

Medaille College
30 Wilson Road; Williamsville NY 14221

Medaille College
Mental Health Counseling Program

Procedures and Policy Manual for Clinical Placements

Clinical Placement Procedures

Clinical Placement Info Session with the Clinical Coordinator to:

- Describe the clinical placement process
- Advise students regarding clinical selection
- Answer student questions
- Direct students to practicum and internship materials

Advisement

- Site Supervisors will provide on-site supervision
- Campus Supervisors will provide supervision during MHC 677
- Clinical Coordinator will provide assistance and guidance with regard to clinical placement procedures and opportunities

Exploration Stage (Start now)

- Think about which areas of “helping” interest you (populations, settings, specific disorders)
- Explore areas that you may not be familiar with (educate yourself about what mental health services and settings are available in your area, and get more information about working with different populations). Participate in community and private training seminars to broaden your vision and to meet others in the field
- Determine your requirements and limits (it is especially important that you start looking early if you have limitations for your practical work -- availability, the need for compensation, transportation issues)
- Review the **Site Lists** for some ideas for where to start looking. You are encouraged to look at sites that are not on the list. If you uncover different or new sites or if you discover different or additional information regarding sites on the list, please let me know so that I can keep the list up to date
- Start talking with other students, teachers, and professionals who are already working in the community. Now is the time to begin networking and building your knowledge base about internships, jobs, and careers in mental health. Most professionals will be glad to speak with you about their jobs and what might be available to you when it comes to internship. It is NEVER too soon to make a good impression!
- Maintain your ACA student membership and your student malpractice insurance. Canadian students can purchase their insurance through their student memberships in the [Canadian Counseling Association](#) . Provide Clinical Coordinator and Campus Supervisor with renewal certificates
- Make sure to stay updated regarding the ACA Ethical Guidelines, the **Professionalism Agreement**, and the **Mental Health Counseling Handbook**.

Preparation Stage (2-3 months before taking MHC670)

- Create a good cover letter and a resume that is appropriate to the mental health field (contact Career Planning at 880.2211 if you need assistance, or would like a professional to look over your

resume). Be sure to include any counseling-related volunteer or paid experience. Leave off the unrelated part-time jobs, and focus on your training and courses you've taken to date

- Make sure you are ready to apply and interview for your placements. Many sites treat interns like employees. That is, you may have to fill out a job application and meet the requirements of employment, which might include providing the site with proof of health, immunizations, and health insurance. You may be drug tested by the site, and background checks and/or fingerprinting might be required
- Consider a professional email address. Email is often used to communicate with clinical sites. It is helpful for recipients to recognize you by your email, but at the very least, your email address should convey a professional image. Be sure to inform the College and the MHC Program if you change your email address at any time during your program

Pre Practicum Stage

- Pre Prac consists of 100 hours of clinical experience. 45/100 hours need to be “clinical” (face-to-face with clients) hours. Some students will have to work more than 100 hours to get enough clinical hours. In Pre Prac, students become acclimated to their site. They learn about policy, procedure, and the specifics of their setting. You may be required to take specialized training to prepare you for your work with the setting and that training is considered to be part of your Pre Prac hours
- **BEFORE** you can start Pre Prac, you must:
 - have the approval of the MHC670 Instructor and the Clinical Coordinator
 - have successfully completed MHC 670: Clinical Instruction
 - be enrolled in MHC677 (you will be enrolled in MHC677 three times)
 - identify and be accepted by a site that meets NYS guidelines and the requirements of Pre Prac
 - 100 hours (45 clinical hours)
 - supervision by an acceptable NYS licensed professional (LMHC, MD, RN, NP, PhD, LCSW)
 - turn in a signed **Pre Practicum Agreement** to Clinical Coordinator

FAILURE TO COMPLETE THE ABOVE WILL RESULT IN POSSIBLE TERMINATION FROM THE PROGRAM AS YOU WILL BE MISREPRESENTING YOURSELF AND THE COLLEGE AND THIS IS CONSIDERED A GRAVE BREACH OF PROFESSIONALISM

- **WHILE** you are in Pre Prac:
 - you must have weekly supervision with your Site Supervisor (noted on your **Time Sheet** and signed by your Site Supervisor)
 - you must meet with your MHC677 Supervision group a minimum of twice a month
 - you may contact Clinical Coordinator should you require more supervision
 - keep a tally of your hours, noting the clinical hours (signed by your Site Supervisor)
- **FINISHING** Pre Prac
 - Turn in your tallied **Time Sheet** noting clinical hours (signed by your Site Supervisor) to Clinical Coordinator
 - Have your supervisor mail your **Evaluation** to Clinical Coordinator and Campus Supervisor at the end of your placement

Internship Stage

- Internship consists of 600 hours of clinical experience. 240/600 hours need to be “clinical” (face-to-face with clients) hours. Internship experiences include specialized training, case-conference, supervision, community service within your organization, and (most importantly) your face-to-face experience working with clients in group and individual counseling. Your clinical hours must be done directly (not observing or sitting in with others). You can do your entire Internship at one site, or you can divide it up into two experiences. If you do divide the internship experience, you will need to abide by all of the requirements for each of the Internships
- **BEFORE** you can start Internship, you must:
 - have the permission of the Clinical Coordinator
 - identify and be accepted by a site that meets NYS guidelines and the requirements of Internship
 - 600 hours (240 clinical hours)
 - supervision by an acceptable NYS licensed professional (LMHC, MD, RN, NP, PhD, LCSW)
 - turn in a signed **Internship Contract** to Clinical Coordinator
 - maintain a copy of your insurance certificate on file with Clinical Coordinator and Campus Supervisor

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- **WHILE** you are in Internship:
 - you must have weekly supervision with your Site Supervisor (noted on your **Time Sheet** and signed by your Site Supervisor)
 - you must attend your MHC677 Supervision groups
 - you may contact Clinical Coordinator should you require more supervision
 - keep a tally of your hours, noting the clinical hours (signed by your Site Supervisor)
- **FINISHING** Internship
 - Turn in your tallied **Time Sheet** noting clinical hours (signed by your Site Supervisor) to Clinical Coordinator and Campus Supervisor
 - Have your supervisor mail your **Evaluation** to Clinical Coordinator and Campus Supervisor at mid and end points of the placement
 - Turn in your **Student Evaluation** of the site to Clinical Coordinator

Clinical Site Selection Procedures

Description of Sites

The current list of approved sites includes: State mental health facilities, outpatient clinics (city and suburban), private practice settings, private psychiatric hospitals, psychiatric units in general and community hospitals, schools and treatment centers for developmentally disabled, behavior disordered and/or emotionally disturbed adults and children, chemical dependence treatment programs plus a variety of specialized programs such as day treatment for eating disorders and neuropsychiatric rehabilitation programs.

Acquisition of and Selection Criteria for Practicum Training Sites

Throughout the year, the Clinical Coordinator develops practicum sites. Any faculty member or student can suggest a particular agency as a potential practicum site. The Clinical Coordinator contacts the potential site administrator and/or supervisor for an initial review of requirements on the telephone. If the site meets the basic requirements, the Clinical Coordinator schedules a visit with the site administrator and/or supervisor to review the requirements and establish an affiliation.

In order to approve a site, the Clinical Coordinator obtains information regarding the objectives and function of the agency, treatment population, the training opportunities and duties available to students, credentials of staff and site (registration, licensure, accreditation), and the availability and training of supervisors (licensed health professionals). The Clinical Coordinator approves sites based on their overall suitability to the use of the practitioner model of training graduate level psychology students, i.e., emphasis on the acquisition of assessment and clinical skills. The ideal practicum experience involves sufficient direct clinical contact, exposure to seminars, meetings, administrative duties and record keeping, and appropriate supervision. Every effort is made to be certain that students receive competent supervision within a mentoring relationship in an environment conducive to learning, and that supervision requirements can and will be met by the training site.

The Clinical Coordinator grants provisional approval to a site until it is determined that it can provide the type of practitioner training Medaille College requires. Full approval is granted after a student has successfully completed a practicum and both the agency and the Clinical Coordinator determine that this has been a positive experience for both the student and the agency.

Policy on Training Sites with Creedal Statements

Practicum and internship sites approved by Medaille College are expected to conduct their selection and training in a nondiscriminatory manner. Sites are expected to select applicants without regard to race, sex, age, ethnic background, or sexual orientation unless they have compelling legal or therapeutic reasons for limiting the applicant pool. Sites that have a selection policy that disallows students based on any of the above criteria will be approved by Medaille College if the Clinical Coordinator in consultation with the College determines that an adequate legal and/or therapeutic rationale exists for the selection policies.

Policies for Site Requirements and Evaluation

Monitoring Sites

- Campus Supervisors have email, phone, or direct contact with the site supervisors each term. This must be documented in the student file.
- Students complete evaluations of the sites at the end of each internship year. The Clinical Coordinator carefully reviews these to identify problems at sites.
- The Clinical Coordinator conducts site visits throughout the year. The clinical Coordinator will visit current sites, problematic sites, new sites, sites that have not been visited recently, and sites that request visits.

Deficient Sites

A site may be identified as deficient due to, for example, inadequate supervision, inappropriate use of students, insufficient workload for students, failure to fulfill the program requirements, or unethical behavior on the part of the supervisor. When this occurs, the Clinical Coordinator intervenes by speaking with the supervisor or agency representative to highlight the problematic area(s) and work to address the issue. If appropriate, the Clinical Coordinator may develop a remediation plan with the site; if change does not occur or is insufficient, the Clinical Coordinator will terminate use of the site. If the problems are egregious, the Clinical Coordinator may remove the students immediately. Problems may be discovered at the end of the practicum year; at this point, the Clinical Coordinator may terminate the affiliation with the site.

Student Grievance Procedures

The Campus Supervisor serves as a liaison with the sites. Students are informed at the beginning of the year to address any problems on site with their Campus Supervisor. The Campus Supervisor keeps the Clinical Coordinator informed of any problems noted by students and any intervention undertaken. Students may also speak directly with the Clinical Coordinator.

Policies for Student Placement Requirements and Evaluation

Grade of “Fail”

If a student receives a failing grade in any term of MHC677, he or she must repeat the full practicum year. If a student receives four (4) ratings of “disagree” or “strongly disagree” within the site supervisor’s evaluations, the student automatically fails the practicum and receives a grade of “Fail” for that term of MHC677. One “disagree” or “strongly disagree” rating may be enough to fail a student on practicum given severity of deficiency. Poor clinical judgment, ethical misconduct, deficits in basic clinical skills, and problems using supervision are examples of serious deficits that may alone be sufficient to fail a student.

Grade of “Credit Pending”

Students may receive a grade of “Credit Pending” for reasons of insufficient hours, missing paperwork, final project revision, or other matters. A student must fulfill the relevant requirements within one additional semester unless extenuating circumstances are pre-approved by the Clinical Coordinator. If the student does not complete the requirements, the student will receive a grade of “Fail” and will repeat the practicum year. The student will not be guaranteed a practicum if this occurs.

Policies for Student Breach of Professionalism

According to the **Professionalism Statement** signed by all students upon entry to The Program, students are not only expected to achieve academically at the graduate level, but also to manage themselves throughout the program as ethical professionals-in-training. The **Professionalism Statement** and **Mental Health Counseling Handbook** address issues of: Ethical Misconduct, Behavioral Misconduct, Impairment, and Incompetence. Any concerns regarding these issues may be brought to the attention of The Program by students, faculty, and other professionals. Those reports are taken by the Program Director so the matter can be investigated. Those accused of violations will be treated fairly and have every opportunity to represent themselves against the allegations.

Concerns and complaints will be addressed by the Program Director and, if necessary, will be taken to higher levels of College administration. Information will be handled in a responsible manner, and attempts will be made to maintain confidentiality. Resolution of founded complaints as determined by the Program Director or the Dean will vary but may range from a plan for remediation to immediate expulsion from The Program.

Remediation

Remediation may be developed with consultation between the Campus Supervisor, Site Supervisor, and Clinical Coordinator. If the student receives three (3) ratings of below expectation in a term on either the Site Supervisor or Campus Supervisor evaluation forms, a written remediation plan must be developed.

Minor Remediation: Requests for minor remediation within the ordinary time frame of practicum can be handled informally. Informal remediation plans would be handled as would other in-course assignment, typically through consultation between the Campus Supervisor and Site Supervisor.

Remediation of Professionalism Issues: The Program Director and the Dean oversee remediation of Professionalism Issues as outlined in the **Professionalism Statement** and the **Mental Health Counseling Handbook**. The remediation plan may include additional training, additional coursework, or a remedial practicum. If the Program Director identifies deficits which may not be corrected through a remediation plan, students will be referred to the Dean for possible probation or dismissal.