developing clinical skills and working within a helping profession is psychologically taxing. Students will confront stressful situations and must rethink their understandings of themselves and of the world. This is often quite distressing. Learning how to take care of one's own needs is an important component of professional development. Students are encouraged to raise issues and questions with their supervisors and peers and in the context the Clinical Program Professional Development sessions. Sometimes these informal approaches to personal distress will be insufficient. While faculty, supervisors and peers are useful sounding boards for discussion of stressful issues, the clear dual relationships make them

inappropriate resources for personal therapy. Many programs have a tradition of requiring personal therapy for all candidates. While this is not a requirement at Queen's it is encouraged. Seeking therapy or counselling for personal issues is sign of professional maturity rather than a sign of clinical weakness. It is recommended that students do not seek therapy or counselling at Queen's Health, Counselling and Disability Services, given the potential for dual relationships in doing so. Rather, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at Queen's is a confidential resource for graduate clinical students who are employed by the university. The service can be accessed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by calling 1-800-387-4765. Additional information is available on the Queen's EAP website at <http://www.queensu.ca/eap>. Students who are dealing with personal issues that may impact their performance within the program are encouraged to discuss these issues with their appropriate supervisor (e.g., research, clinical), the Director of Clinical Training or the Director of the Psychology Clinic. In most cases, addressing support needs earlier will lead to better outcomes for all.

## **Evaluation**

### ***Procedure and time line for evaluations***

Feedback to students is regarded as an essential feature of clinical training. Supervisors are encouraged to provide ongoing constructive feedback to the student with regard to clinical skills development, case management, and professional issues. Similarly, students are encouraged to provide supervisors with ongoing constructive feedback regarding their training experience. This informal, ongoing feedback gives the student a chance to practice the behaviours that a supervisor praises and to develop alternative approaches to areas that need work. In addition to ongoing informal communication, it is strongly recommended that supervisors and practicum students meet for a feedback session midway through the placement to review goals and to discuss the student's progress. One goal for successful supervision will be that there are no surprises at the final evaluation. At the end of each twelve-week term, the formal written evaluation form should be completed. During these evaluations students and supervisors will have an opportunity to review and revise the goals originally set out for the placement, if the placement is continuing. A copy of the completed evaluation signed by both student and supervisor should be provided to the Director of Psychology Clinic at the end of each term. The supervisor should notify the Director of Psychology Clinic if there is any cause for delay for the completion of the evaluation.

The completed evaluation form is reviewed by the Director of Psychology Clinic and then placed on the student's file in the Graduate Office. Grades are awarded on a pass/fail basis. The completed evaluation form is required in order to gain credit for the practicum course. Failing to complete the number of hours required for the practicum (180 hrs/term) and ratings of "Does not Meet Expectations" are both reasons for consideration of a "Fail" grade, although discussions regarding possible solutions will be encouraged before this decision is made.

### **Procedure for Student or Supervisor Grievances**

Consistent with the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists (2017), the individual who experiences a concern should first make every attempt to resolve the problem directly. For example, misunderstandings between a student and a supervisor should start with open communication about the problem to try to attain a resolution.

Either or both the student and supervisor should inform the Director of Psychology Clinic (or Director of Clinical Training) of any concerns that require further support for resolution. The Director of Psychology Clinic can work informally to assist in resolving the problem by meeting with one or both parties or by providing clarification of an issue. The Director of the Psychology Clinic may also consult with the Director of Clinical Training for support and clarification of issues.

If an informal resolution is not possible, the individual should submit a written grievance to the Director of Psychology Clinic and/or Director of Clinical Training outlining in detail the reasons for the grievance. The grievance will be shared with the Director of Clinical Training and depending on the nature of the

grievance, appropriate action will be taken. Should the problem involve the Director of Psychology Clinic and a student placed with the Director, the student is encouraged to speak to Director of Clinical Training who will take appropriate action.

### **Tracking Clinical Hours**

Practicum hours are defined as outlined by the Association of Professional Psychology Internship Centres (APPIC). Students should become familiar with the APPIC Application for Psychology Internship (<http://www.appic.org>). Recording clinical hours and experiences in as much detail as possible at the time of training will help students in later years when they need to demonstrate clinical experience for internship applications. Tracking clinical experiences is also helpful in determining areas of strength and gaps in clinical training. Many student use the program Time2Track and a discounted membership is organized by the Clinical Student Representatives. Alternatively, students can develop their own spreadsheets for tracking hours.

## **Internships**

### **Internship Applications**

Students in the Clinical Program are required to complete a one year internship after all other requirements for the Ph.D. have been completed. Students are strongly encouraged to seek a placement accredited by the Canadian and/or American Psychological Association. The clinical internship is an academic requirement and students must properly register for it (PSYC 993).

Internships generally start in July or September, although a few will allow for start in January. Applications for internships usually take place during the October-December period of the preceding year. Decisions about acceptance are normally made during February according to guidelines set by APPIC. These policies are available at <http://www.appic.org/>. Not all agencies follow these guidelines. It is the student's responsibility to make application according to deadlines set by individual internship settings.

The Canadian Council of Professional Psychology Programs has a Directory of Canadian Internship settings available at [ccppp.ca](http://ccppp.ca).

Before applying for internship, the student is required to work out with his/her supervisor a detailed and realistic plan for completion of their dissertation. The plan must be signed by both the student and supervisor and copies submitted to the Director of Clinical Training. The Director of Clinical Training (sometimes in consultation with the Director of Psychology Clinic) will make the decision as to whether the student should proceed with the application for internship at the date specified.

An internship setting selected by a student must, if not APA and/or CPA accredited, be approved by the Director of Clinical Training in consultation with Director of Psychology Clinic. This entails a guarantee that the internship will be supervised by a registered psychologist (Ontario) or in the case of out-of-province settings, by a psychologist capable of being registered in Ontario (i.e., Ph.D. and appropriate clinical training). A description of the setting and a personal letter from the supervisor (along with curriculum vitae) describing the experience the student will have at that setting are also required.

The Director of Training at the Internship will provide the Director of Clinical Training with evaluations of the student's progress in the internship. Upon receipt of the final evaluation the Director of Clinical Training will assign the student a pass or fail for the course.

It is common that internship sites requests that trainees obtain their own professional liability insurance as a condition of the placement. This insurance coverage is different from what is provided by the university while on practicum placements, although some internships do also ask for an affiliation agreement to be completed with the university. Professional liability insurance

is required for registration with the most regulatory boards for psychology service providers.

Currently most psychologists in Canada have their professional liability insurance through BMS Group, which offers a discount for those who are members of CPA and/or OPA. Information is available here <http://www.psychology.bmsgroup.com/index.html> There is a discounted student rate (currently \$125/yr).