

# Clinical Mental Health Counseling Practicum and Internship FAQs

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## General Training

### 1. How do I select a training site?

We consider it a strength of this program that students are encouraged to pursue their own clinical interests when selecting a site for training. With that said, our sites also need to meet New York State requirements involving certification, supervision, and training content (see Question 2 below for more information regarding New York State requirements). A list of sites that meets New York State requirements is distributed to students five to six months before the start of practicum to allow time to contact potential sites, schedule interviews, and submit required documentation to the Director of Clinical Training.

### 2. What if I want to train at a site not on the Site List?

You may train at a site not on the list, but it must meet EACH of the following three criteria, AND be approved by the Director of Clinical Training:

1. **The Site:** The training site must be approved by NYS-OMH to provide mental health services. Such sites will have an operating certificate issued by:
  - a. The Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)
  - b. The Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS)
  - c. The Department of Health (DOH); e.g., approved hospital or nursing home
  - d. The Office of Children & Family Services (OCFS)
  - e. The Office of Mental Health (OMH)

Other approved sites include:

- f. A public health agency or facility approved by the social services district
  - g. The office of a licensed Mental Health Counselor (not owned by the applicant)
  - h. The office of a Licensed Physician, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, or Licensed Psychologist (PLLP, PLLC)
2. **The Supervisor:** Your supervisor must be licensed and registered in New York State as one of the following, and be competent in Mental Health:
  - a. Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC)
  - b. Psychiatrist
  - c. Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner
  - d. Licensed Psychologist
  - e. Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)

Your site supervisor also must have a minimum of 2 years of pertinent professional experience in the program area in which you are completing clinical training.

3. **The Content of Training:** At least 50% of your practicum hours and/or internship hours must involve provision of mental health services (as opposed to provision of Chemical Dependency services).

### **3. Am I allowed to train in a Chemical Dependency (CD) agency?**

New York State requires that the majority of your training involve delivery of mental health services, as opposed to treatment of chemical dependency. This is generally not an issue if you are training at a site that offers a Dual Diagnosis or Co-Occurring (Chemical Dependency and Mental Health) Track. If you are accruing hours in a site that only offers Chemical Dependency treatment, you will need a second site that allows you to greater than 50% of your hours specifically assessing and treating non-CD disorders.

### **4. Am I allowed to train at my place of employment?**

The short answer is “yes.” **BUT**, the responsibility is on you, if called upon by New York State when applying for licensure, to document that your training activities were substantively different from your employment activities. Essentially everything needs to be separate; you need to document, clearly, which hours and activities were part of your employment versus hours and activities that were part of your training. It is strongly recommended that you have different supervisors for each role.

If you are interested in using your employment site for training, be sure to discuss this with the Director of Clinical Training, who must approve the site and the training plan.

### **5. Am I allowed to accept employment at my training site?**

Yes, **but**, you need to be crystal clear in your documentation which activities and hours count as training and which activities and hours count toward employment. The hours must be separate, and training activities must be substantively different from employment activities. If your status as an employee affects the arrangements you have made for training and supervision, you and your site supervisor must complete a new training contract, and the new contract must be approved by your campus supervisor. Be sure to consult with your campus supervisor regarding any change in your training contract.

You are always welcome to review your situation with the Director of Clinical Training if you have further questions.

### **6. What if I can't find a site?**

If you are having trouble finding a site, or would like some guidance in selecting potential sites, contact the Director of Clinical Training, who can assist you. You are also welcome to consult with your program advisor.

### **7. What if I am having problems at my site or with my supervisor?**

Problems sometimes develop within sites such that students are unable to meet the requirements of the program through no fault of their own. If you find yourself in such a situation, talk with your campus supervisor. Your campus supervisor is your advocate, and needs to be kept informed about your experience. Let your campus supervisor know your concerns so that the two of you can develop a plan. Often this will involve your campus supervisor speaking with your site supervisor to identify steps that can be taken to improve the

situation. Be sure to keep your campus supervisor apprised of your progress in implementing the plan you developed to address your concerns.

## 8. What if I need to leave my training site?

In some cases, it is necessary to leave a training site. This is a decision that needs to be made in consultation with your campus supervisor, who also will review this plan with the Director of Clinical Training and/or the Program Director. If you and your campus supervisor determine that you need to leave your training site, discuss with your campus supervisor the approach you will take to inform your site supervisor.

In the event that you need a new training site, contact the Director of Clinical Training, who can advise you on possible sites, in keeping with your training goals.

## 9. What if I receive an “Unsatisfactory” grade?

If you receive a grade of “unsatisfactory” for any portion of training, you will need to meet with the Director of Clinical Training and/or the Program Director to review your situation. The outcome of such a situation could include termination from the program or/and repeating the full training year (and responsibility for all costs associated with re-enrollment).

## Practicum Training

### 10. What documents do I need to submit to the Director of Clinical Training in order to begin Practicum?

1. **The Practicum Contract** (completed by you and signed by you and your site supervisor). This form can be downloaded from the Medaille College Clinical Mental Health Counseling website by selecting the “Clinical Placements” tab at: <http://www.medaille.edu/academics/graduate/master-arts-clinical-mental-health-counseling>
2. **The Site Supervisor’s Information Sheet** (completed by your site supervisor). This form can be downloaded from the Medaille College Mental Health Counseling website by selecting the “Clinical Placements” tab at: <http://www.medaille.edu/academics/graduate/master-arts-clinical-mental-health-counseling>
3. A copy of the your **American Counseling Association (ACA) membership and Liability Coverage** (Note: Liability insurance coverage is part of the ACA Master's level student's membership – verification of membership can be retrieved) <https://www.counseling.org/home>
4. A copy of the your **resume (or CV)**

### 11. How many hours are required for Practicum?

You must accrue a minimum of 100 clock hours over the course of the semester, at least 40 hours of which involve direct service with actual clients that contributes to the development of counseling skills. This is typically completed over 1 to 2 days per week for the length of the semester.

### 12. What if I accrue 100 practicum hours before the semester is over?

You are expected to continue at your practicum site until the end of the semester, even if you accrue 100 hours before the end of the semester.

### 13. What if I am unable to complete the requirements of Practicum before the end of the semester?

If you've been unable to complete your required hours by the end of MHC 677 (Practicum), you will need to develop a plan, in consultation with your campus supervisor, explaining how you expect to complete your hours, and the date by which you will complete them. This plan is then submitted to the Program and Clinical Director for review and approval, and if approved, you may be eligible for an "Incomplete." If eligible for an incomplete, you must submit the appropriate "Incomplete" paperwork to the Registrar's Office with the assistance of your campus advisor.

### 14. How many hours of supervision are required during Practicum?

There are two types of supervision during practicum: 1) campus supervision and 2) site supervision.

1. **Campus Supervision:** Your campus supervisor is considered your primary supervisor. You will meet every other week for 3 hours of group supervision.
2. **Site Supervision:** The amount and format of supervision at your site is at the discretion of your site supervisor.

## Internship Training

### 15. What documents do I need to submit in order to begin Internship?

**If Internship is continuing at your practicum site, submit the following documentation to your Campus Supervisor:**

1. **The Internship Contract** (completed by you and signed by you and your site supervisor)

**If working with a new supervisor, submit the following documentation to your Campus Supervisor:**

1. **The Site Supervisor's Information Sheet** (completed by your site supervisor)

**If establishing an Internship at a new site:**

1. You must inform the Director of Clinical Training, who must approve the site and supervisor.
2. Once the site is approved, submit the following documentation to your Campus Supervisor:
  - a. **The Internship Contract** (completed by you and signed by you and your site supervisor). This form can be downloaded from the Medaille College Mental Health Counseling website by selecting the "Clinical Placements" tab at: <http://www.medaille.edu/academics/graduate/master-arts-clinical-mental-health-counseling>
  - b. **The Site Supervisor's Information Sheet** (completed by your site supervisor). This form can be downloaded from the Medaille College Mental Health Counseling website by selecting the "Clinical Placements" tab at: <http://www.medaille.edu/academics/graduate/master-arts-clinical-mental-health-counseling>
  - c. A copy of the your **American Counseling Association (ACA) membership and Liability Coverage** (Note: Liability insurance coverage is part of the ACA Master's level student's membership – verification of membership can be retrieved) <https://www.counseling.org/home>
  - d. A copy of the your **resume (or CV)**

## 16. How many hours are required for Internship?

You must accrue a minimum of 600 clock hours over the course of 2 semesters, at least 240 hours of which involve direct service with actual clients, in activities that contribute to the development of counseling skills. You should expect to complete a minimum of 300 clock hours in the first semester of internship, and 300 clock hours in the second semester of internship. This is typically completed over 2 to 3 days per week for the length of 2 semesters.

## 17. What if I accrue 600 internship hours before the two semesters are over?

You are expected to continue at your internship site until the end of the second semester, even if you accrue 600 hours before that time.

## 18. What if I am unable to complete the 600 hours before the end of the second semester?

If you've been unable to complete all of your hours in the required time frame, you will need to develop a plan, in consultation with your campus supervisor, explaining how you expect to complete your hours, and the date by which you will complete them. This plan is then submitted to the Program Chair for review and approval, and if approved, you may be eligible for an "Incomplete." If eligible for an incomplete, you must submit the appropriate "Incomplete" paperwork to the Registrar's Office with the assistance of your campus advisor.

If you have been unable to complete your required hours by the end of the MHC 679 (Internship 2), you will need to take (and pay for) an additional internship semester. If you are unable to complete your hours on time, your graduation may be delayed.

## 19. How many hours of supervision are required during Internship?

There are two types of supervision during practicum: 1) campus supervision and 2) site supervision.

1. **Campus Supervision:** You will meet with your campus supervisor for group supervision at least 1.5 hours per week or 3 hours every other week for the duration of your internship.
2. **Site Supervision:** Your site supervisor is your primary supervisor. You need a minimum of one hour of weekly individual supervision with your site supervisor, focused on counseling cases and related professional issues.

## Contact Information

Buffalo/Rochester/Online Clinical Mental Health Programs:

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