FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ) ABOUT PRACTICUM AND INTERNSHIP

These questions are intended to assist students in understanding the expectations and opportunities offered in their internship experiences. All students should be able to answer these questions PRIOR to the start of their field experience. Students are encouraged to speak to any faculty member for further clarification of any of these questions. They are also encouraged to suggest other questions that should be addressed in this list.

(About Applying)

1. What are the prerequisites for practicum?

All courses noted below must be completed prior to the semester of enrollment in COU 880 but you may enroll in additional coursework beyond these listed in the semester you take COU 880. An asterisk (*) indicates that these courses are generally only offered one time per year. School practicum will only be offered during the fall and spring semesters. Pre-requisites for COU 880 Practicum are noted below and also appear on the application form.

EPY 816 Tests and Measurements
*COU 803 Principles and Practices of Mental Health Counseling (Mental Health Counselors Only)
COU 813 Professional Orientation and Ethics
*COU 814 Organization & Administration of Counseling Services (School Counselors Only)
COU 820 Group Counseling
*COU 825 Developmental Guidance (School Counselors Only)
COU 840 Counseling Theory and Practice
COU 846 Process and Basic Techniques of Counseling
COU 847 Crisis and Abuse Counseling
COU 848 Child and Adolescent Counseling
COU 855 Diagnosis and Treatment in Counseling
*COU 849 Addiction Disorders Counseling

*May only be offered one time per year and should be taken as early in the program as possible after you have the prerequisites needed.

2. What are the prerequisites for internship?
COU 880 Counseling Practicum is a prerequisite for COU 881 Counseling Internship, as are all the prerequisites listed for COU 880. In addition, students must complete the following courses prior to the semester they intend to enroll in COU 881 Counseling Internship.

COU 804 Counseling Diverse Populations  
COU 822 Lifestyle and Career Counseling  
COU 850 Family Counseling (Mental Health Counselors Only)

Internship is designed to be the final clinical field experience at the end of your course work. Internship will be offered spring, fall for school counseling students and mental health counseling students. Internship will be offered in the summer session primarily for mental health counseling students but under very rare circumstances may be available to school counseling students. There is an additional component for the application for those students who want to take internship in the summer for school counseling and this component details very strict conditions which a placement must meet to be approved as a summer internship site. Due to these very difficult standards for doing a school counseling internship in the summer, it is highly recommended that all school counseling students try to complete the internship in spring and fall placements. For detailed information about the specific requirements for a summer internship in school counseling, please see the form labeled “Summer Internship in School Counseling” located with the other forms at the end of this Handbook. The faculty recommends that all counseling (COU) courses be completed prior to taking COU 881 to enhance your learning experience and your client’s services.

3. Where do I find the application materials for Practicum/Internship and what do I do with them?

Prior to enrolling in either Practicum or Internship, students will be required to have completed an application. Be sure to use the checklist provided on the application to ensure that your application is complete and that you have followed all directions for submission. All information must be clear and readable including the attached picture or it will be returned to you.

This application is available in this manual under Forms and Agreements and must be turned in to:

Dr. Carol A. Sommer, Clinical Experiences Coordinator
The application **must be initiated by the deadlines (below in #4)** in the semester prior to registering in either course. You may not have your application entirely completed, but you MUST initiate the application by the deadline to ensure your space. You will not be given the CRN to enroll until your application is cleared by the internship coordinator. **A new complete application must be submitted for each semester of Internship!**

PLEASE NOTE that only hand-delivered applications or those posted via regular mail will be accepted. **Do not fax your application or submit it as an email attachment** – it will not be accepted.

4. **What is the deadline for submitting practicum/internship application materials?**

A completed application, **or at minimum an initial application**, must be submitted to the Clinical Experiences Coordinator by hand-delivery or by regular post by the following dates. Even if you do not have all the signatures on your application by the deadline, you must have initiated the application process with the Clinical Coordinator to secure a space in the class by the following dates:

**DECEMBER 1** for spring semester  
**APRIL 1** for summer semester  
**JULY 1** for fall semester

NOTE: Some schools or agencies may require that you have a State Police or FBI criminal background check prior to starting work in their sites (for example Fayette County Schools). This can take over six weeks and is the students responsibility to have this completed prior to the start of Practicum or Internship. This means that you need to check with your intended site at least two months prior to starting your experience.

(About Specific Requirements)

5. **Is professional liability insurance required?**
Yes. All students are required to purchase professional liability insurance beginning in COU 846 through completion of internship. Instructors will note this requirement in classes and will verify that students have insurance before they allow students to proceed in their classes. The department will accept any personal Professional Liability Insurance that specifically says it covers student counselors/counselors in training in their role as a student counselor. An example of this type of insurance plan is available via the web at [www.hspo.com](http://www.hspo.com) where a one year policy for a mental health counselor or school counselor is approximately $35.

6. **Do I have to do group guidance and/or group counseling in internship?**

Per the 2009 CACREP Standard III.G.1., interns must accrue at least 240 hours of direct service, including experience leading group counseling. Group guidance or classroom guidance may be part of a school counseling practicum or internship experience. Your instructor will discuss specifics of this in your class.

7. **What do I need to know if I am planning on doing the School Counseling Internship while still employed as a teacher?**

First, to do the school counseling internship requires 600 hours of internship on site including individual site supervision and university group supervision required for each semester. The 600 hours are part direct and part indirect hours. If you are willing to do a full semester of full time internship you should be able to generate the needed hours in that one spring or fall semester. As a teacher doing internship in your school, you complete internship hours during times you can get free of your regular work duties, (such as during planning period; during lunch period; before or after school if you can arrange to see students who come early or stay late). Your indirect hours can be arranged at other times when students are not available. This means, if you are not a full-time intern, you would have to sign up for internship for 2 semesters (for 3 credit hours each semester – 6 credit hours total) to finish the requirements. (*Please refer to item #2 above for information regarding rare exceptions in which school counseling students may complete internship hours during the summer.*) You may use any extra hours of internship taken toward the 54 hours credit required for the Standard Certificate in School Counseling and use any hours taken toward the 60 hours required for RANK I. 3 semester hours of internship = 200 minimum hours of field experience required.
8. If I take must Internship for more than 3 hours (more than one semester) what can I do with the additional credit hours?

Internship is a three hour per semester course. Both school and mental health counselors may take more than one semester to complete internship. If internship is taken for more than one semester, it must be taken in consecutive semesters and completed within 12 consecutive months. If taken for more than one semester, the additional credit hours may be used for electives in your program if those have not been used for other courses. These credit hours will also count toward the Standard Certificate in School Counseling, Rank Change and toward the 60 credit hours needed to become a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC). 3 semester hours of internship = 200 minimum hours of field experience required.

9. Can I start (or continue) completing my practicum or internship hours before (or between) the semester(s) that I am enrolled in the course?

No, due to liability insurance limitations, you must wait until the semester begins to accumulate practicum or internship hours. Your coverage exists for the practicum/internship experience only and must coincide with class times for the semester under university and site supervision. However, it is very important to meet with your site supervisor prior to the beginning of practicum/internship so they have signed consents, oriented you to the site, and so they have identified a counseling load for you to begin seeing on the first day of your practicum/internship experience.

The total internship hours concluded at the end of a one semester may be applied to the total 600 hours needed; however, you may not accumulate hours when an official university course is not in session and you must complete your hours within a 12-month period (each semester of internship is treated as a separate class until the total hours are accumulated). 3 semester hours of internship = 200 minimum hours of field experience.

10. What do I do if I can not complete my practicum during the semester enrolled?

You will need to complete the practicum within the semester in which you are enrolled due to liability issues. Only 100 hours are required for practicum and if you do not believe you can get those hours in one semester you will need to wait to take practicum until you can get the required minimum of hours. Your internship experience, however, may be carried over from 1-3 semesters (you must register each semester) over a 12 month period to acquire the required total of 600 hours.
3 semester hours of internship = 200 minimum hours of field experience.

11. How many semesters of practicum and internship are required?

One semester of practicum (100 hours) is required for the Master's degrees in school and mental health counseling. In addition, a 600 hour internship which may be completed in one semester (50 hour maximum per week) or two semesters (fall and spring) for school counseling students. (Please refer to item #2 above for information about rare instances in which school counseling students may work on internship during the summer). Internship may be completed in up to three semesters (within a consecutive 12-month period as long as hours are accrued when the student is actively registered for a course (e.g., not during the semester breaks). For your information, the Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor law requires a minimum of 400 hours of practicum/internship for licensure.

12. How do the goals of the practicum and internship classroom experience differ from the goals of the field placement practicum and internship experience?

CACREP Standards suggest that the practicum-internship series is an iterative experience and developmental in nature whereby initial, less complex skills are developed in practicum and later, in internship, the skills are refined and the expectation for a complexity of knowledge and application is greater. The goals of both classroom and field experience include professional knowledge and skill development such as exploring pertinent ethical and legal considerations and the development of advanced skills. The primary goal of the field placement portion of the practicum experience is to begin to accrue some initial actual counseling experience with clients or students and to put into place the knowledge and skills learned earlier in the program. At the practicum level, students may begin to be introduced to additional duties such as scheduling, interfacing with special education, and coordination of the assessment program (school counselors) and charting, staffing, and interfacing with medical staff (mental health counselors).

The internship is the culminating professional experience in the field and is conducted, as is the practicum, with group supervision provided by the university supervisor and individual supervision provided by the site supervisor. Both the school counseling internship and the mental health counseling internship require a total of 600 hours. Internship field placement goals include those noted for practicum but also include the ability to work with increasingly complex cases as well as the development of higher order professional skills such as supervision.
13. Can I do internship in my present work setting?

Yes, provided your site has a counseling focus/program and your clinical supervisor does not have any administrative supervision relationship with you (such as hiring, firing, or evaluating) which would constitute a dual relationship. If the student does practicum in their current job site, it is strongly encouraged that they perform different duties in another part of the institution/organization and have a different supervisor.

14. What is included in the internship career binder?

Students are encouraged to maintain a binder that will include, at minimum, a copy of all practicum/internship application materials with a picture of the student, a daily log of experiences signed by the site supervisor, supervisor midterm and final evaluations, supervision plan, and other documentation of counseling and supervision requirements. The binder will be reviewed at midterm and the last class meeting but should be brought to each class meeting. Relevant practicum and internship materials such as the application, direct and indirect summary log, site supervision log, and site supervisor evaluations will be kept by the department and stored in a central filing area with the student’s other program records but, these materials only will be kept for a period of five years post graduation. Therefore it is imperative that you maintain a copy of these documents for your own file prior to turning them in to the university supervisor.

15. How does a LPCC become a Certified School Counselor?

The only way to do this is to complete a second master’s degree in School Counseling.

16. How does a Certified School Counselor become a LPCC in Kentucky?

The LPCC law requires a minimum of a Master's degree or above in Counseling or a related discipline and 60 graduate hours of course work in the 9 core areas of counseling specified in Kentucky's LPCC law; practicum/internship experiences of at least 400 hours; passing score on the National Counselor Examination (NCE); and 4,000 hours of post Master's supervised work experience with 100 hours minimum of face-to-face, individual supervision by an approved supervisor. A counselor (school or mental health) can become an LPCA upon completing all the
requirements listed above, except the post-master’s supervision and passing the NCE, and completing the application for same that includes a plan for acquiring the required supervision. **NOTE: Stay updated with the LPCC Board for any changes in their regulations and policies. Information is available at the Board web site at:** [http://lpc.ky.gov](http://lpc.ky.gov).

17. What do I need to keep as verification of my internship for LPCA/LPCC?

In order to meet the requirements for the LPCC board, you must keep, at a minimum, a signed record of supervision that includes a list of hours spent in direct counseling time, indirect time, and supervision hours. You may get a copy of the supervision documentation form from the LPCC website listed above to use with your site supervisor. Remember, the CEP Department only will retain your records for **five years** post graduation, so you must keep your own copy of all relevant materials.

18. Where can I get a list of potential mental health internship sites?

A list of sites where previous students have completed practicum and internship will be posted on the departmental website. Other sites may be considered if they meet all program and CACREP requirements but this will need to be determined in consultation with the Clinical Experiences Coordinator.

(About Site Supervisor Requirements and Issues)

19. What requirements does my site supervisor have to meet?

**School Counselor Supervisors for internship** must be practicing school counselors with at least a Master’s degree and at least 2 years post-Master’s, full time counseling experience as well as Kentucky Education Professions Standards Board (EPSB) elementary or secondary school counseling certification. **Mental Health Counselor Supervisors** must be practicing counselors/therapists, are required to have at least a Master’s degree in counseling or a related therapist degree area, have at least 2 years post-Masters, full time counseling experience, and hold **appropriate licensure and/or certification**. Supervisors of both school and mental health counseling practicum and internship students must have some training in supervision per 2009 CACREP standards.
Practicum and Internship Site Supervisors must agree to complete the EKU CEP Site Supervisor Training offered in the fall and spring semesters. Site supervisors will be notified via their supervisees at the start of the semester specifying when the training will be offered. Agreeing to be a site supervisor means your supervisor is agreeing to attend this training or that they have recently completed it. This training will provide an orientation to the program expectations for practicum and internship as well as offer an overview of current supervision theory and practice. Certificate of attendance is presented to Supervisors to document training.

20. Can I have more than one supervisor and/or more than one site?

It is strongly encouraged that practicum and internship students have only one site and one supervisor at a time. Students may seek additional supervision or consultation, but one official supervisor of record needs to be the primary supervisor. In rare instances, a student may be allowed to utilize two sites, for instance, if the primary site does not provide opportunities for group counseling which is an internship requirement per 2009 CACREP Standards.

21. What should I do if I have a conflict with my site supervisor and I am afraid it might affect my grade?

It is your responsibility to contact your university supervisor at the beginning of any potential conflicts that might arise between you and your site supervisor so that plans can be developed early on to abate any serious problems.

22. Does my supervisor have to be onsite?

No, your supervisor does not have to be at your exact internship site at all times, but the site supervisor must be readily accessible at all times and they must be on staff with the agency/school district in which you are completing your practicum/internship. You must also have administrative supervisor approval. In addition, you must have access to some form of supervision at all times while on site and this should be reflected in your Supervision Plan. As your site supervisor is the first person to be contacted in the event of a client-related emergency it is crucial that you have quick and reliable access to your site supervisor. This can be phone access to supervision, if it is formally arranged, to be utilized in the event of an emergency. This does not apply to the required minimum of one hour per week of face to face supervision. The chain of command for contacting supervisors for problems on the site is: a) site supervisor; b) alternative site supervisor; c)
practicum or internship university supervisor; d) alternative university supervisor; e) university department chair.

23. Does my site supervisor have to be a currently practicing counselor/mental health practitioner?

Yes, your site supervisor is responsible for orienting you to the counseling profession and updating your knowledge of the profession, assisting with the development of your professional identity as a counselor, and monitoring the daily activities of a counselor in the field. To do these things properly they must be active in their profession.

24. Can I hire a site supervisor?

No, to hire a supervisor for the internship requirement would be a dual relationship.

25. If there is not a school counselor in my school or if I am the only school counselor in my school or in my school district, who will supervise me?

Practicum/internship in a school district that does not have any school counselors would, in actuality, not have a school counseling program and would not be an approved site. However, if you are the only counselor in a specific school within a district, but there are other school counselors at other schools in the district, you will need to arrange for one of these school counselors to provide supervision. You must have advanced administrative supervisor approval at both sites for such an arrangement.

26. Do I have to have a supervisor in COU 881 Counseling Internship if I am currently a counselor and currently a counseling supervisor?

Yes, ethically all counselors seek supervision/consultation throughout their careers and they absolutely must be supervised during this experience. COU 881 Counseling Internship is a class which consists of both weekly university group supervision and weekly, individual, face-to-face site supervision.

27. What is the Supervision Plan?
The Supervision Plan is a tentative outline of the supervision experience that will take place over the semester and is to be turned in with the practicum application and materials. A Supervision Plan is a formal, collaborative agreement between the supervisor and supervisee regarding: a) the time and day of weekly supervision; b) the mode of supervision; c) the plan for on-going access to supervision; and d) the goals of supervision.

(About Taping)

**28. Do I have to video record sessions if my site does not allow it?**

Internship may vary, depending on your instructor, but practicum requires a minimum number of visual recordings from each student as requested by the university supervisor. Internship *may* require videos as requested by individual university instructors. The issue of video taping on the site must be worked out as part of the agreement turned in with the practicum application. Normally the issue is one of confidentiality; therefore, obtaining a signed, informed consent may resolve the issue your site may have with this. If not, discuss the issue in depth with your clinical site supervisor emphasizing that consent can be given on an individual basis and stressing the critical importance of video recording to the university supervision process. Note that you may use the same client for more than one video recording. If needed, request that the university supervisor speak with the site supervisor about the importance of video-recording. The video may be made with the client’s back to the camera to ensure confidentiality. Although video recording can be anxiety provoking for counselors-in-training, it is a necessary requirement.

**29. Where do I get video equipment?**

Video equipment is required for various courses in the program. Students have found equipment at their work sites, have purchased equipment, or have borrowed from friends and family.

(About Defining Terms)

**30. What is the difference between direct counseling experiences and indirect counseling experiences?**

Direct counseling is interaction with clients that includes the application of counseling, consultation, or human development skills. To count as direct
counseling experience, it must be face to face counseling or consultation done in a confidential setting. It is commonly referred to as billable time. Examples of Direct Counseling hours include individual, group, couple and family counseling; classroom guidance, and consultation among others. Indirect counseling experiences are all other duties and experiences that do not fall into the direct counseling category such as staffing, charting, and reviewing records; informal assessments and observations; and supervision.

31. What is group guidance?

Group guidance is not just a lecture and activity on a non-academic topic. It requires basic counseling skills and the facilitation of group process and focuses on the social/emotional needs of students. Some group guidance activities are highly structured and may involve tapes, books, games, puppets, videos, and so forth whereas other group guidance activities are more informal and less structured. Your practicum or internship instructor will work with you to determine a maximum number of hours to be used to meet the required direct hours for school counselors in both the practicum and internship experience.

32. How does group counseling differ from group guidance?

Group counseling typically includes 3-12 participants while group guidance typically includes the whole classroom. Group counseling has more of a group process and dynamics focus and group guidance has more of a topic focus. Group counseling must include several sessions while group guidance may only include one session. Group counseling requires individual screening for group appropriateness and consent (plus parental consent for minors) while group guidance may be part of the school counselor’s general job description and consent may not be required. As noted earlier, interns must complete an experience leading groups in Internship (COU 881).

33. What is the difference between RANK I and the Standard Certificate in school counseling?

RANK I and Standard certificate are different things. Upon completion of the first 33 hours of your 48 hour school counseling master’s you may be eligible for Rank II and you will need to talk to your program advisor to be sure our certification office has a planned program on file to consult when you file your TC-1 requesting this Rank Change. In the fall of 2005 the requirements for the standard certificate changed. EKU requires all of the 48 hours of coursework for the Master’s in
School Counseling plus 6 hours of approved electives for a total of 54 hours for the standard certificate. Rank I is generally 60 graduate hours in counseling or related coursework.

(About Additional Concerns)

34. How does the school internship differ from the mental health internship?

They differ primarily by setting and the credentials of the site supervisor.

35. Can I counsel students who are enrolled in my classes or with whom I have another relationship?

No, you may not counsel students in your classes or students for which you have disciplinary responsibilities, such as athletic team, club sponsor, and so forth. Counselors should also not counsel students with whom they have another special relationship such as a family member or other another type of close and current relationship. These types of situations would constitute dual relationships and are unethical. You may counsel former students or a client with whom you have had a previous relationship (though not one of a romantic nature) as long as that relationship is no longer active. See the question below for further discussion of this issue.

36. Can I work with a student or client that I have had contact with in another setting? For example, a child I have had in class or a child that attends my church?

The ACA ethics code states that dual relationships are to be avoided and if they are entered into, the parameters of the relationship must be specified, preferably in writing as a contractual arrangement between the counselor and client. As the code says they are to be avoided but not prohibited, except for relationships of a sexual nature, it is recognized that there might be occasions when certain dual relationships may be in the best interest of the client, may be the best alternative, or may be the only alternative in some settings. Therefore, a practicum student may enter into some limited dual relationships with students/clients if the student has the permission of both the university and site supervisors and these supervisors closely monitor the practicum/internship student's work.
37. As a school counselor, may I take my internship in a mental health setting?

No, your internship experience must be completed in a school counseling setting under the supervision of a practicing, certified school counselor. School internship is primarily completed during the fall and spring semesters. A school counseling summer internship is only considered under rare circumstances meeting rigid requirements.

38. Where can I find approved sites for my internship?

A list sites where students have previously completed practicum/internship is posted on the website. If there is a site that you find that meets the internship criteria, contact the Clinical Experiences Coordinator for approval.

39. How will I be evaluated during the process of practicum and internship?

Portions of this answer are taken from the CEP Student Monitoring Process. In addition to mid-term and end of semester evaluations completed by site supervisors, your faculty supervisor will complete a copy of the Professional Counselor Performance Evaluation (PCPE) at the end of COU 880 Practicum and COU 881 Internship. The Student Monitoring Process and a copy of the PCPE can be found in the Student Handbook for your reference. You should be familiar with the content of this form.