



University of West Alabama
School Counseling Master's
Program Handbook

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To Students and Prospective Students:

Welcome to the Counselor Education Master's Program at The University of West Alabama. The *Counselor Education Master's Program Handbook* serves as a guide with valuable information for you as a current or prospective student. It was developed and revised on the basis of student recommendations and years of faculty experience.

The *Counselor Education Master's Program Handbook* is regularly updated. We value your feedback about program procedures, policies, and practices, so be sure to discuss any potential changes with your advisor. Counselor Education Program Faculty members honor your opinions and depend on you to keep us informed about how the program is serving you.

Based on your major and last name, you will be assigned a Faculty Mentor. Your Faculty Mentor is well-prepared to serve in their role, has a full grasp on the curricular program, has a strong understanding of the process (for both full time and part-time students) to navigate the program including understanding the purpose and timing of clinical placements. In addition, your Faculty Mentor will be aware of the resources available to you.

If, after reading the Handbook, you have questions, contact your University Faculty Mentor or Dr. Poppy Moon (pmoon@uwa.edu), Clinical Experiences Coordinator for School Counseling, with any questions related to your UWA experience.

Sincerely,

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Mission

Our Counseling Program's mission is unique in that it strives to provide a brighter future for individuals, families, and communities. By training emerging counselors to:

- Celebrate creativity, knowledge, & diversity.
- Teach students to view counseling as both an art and a science by providing them with the practical tools and knowledge to help facilitate change.
- Provide students with cultural experiences to help them grow into culturally competent practitioners.
- Advocate for client well-being through innovation and collaboration.
- Involving the clients in learning the resources by student involvement in providing resources in students to foster lifelong learning.
- Provide clinical skills needed to provide a wide variety of counseling services while maintaining the highest ethical and professional standards.
- Train students in knowledge and application skills that support multiple counseling service needs in a framework of national, state, and local ethical and professional standards.
- Encourage students to lead productive, responsible, and enriched lives.

School Counseling Program Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, all students will be able to:

1. Design and evaluate school counseling programs [2016 CACREP Standards V.3.b]
2. Be exposed to core curriculum design, lesson plan development, classroom management strategies, and differentiated instructional strategies [2016 CACREP Standards V.3.c]
3. Create and implement interventions to promote academic development [2016 CACREP Standards V.3.d]
4. Implement developmentally appropriate career counseling interventions and assessments [2016 CACREP Standards V.3.e]

5. Implement techniques of personal/social counseling in schools [2016 CACREP Standards V .3.f]
6. Possess skills to critically examine the connections between social, familial, emotional and behavior problems and academic achievement [2016 CACREP Standards V.3.h]
7. Implement interventions to promote college and career readiness [2016 CACREP Standards V .3.j]
8. Use accountability data to inform decision-making [2016 CACREP Standards SSG.3.n]
9. Use data to advocate for programs and students [2016 CACREP Standards V.3.o.]
10. Possess and implement strategies to promote equity in student achievement and college access [2016 CACREP Standards V.3.k]
11. Demonstrate knowledge of legal and ethical considerations specific to school counseling [2016 CACREP Standards V.2.n]
12. Identify community resources and referral sources [2016 CACREP Standards V.2.k]
13. Implement strategies for personal and professional self-evaluation and implications for practice [2016 CACREP Standards II.1.k]
14. Recognize the impact of heritage, attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences on an individual's view of others [2016 CACREP Standards II.2.d]
15. Recognize the effects of power and privilege for counselors and clients [2016 CACREP Standards II.2.e]
16. Apply a systemic approach to conceptualizing clients [2016 CACREP Standards II.5.b]
17. Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for understanding and practicing consultation [2016 CACREP Standards II.5.c]
18. Possess the essential interviewing, counseling and case conceptualization skills [2016 CACREP Standards II.5.g]
19. Develop relevant counseling treatment or intervention plans [2016 CACREP Standards II.5.h]
20. Possess knowledge of suicide prevention models and strategies [2016 CACREP Standards II.5.l]

21. Apply theories and models of counseling to group and individual work [2016 CACREP Standards II.5.a]
22. Demonstrate knowledge of procedures for identifying trauma and abuse and for reporting abuse [CACREP 2016 Standards II.7.d]
23. Use environmental assessments and systematic behavioral observations [CACREP 2016 Standards II.7.j]

Program Admission Requirements

Phase I: Graduate School Admission

1. Meet the requirements to be admitted to the School of Graduate Studies.
2. Provide verification of background clearance/fingerprints.
3. Hold valid baccalaureate level certification in a teaching field or valid master's level professional educator certificate in another area of instructional support. Two years of satisfactory educational experience is required prior to admission. (Not required for Guidance & Counseling majors)

Note: Educational experience is defined as: teaching experience and instructional support experience, including full-time educational work in: (1) any state or local public school, regionally accredited postsecondary school, educational agency, or educational association; (2) an accredited, state registered, state-approved, and/or church-related nonpublic school; and (3) rehabilitation facilities for P-12 students. Education experience as an intern, graduate assistant, student teacher or in positions such as substitute teacher, aide, or clerical worker, shall not be considered.

Phase II: Counseling Program Admissions Portfolio

Candidates must submit an application packet during the admissions process. This affords a candidate to provide valuable information regarding:

- Relevance of career goals
- Aptitude for graduate-level study
- Potential success in forming effective counseling relationships
- Respect for cultural differences.

The application includes:

1. Resume including educational background, a record of employment, and volunteer activities.
2. Professional goals essay

3. Three completed Recommendation for Admissions Forms
4. Video Interview

Advising

Your Faculty Mentor will be full-time faculty at UWA. Your Faculty Mentor will work with you during your entire time in the program.

Your Faculty Mentor will not replace your Advisor but can work with you to compliment the services offered by Advising.

Your Faculty Mentor will assist in your socialization into the counseling programs and the counseling profession in the following ways:

- Introduce you to relevant persons, processes, and resources within the graduate system
- Help you understand your responsibilities as an adult learner
- Provide support and encouragement to you as you transition into the role of graduate student
- Assist you to make connections with graduate faculty whose expertise is within your area of interest
- Assist you with specific questions you may have about the profession
- Assist you with specific remediation strategies if you are struggling

Curriculum Guidance

Your Faculty Mentor can assist in curriculum guidance in the following ways:

- Help you understand the conceptual basis of the curriculum
- Help you identify conferences and seminars relevant to your education and career goals

You can expect the following from your Faculty Mentor:

- To be contacted individually at least once per academic year to discuss your status, answer questions, etc.
- To be encouraged to participate in relevant events by receiving emails about key graduate program events

Expectations Faculty Mentors expect from students:

- Communicate with your Faculty Mentor regarding problems, issues or circumstances that might prevent you from successfully completing the courses and program.
- Meet the professional dispositions of the counseling profession.

If you have any questions about the Faculty Mentor Program, please contact your mentor or Dr. Nisha Warbington, Program Chair of Counseling Programs at nwarbington@uwa.edu.

Course of Study – M.Ed. in School Counseling & M.S. in Guidance and Counseling

Professional Courses: 9 hours

CO506 Life-Span Development and Learning (3)

ED 504 Techniques of Educational Research (3)

ED 506 Educational Statistics (3)

Certification Area: 39 hours

CO 500 Professional Orientation (3)

CO 509 Pre-Practicum in Counseling with Residency (3)

CO 540 Introduction to School Counseling (3)

CO 541 Theories and Techniques of Counseling (3)

CO 542 Career Development and Counseling (3)

CO 543 Counseling Children and Adolescents (3)

CO 544 Strategies for Crisis Intervention (3)

CO 545 Diagnostic Techniques in Counseling (3)

CO 546 Group Counseling (3)

CO 547 Counseling Multicultural Populations (3)

CO 548 Practicum in School Counseling (3)

CO 579 Internship in School Counseling (6)

Total Required: 48 hours

Program Completion Requirements

- A grade-point average of no less than 3.25 on a four-point scale on all work attempted with no grade less than a “C”.
- A passing score on the comprehensive exam. School Counseling students must receive at least a 156 on the Praxis II Professional School Counselor Exam.
- Successful completion of one practicum for 100 clock hours and 600 clock hours of an internship supervised jointly by a Site Supervisor and a UWA counseling program faculty member.

Comprehensive Examination

All counseling students are required to pass a comprehensive examination. Successful completion of a comprehensive exam is part of the graduation requirements. Students enrolled in the School Counseling program must pass the Praxis II Professional School Counselor Exam (5421) with a minimum score of 156. School Counseling students may register for this exam on the ETS website: <https://www.ets.org/praxis>. The test code is 5421. UWA recommends that School Counseling students take the Praxis two terms before graduation.

UWA’s School Counseling Clinical Experience

The University of West Alabama’s Clinical Experiences Component contains two separate experiences, Practicum and Internship. These experiences provide the opportunity for candidates to apply knowledge gained in their college classrooms, to collaborate with P-12 school personnel, to practice inquiry skills, and to reflect upon experiences under the direction of practiced on-site and university supervisors.

Obtaining an internship is a collaborative process between the candidate, university designee, and P-12 personnel. A step-by-step outline of specific procedures is provided for programs in this internship handbook. Initial identification of potential sites is made by the candidate. Once the candidate has selected a site that meets the required criteria, a request for placement will be completed and submitted to the appropriate university designee. The university designee will then collaborate with P-12 personnel at the potential site to determine if the partnership is appropriate. Once a potential placement is determined to be suitable, a formal agreement will be initiated according to the procedures required for each program.

Clinical experiences are expected to take place in a diverse learning environment. Diverse settings include students with exceptionalities and students from diverse ethnic/racial, linguistics, gender, and socioeconomic groups. Placement demographic data is provided in the placement request process. This data, in addition to collaborative discussion with P-12 personnel aids the university designee in making placement decisions. Candidates who are not able to gain a diverse experience within the assigned school collaborate with the university supervisor to secure an additional placement where the diverse learning environment can be expanded. Upon completion of clinical experiences, candidates will document their work with diverse students on their summary logs.

Pre-Practicum CO 509 - Residency

CO 509, Pre-Practicum, is the first step in the Clinical Experiences journey. CO 509 is a required experiential course involving applied elements of theoretical models and customary helping skills to orient and prepare students for their initial supervised work with counseling clients. CO 509 is taught Spring 2, Summer 2, and Fall 2.

CO 509 requires a five (5) day residency on our campus. All UWA Counseling students must be prepared to attend the residency. Residencies run Thursday at 6:00 p.m. until Monday at 2:00 p.m.

Students will meet on Thursday evening from 6 p.m.-8 p.m. Friday, Saturday, and Sunday will consist of full days of coursework along with a “working lunch”. Monday will also have a “working lunch” and conclude around 2:00 p.m.

Should you need to fly out on Monday, please schedule as late as possible to allow yourself plenty of travel time.

Coursework Details:

The course will open in Blackboard at the start of the semester you are registered in.

There will be a course schedule just like in all your other classes. Prior to the on-campus portion of the course, you will have reading and viewing materials that will better prepare you for the on campus coursework.

During the week, students will spend the majority of time in lectures, seeing skill demonstrations, and practicing skills. You will also participate in a group experience with your classmates.

Following your departure, you will have several graded assignments to submit. These will consist of videos of demonstration of skills learned during the week and other "wrap-up" assignments that will be due within approximately 10 days following the conclusion of the residency.

Lodging:

Local students are welcome to drive back and forth, but we find most students prefer to stay local as the sessions run into late evening. Specific lodging options vary from term to term, and will be provided to you upon registration for CO 509.

Practicum in School Counseling CO 548

Practicum involves 100 supervised clinical hours lasting 16 weeks (2 terms) with the P-12 setting with 50 hours being done in a P-6 setting and 50 hours being done in a 7-12 setting. Of the 100 hours, 40 must be in direct contact hours. This course will also require weekly supervision with both your on-Site Supervisor and your university supervisor.

This is to ensure that our candidates, who will be certified as a P-12 school counselor, will have experience with students across grade levels. These hours will be done as part of the CO 548 course. Practicum hours must be completed within 2 terms (16 weeks). A grade of "IP" (In Progress) will be assigned at the end of the enrollment term, and will remain in place until the course is complete OR time expires. At that time, it will be changed to the appropriate letter grade. An "F" will be assigned if time expires, and the course will need to be repeated.

Prerequisites for Practicum, CO 548:

CO 540 – Intro to School Counseling

CO 541 – Theories and Techniques of Counseling

CO 509 – Pre-Practicum with Residency

Internship in School Counseling – CO 579

Internships involve 600 supervised clinical hours. Of the 600 hours, 240 must be direct contact hours.

Students must complete 100 hours in grades P-6 and 100 hours in grades 7-12. The remaining 400 hours can be completed in either P-6 or 7-12.

CO 579 Internship - all 600 clinical hours are done within the CO 579 course. At least 100 hours must be in P-6 and 100 hours in 7-12. The remaining hours can be completed in either P-6 or 7-12.

The internship courses can last a maximum of six terms. The following deadlines are in place to ensure that your final internship grade can be posted to the transcript by the end of the term listed below.

If you need to finish the course by:

Summer One Term - June 1st is the deadline

Summer Two Term - July 15th is the deadline

Fall One - September 15th is the deadline

Fall Two - November 15th is the deadline

Spring One - February 15th is the deadline

Spring Two - April 15th is the deadline

Again, a grade of "IP" (In Progress) will be assigned at the end of the enrollment term, and will remain in place until the course is complete OR time expires. At that time, it will be changed to the appropriate letter grade. An "F" will be assigned if time expires, and the course will need to be repeated.

Prerequisites for Internship, CO 579:

CO 500, CO 509, CO 540, CO 541, CO 546 CO 548, ED 504

Before You Begin

Before you can begin planning your practicum or internship site, you will need to have a background check and provide proof of liability insurance.

Background Check

All students in the counseling program must have a clear criminal history background check. This was completed at the time of admission to Graduate School.

Questions about background checks may be directed to the UWA Teacher Certification Office at 205-652-3421.

Liability Insurance

All students in School Counseling Practicum and Internships must have a current membership in The American School Counseling Association (ASCA). ASCA provides complimentary professional liability insurance to ASCA Master's Level Students. For more information, visit www.schoolcounselor.org.

Practicum, Internships & Tevera

What is Tevera?

UWA and Tevera have partnered to help facilitate your Practicum and Internship. Tevera allows you to:

- Search for approved field sites that complement your professional interests and personal strengths
- Apply for and confirm your field placements online
- Track your hours toward graduation and licensure
- Run time tracking reports for your field instructors to sign
- Automate the process for submitting site evaluations and other program assessments

How Do I Access Tevera?

When you begin CO 509, you will receive an email from Tevera asking you to register as a user.

You will not need Tevera right away in CO 509. You can purchase it toward the end of the course. You will simply need it to use for completing the request for your practicum placements prior to enrolling in CO 548.

Please take these three important steps:

1. Watch a video to get an overview of Tevera's benefits.
<https://tevera.com/students/>
2. Add noreply@app.tevera.com to your Contacts to ensure that you receive the registration email.

Keep an eye out for your registration email. You will need to register in order to apply for field placement, log your hours and activities toward graduation and licensure, and submit evaluations and other assignments.

Once you've registered, take a look at the training videos and articles about the Student Journey (www.tevera.com/student_journey) to better understand how Tevera helps you complete your most important tasks.

CO 509: Site & Supervisor Approval

In this course you will need to begin taking formal action to begin your clinical experiences. You will set up your online account with Tevera.

We encourage you to start looking for potential sites and supervisors by no later than the 2nd week in 509. By the 7th week of 509, you should have located potential sites and site supervisors.

Since CO 548 requires that you do 50 hours in a P-6 setting and 50 hours in a 7-12 setting, you will need to find 2 placement sites, or one site that has students at grade levels in both the P-6 and 7-12.

Once potential sites are found, submit your request for placement into Tevera. When you log into Tevera, you will complete the following forms:

- Request for Placement Forms (one for each school)
- Supervisor Information Form (one for each supervisor)

These forms must be signed online by you, your Site Supervisor, and your Building Principal or Superintendent. Please check to make sure all forms are signed. If your forms are not signed, your placement process will not be forwarded to UWA for review.

Site Approval

- Once all forms are signed and submitted, the School Counseling Clinical Experiences Coordinator will review your site and your Site Supervisor. The School Counseling Clinical Experiences Coordinator will determine if your sites and supervisors are acceptable. The School Counseling Clinical Experiences Coordinator will notify you if your site is approved, typically within five (5) days.
- It is possible that your site will not be approved. If this happens, you will need to find another site, complete the necessary paperwork, and resubmit in Tevera. The School Counseling Clinical Experiences Coordinator will provide assistance with this if required.

When your site is approved and your CO 548 course begins, you are eligible to begin the placement following the guidelines set forth in your course syllabus and other related information. You will have all of the specific information required for each course provided for you by your professors within the courses. **Placements cannot begin PRIOR to the term in which you are enrolled in the appropriate course.**

Please note that the courses for practicum and internship do not last for the 8-week term, but are extended to give you more time. **Practicum courses last at least 10 weeks**, and can last 16 weeks (2 terms) and internships can last 1 calendar year (5 terms).

Please be aware if you are doing your Practicum or Internship at multiple locations under different supervisors, you will need to submit additional UWA Agreements for Practicum or Internship for each site into Tevera.

CO 579 Supervisor

If you are completing your Internship at the same school with the Site Supervisor that has previously been approved, you will not need to resubmit the Request for Placement or Site Supervisor Information form.

If you are starting Internship at a new place or with a new supervisor, you will need to submit the Request for Placement and/or Site Supervisor Information form.

Site Supervisors

In order to be considered as a Site Supervisor, they must meet the following requirements:

- Hold a minimum of a Master's degree
- Hold relevant certifications and/or licenses (All supervisors must be licensed within the discipline they are working in, e.g. Licensed Professional Counselor, Licensed School Counselor, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Licensed Social Worker, Licensed Addictions Counselor, Licensed Psychologist, etc. For example, a Site Supervisor within the school setting must be a Certified School Counselor or state equivalent)
- Have a minimum of three years of pertinent professional experience in the specialty area and is currently practicing in that specialty area.
- Have knowledge of the program's expectations, requirements, and evaluation procedures for students
- Have relevant counselor supervision training

The Site Supervisor serves as a mentor to the student by facilitating the student's integration into the clinical system. Common activities performed by a Site Supervisor include:

- Orienting the student to setting policies and procedures;
- Allowing student to observe and co-lead clinical activities;
- Assisting the student in building an appropriate case load; and
- Facilitating the student's efforts to fulfill the required practicum and internship activities.

The Site Supervisor has final authority for all decisions made and/or actions taken about the student's roles and activities while attempting to fulfill practicum or internship functions and responsibilities at the setting. The Site Supervisor is not responsible for grades, but will be asked to provide a brief mid-point and final report regarding the student's clinical experience via an online platform.

Site Supervisor Training

UWA will provide training for Site Supervisors. Detailed information on Site Supervisor training will be located in the Site Supervisor Handbook. It is the student's responsibility to provide a copy of the Site Supervisor Handbook to their Supervisor prior to Practicum and Internship.

The Site Supervisor Handbook and the Site Supervisor Training Link can be found in your CO579 Course Shell under the Site Supervisor Information Link.

The handbook and other important information is also housed on the Counseling Programs webpage at

<https://www.uwa.edu/academics/collegeofeducation/departments/instructionalleadershipandsupport/counselingprograms/sitesupervisors>

Locating a Practicum or Internship Site

Candidates are responsible for initial contact with potential practicum and internship sites. Once you have narrowed your search down, and have a placement in mind, the School Counseling Clinical Experiences Coordinator will reach out to the potential site, and UWA and the local school system will collaborate to design the most effective placements for students.

Selecting an appropriate site is essential for the greatest benefit. Students should discuss possible sites with their advisors early in their program. The first term during which a counseling candidate is enrolled is not too early to begin thinking about practicum and internship placements. As the candidate and his/her mentor construct a degree plan, they will be projecting times for practicum and internship which will assist the candidate in planning well in advance.

Please note, for Practicum and Internship, professional school counseling candidates must be in a P-12 school setting.

Early Placement

The reason to start finding a placement early is that you will have lots of time to visit sites, meet potential supervisors, and file forms with the University. It can take several weeks or longer before everything is in order.

Locating a Possible Site Supervisor

The following are some suggestions when starting your search process.

School Counseling students can consult local listing of schools (public, private, charter) as long as the school is regionally accredited.

Ask other students if they know of any possibilities. Network!

- Before you move forward with an interview, check these two things:
- Can the site meet all of my needs as a practicum student/intern?
- Does the Potential Supervisor actually have all of the required qualifications?

Can The Site Accommodate Your Needs?

Students must select sites with some of these questions in mind:

- Is the Potential On Site Supervisor willing and able to supervise you weekly?
- Can you accrue the required number of direct contact hours?
- Is it possible to earn the total number of hours?

Interns also need to consider the types of experiences available to you at a potential site. If you are a school counseling student, find out what the duties of the school counselor at that school entail.

- Will you be more of an administrator, or a counselor?
- Does the school counselor conduct individual and group sessions with students?
- Will you be expected to conduct classroom lessons?
- Does the school counseling program follow the ASCA National Model?

Making Initial Contact with A Potential Site and Supervisor

1. Find out the protocol for the school system you are exploring. Some systems have a coordinator at the system level who coordinates placements. Other systems allow individual schools to make decisions. Make sure you begin with the appropriate source. Find out if your needs match the policies of that particular system. For example, is a part-time internship possible? Do I need to take a leave of absence to be approved for a placement? Is there paperwork that must be filed to formally request placement?
2. Next, when possible, you should convey interest and utilize all modes of communication. You should call, email, and visit the site personally OR follow the previously discussed protocol for requesting a placement based on the guidelines of the potential site.

Contact the possible Site Supervisor or other appropriate contact. Prior to the initial meeting send them a letter explaining your request and copy of your resume.

3. Set up an interview/meeting with the possible Site Supervisor at the site. Prior to the meeting familiarize yourself with your responsibilities, the Site Supervisor's responsibilities, and the responsibilities of your site.

Sample Advanced Clinical Placement Cover Letter

Your Name

Current Street Address
Current email address • Phone
Permanent Address • City, State • Zip
Code

Today's Date

(Name and address of contact)

Dear _____:

In the upcoming months, I will be completing the coursework for my Master of Arts degree in School Counseling from the University of West Alabama. I am currently searching out various internship opportunities and was wondering about the possibility of doing a **(100 hour Practicum or 600 hour Internship – enter the appropriate hours)** with **(enter school district or agency name, as well as semester and year for interest)**. My interest in this position stems from **(list reason for interest)**. Please consider this, my resume, and the attached Advanced Clinical Placement Request for School Counseling Practicum & Internship Form as my application.

In addition to my Master's degree, I received **(insert degrees, dates, and institutions)**. **Insert sentences about personal characteristics that will appeal to an employer. Insert leadership positions currently held both in the community and the school, and professional development/organization membership. Insert a summary of why the employer would want you to work for them. Also, in this paragraph, how you found out about the internship can be mentioned (It can be helpful to use someone's name if they work for the company/school).**

I am very interested in an internship position with **(enter school district or community agency)**. I have enclosed my resume for you to review. If you desire further information, I can be reached at **(enter phone number here)**. Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Your Name Here

How to Behave During a Practicum or Internship Interview

- Present yourself professionally (appropriate interview attire)
- Bring necessary items, e.g. resume, etc.
- Display good posture
- Do not chew gum
- Practice appropriate eye-contact
- Listen attentively
- Smile enough to convey your interest and positive attitude
- Sound enthusiastic and interested, yet sincere
- Turn-off all electronic devices
- Send a thank you letter, email, etc. thanking the potential site/supervisor for their time and consideration. Handwritten notes are always special.

Interview Questions That May Be Asked of You

- What are your expectations for this Practicum/ Internship experience?
- How do you handle conflict or stress?
- You disagree with how your supervisor has rated your skills/development/performance at your site. How would you handle this?
- What are your areas of growth and what are your strengths?
- Why are you interested in completing your Practicum/ Internship at our facility?
- What do you hope to gain from your Practicum/ Internship?
- What is your experience working with diverse populations?
- What are your future career goals?

- Explain the qualifications of an on-Site Supervisor.
- Tell me about UWA's counseling program:
 - What courses have you taken?
 - What is expected of an intern?
 - How long is an internship?
 - What is expected of a Site Supervisor?
 - Is there a training program for the Site Supervisor?
 - What questions do you have about this site?

Interview Questions You May Want to Ask

- What will my duties be?
- Have you ever supervised a Practicum/ Internship student before and if so, what was your experience? If not, what is your expectation?
- Will you be able to meet my program's requirements?
- What are your licensing/credentials, experience, and supervision training?
- Tell me about your site's population demographics.
- What can you tell me about your school, agency, practice, etc.
- What experiences can you provide me with as a Practicum/Internship student?
- Sites have the option of offering or declining to offer a student intern applicant a placement.

Some sites may require job orientation/ training, background checks, and drug testing before a student can begin the work experience. Know the process so you don't lose valuable time.

Agreement Between UWA & Your Site

Find out if your site requires a written contract between the site and University that is above and beyond the Practicum/ Internship Registration document. If so, follow up with your University Supervisor for assistance.

Direct and Indirect Contact Hours

Direct contact hours include any activity in which the intern or practicum student is meeting face-to-face with students. Examples of direct contact hours:

- individual counseling
- group counseling
- classroom guidance lessons
- Sitting in on the Site Supervisor's individual or group sessions is considered direct contact hours.

Indirect contact hours include any activity related to counseling functions that does not include face-to-face meeting with students. Examples of indirect contact hours:

- supervision hours
- record keeping
- filing of records
- planning sessions
- consultation
- attending in-services
- attending conferences
- working with parents or teachers

Remember that the emphasis is for direct contact hours to include the actual face-to-face meeting with the student and the provision of some school counseling service. If there is a question about how to categorize an activity, please contact your University Supervisor.

Summer Hours for School Counselors

A frequently asked question is how to get summer internship hours.

When planning summer hours, remember that you must have 240 of DIRECT service (providing counseling directly to students).

Many school counselors work throughout the summer, and interns are allowed to work along side the on-Site Supervisor.

Please note: If your summer placement does not include a student population, then you will need to make sure that direct hours are done throughout the regular school year. If students are not available, you can only accrue indirect hours.

The following situations cannot be used for summer placement hours.

- Camp Counselor
- Vacation Bible School
- Volunteering at various summer enrichment programs (library story time, Boys & Girls Clubs, Boy & Girl Scouts)
- Working at a daycare
- Going on field trips with students

The reasons are:

- It is not in a school setting
- You are not being supervised as a school counselor

Professional Development

Students are encouraged to join and maintain membership in professional counseling organizations. Such memberships offer students additional learning opportunities and allows the students to be introduced to the professional world of counseling. Through engagement with professional counseling organizations, students will be exposed to professional issues and leaders in the counseling profession. Membership in some professional counseling organizations offer students the opportunity to join list serv that provide access to job postings as well as access to job fairs and/or interviews at annual conferences. Below is a list of names and websites of different professional counseling organizations:

Alabama Counseling Association (<http://www.alabamacounseling.org/>)

American Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (<http://acesonline.net/>)

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (<https://www.aamft.org/>)

American Counseling Association (<http://www.counseling.org/>)

American Mental Health Counseling Association (<http://www.amhca.org>)

American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (<http://www.arcaweb.org/>)

American School Counseling Association (<http://www.schoolcounselor.org/>)

NAADAC The Association for Addiction Professionals (<https://www.naadac.org/>)

Southern Association of Counselor Education and Supervision

(<http://www.saces.org/>)

** Each state has its own counseling association. It is recommended that clinical mental health counseling students join the professional counseling association of the state they intend to pursue a license in.

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Student Retention and Dismissal Policy

University of West Alabama Counseling Programs

This policy applies to all students enrolled in the Counseling Programs in the College of Education.

As part of meeting the program objectives set forth in the Department of Counseling Program Student Handbooks and Graduate Catalog, students are expected to conduct themselves in an ethical, responsible, and professional manner. This process is to ensure students demonstrate appropriate progress towards developing the necessary behaviors, attitudes, and professional competencies to practice as a counselor-in training. Student progress is routinely monitored and discussed during faculty meetings and in consultation with other faculty members.

At the onset of their academic program, students are directed to review these standards and seek clarification when needed.

In order to successfully complete the program and be endorsed for any relevant certifications or licensure, students must demonstrate academic performance meeting or exceeding department standards in all settings, including classes, advising sessions, clinical sites, and all verbal and written communication, including:

1. Follow all academic requirements as outlined in the Graduate Catalog
2. Demonstrate fitness in their interactions with others as measured on the *Counseling Student Evaluation*

Standards, which include the following competencies:

1. 1) Follows ethical and legal considerations
 2. 2) Displays multicultural competence
 3. 3) Open to new ideas
 4. 4) Aware of own impact on others
 5. 5) Responsive, adaptable, and cooperative
 6. 6) Receptive to and uses feedback
 7. 7) Responds to conflict appropriately
 8. 8) Accepts personal responsibility
 9. 9) Expresses feelings effectively and appropriately
 10. 10) Dependable in meeting obligations
3. Conform to the codes of ethics of professional associations in counseling and all related national and state licensure and certification boards.

The Evaluation Process:

Students' competence is evaluated using the *Counseling Student Evaluation Standards* and documented with the *Counseling Students Evaluation Form*. All students will be reviewed by individual faculty using the Standards during CO 509, Pre-practicum in Counseling, CO 548/558, Practicum, CO 579/589, Internship, and as necessary throughout the program.

Admission to the program does not guarantee fitness to remain in the program. In addition, a review may be initiated on any student at any time if a faculty member, staff, course instructor, program mentor, or field supervisor believes the student has displayed behavior which suggests the student does not possess sufficient competency on one or more criteria. Faculty also may initiate a review at any time for:

- 1) Students who engage in illegal or unethical behaviors,
- 2) Students who present a threat to the wellbeing of others, or
- 3) Students who violate the UWA Student Code of Conduct, or any other applicable UWA policies or

procedures, or any other Counseling Programs policies or procedures.

In such cases, depending upon the circumstances, the evaluation process may result in the student being dismissed from the Counseling Program without the opportunity for remediation. Faculty members, staff, course instructors, program mentors, and field supervisors may evaluate all students according to these standards. Students will have the opportunity to participate and respond at each step of the process. Performance on the standards will be rated on a scale of 1 (Unacceptable) to 3 (Target) as described in the Standards. A rating of 2 or 3 on all standards will indicate competence. The Evaluation Form then will be shared with the student. A rating of 1 on any of the standards will initiate the following procedure:

1. (1) The student will be contacted to schedule a meeting to review the Evaluation Form. The meeting will be held with the issuing faculty member, unless the process was initiated because the student engaged in illegal or unethical activities, presented a threat to the wellbeing of others or violated the UWA Student Code of Conduct (in which case, the meeting will be held with a faculty review committee, as outlined in Step 3 below). The student has five business days to respond to the request to schedule a meeting. If the student does not respond by the close of business on the fifth business day, the matter will proceed to step 3 below.
2. (2) At the meeting, the issuing faculty will review the Evaluation Form with the student and discuss a remediation plan. Within ten business days after the meeting, the issuing faculty will provide a final copy of the remediation plan (incorporating any changes agreed upon at the meeting) to the student for review and signature. The student will have five business days to review, sign, and return the remediation plan. Failure of the student to sign and/or return the remediation plan by the close of business on the tenth business day will not impede the process and may be considered during the process.

The remediation plan may include:

1. Specific competency(ies) from the Standards which require(s) remediation,
2. Specific recommendations to achieve remediation,
3. Specific requirements to demonstrate remediation efforts have been successful, and 4. A specific deadline for subsequent monitoring to evaluate progress.

Both the student and issuing faculty may retain copies of the signed Evaluation Form and remediation plan. At any time during the remediation process, the issuing faculty member may refer the student to a faculty review committee.

(3) A faculty review committee will be convened if:

- a. The process was initiated because the student engaged in illegal or unethical activities, presented a threat to the wellbeing of others, or violated the UWA Student Code of Conduct,
- b. A student fails to respond to the issuing faculty's request to schedule a meeting to review the Evaluation Form,
- c. A student fails to show reasonable progress in the remediation plan, or
- d. A student receives more than one Evaluation Form rated 1 during his or her Program of Study.

The committee will be comprised of three core faculty including the program coordinator, the faculty mentor, and one other member appointed by the program coordinator.

The student will be required to meet with the faculty review committee in accordance with the procedures described in #1 and #2 above. The faculty review committee may consult with any of the full Department of Counseling faculty regarding the development of alternative remedial strategies and/or evaluation of the student's fitness for continuation in Counseling Program. The faculty review committee will monitor the student's progress on the remediation plan. If at any time the student is determined not to be making satisfactory progress, the faculty review committee may either modify the remediation plan or dismiss the student from the program.

(3) All faculty review committee decisions for a student's dismissal from the Counseling Programs will be forwarded to the Department Chair. The Department Chair will forward the committee's decision to the Academic Dean. The student may make a first appeal of the committee's decision to the Department Chair. Should an additional appeal be requested, a final appeal can be made to the Academic Dean of the College of Education. The final decision will be forwarded to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Student Dismissal:

The following circumstances constitute some cases of "unsatisfactory" performance and will result in dismissal from the program without an opportunity for remediation or improvement.

- If a student's GPA remains a 3.25 GPA by the end of the online term or campus semester in which the student was placed on Academic Probation per the policies of the UWA Graduate School.
- A student earns a D and/or F or WF in the same course two times
- A student earns three grades of W, WP, and/or WF
- Failure to successfully meet all requirements of the student's improvement plan
- Any serious ethical violation or unprofessional behavior as determined by the governing laws, professional codes of ethics.

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