
DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

University of Toronto

Counselling Psychology Program

**Practicum Placement
Handbook**

for the

**Guidance & Counselling
M.Ed. Degree**

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Section 1: OVERVIEW

1.1 M.Ed. PRACTICUM (APD1203Y)

This course provides students with basic skills in counselling interventions, assessment of risk, history taking, clinical formulation, and the relationship between assessment and intervention. The course emphasizes the therapeutic relationship and use of self, as well as the importance of ethical and legal issues in the provision of therapy. The course involves extensive counselling simulation and supervision of practice in the field.

Students in the M.Ed. Guidance degree are required to complete the Master's practicum course (APD 1203Y) and a minimum of 250 hours (at least one day per week) in their placement from September to April. Normally, at least twenty-five percent of these placement hours should be direct client contact hours. Should students not have completed their hours by April, they may make arrangements with their supervisor(s) to extend the practicum into the summer (students should be sure to register for the OISE summer session in this case). However, all practicum hours must be completed by the end of August.

It is expected that students in this degree will complete their placements in field settings relevant to training in guidance, i.e., guidance offices in school boards. Most students work in secondary schools although there are a small number of placements in senior schools and in post secondary counselling centres. Students have the option of working within a public school board, a separate school board or a private school as long as criteria for the placement are met.

Students must be supervised by supervisors with at least a master's degree in counselling and several years of counselling experience. Normally, these supervisors should have had some previous experience in guidance or counselling supervision of students or other staff. Supervisors should provide a minimum of one hour per week of one-to-one face-to-face counselling supervision. Other supervision may be provided on particular cases through case conferencing, class supervision and consultation with other peers and professionals. It is expected that all types of practicum activities will be logged by the student. These hours and activities will be detailed in the *Student Practicum and Internship Evaluation Form* which is submitted to the Course Instructor, who then passes it on to the Director of Clinical Training.

In some situations, a student may be able to complete her/his placement at her/his place of work. For more information, see Dr. Judith Silver.

1.2 M.Ed. ADDITIONAL PRACTICUM (APD1247H)

Students in the M.Ed. degree may choose to complete an additional 250 hours of field placement concurrent with the APD1203Y placement from September to April (APD1247H), or after this placement, usually May/June or July/August. To receive academic credit for these additional hours, students must register for this half course credit. No additional class time is required. All field requirements are the same as those for the APD1203Y practicum (25% direct client contact; 1 hour per week of face to face supervision; supervisors have at least a master's degree in counselling and several years of counselling experience; evaluations completed mid-term and at the end of placement). All students must arrange this additional placement in consultation with and with the approval of Dr. Judith Silver, Director of Clinical Training. It is expected that all types of practicum activities will be logged by the student. These hours and activities will be

detailed in the *Student Practicum and Internship Evaluation Form* which is submitted to the Course Instructor, who then passes it on to the Director of Clinical Training.

1.3 ARRANGING YOUR PLACEMENT

Finding a practicum placement is similar to finding a job. Students must phone or e-mail the placements directly, gather information, arrange for interviews and wait to see if they are accepted. In addition, it is often useful to speak to other students who have been in the placement. Many students complete a written evaluation of the placement and their supervisor(s); these are available from the Director of Clinical Training.

Every effort will be made to help students find settings appropriate for and desirable to them. This may not always be possible. We cannot guarantee that all students will find placements in any particular academic year. All students must arrange their practica in consultation with Dr. Judith Silver, Director of Clinical Training.

Target dates for arranging practicum placements will be between January and May. Students should plan to contact the DCT during the late fall of their first year (for full-time students) or in the year preceding when they propose to complete their practicum, in order to arrange the best match between students' needs and the availability of field placements. Students will be asked to state their placement preferences and will be interviewed by the DCT. Together they will then choose placement options. After interviews, the on-site placement supervisors offer (or do not offer) positions to the students who have the option of accepting or rejecting the offer. However, once a student accepts a placement offer, (s)he is expected to attend this placement.

Descriptions of practicum placements in the school boards vary from year to year and are not available. Descriptions of potential M.Ed. practicum settings associated with colleges and universities are available at:

http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/aphd/Students/Practica_and_Internships/Counselling_Psychology/Internship_and_Practica_Sites/index.html

Every effort will be made to assist students in finding settings appropriate for and desirable to them. This may not always be possible. All students must arrange their placements in consultation with Dr. Judith Silver, Director of Clinical Training.

Students are welcome to attend the annual MEd/EdD Practicum Representatives Meeting, usually scheduled in mid-November.

ESTABLISHING A PLACEMENT AGREEMENT

It is important that both supervisors and student interns understand the responsibilities and the rights associated with their respective roles. If the supervisor is unfamiliar with the Counselling Program, the student should provide the supervisor with a copy of the Counselling Psychology Practicum Placement Handbook as well as the Student Practicum and Internship Evaluation Form. This will ensure that expectations regarding supervision and client contact are established at the outset.

There must be a formal Student Placement Agreement in force between all practicum sites and the University of Toronto. Currently we have such agreements in place for many of the GTA school boards. If in doubt, consult Dr. Silver.

All MEd & EdD students should be familiar with the University of Toronto Standards of Professional Practice Behaviour:

<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppsep012008i.pdf>

PLEASE NOTE: Once you have a placement arranged, you must provide Dr. Silver with the details (deadline May 31). In order to register the details of your Counselling Psychology field placement, we have created a special website. Please ensure that you have all the details about your placement before completing the on-line placement form. Should the details of your placement change, you may edit the placement form. Go to the following website to register the details:

<https://supo-app.oise.utoronto.ca/cp/placement/>

1.4 EVALUATION OF PLACEMENTS

A student's performance in her/his placement is evaluated by the on-site supervisor who is provided with an evaluation form for this purpose. Students are encouraged to use this form for the identification of their own strengths and weaknesses, for the setting of appropriate goals, and for the contracting of duties and responsibilities with their supervisors. Evaluation is on a pass/fail basis with the provision that the Department of Adult Education and Counselling Psychology may require additional practicum experience and/or course work where unsatisfactory or barely satisfactory performances have been registered. MEd and EdD students must receive a passing evaluation by their field supervisor(s) in order to pass the associated practicum course. Counselling performance will be reviewed to ensure that standards are being met.

A student's performance is evaluated by the on-site supervisor in January and at the end of the placement. Students are asked to keep a xerox copy of all evaluations of their practicum work in addition to submitting the original to the Course Instructor and subsequently to the Director of Clinical Training. We will also be asking student interns to complete evaluations of their placement settings.

Section 2: *CP POLICIES GOVERNING STUDENTS IN PLACEMENTS*

2.1 TIME EXPECTATIONS

M.Ed. (Guidance) practicum students are expected to spend at a minimum 250 hours in the field placement setting (1 day a week) for their APD1203Y practicum. The practicum experience should include 1 hour of face to face supervision each week and approximately 25% of student time will be spent in direct client contact. M.Ed. students who complete 500+ hours of practicum experience may register for the APD1247H Additional Practicum course (see 1.2 above).

2.2 CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Sometimes conflicts do arise between placement supervisors and students on placement. One type of conflict might revolve around unforeseen differences in expectations, values, or assumptions between the supervisor and the student. Usually, these conflicts can be resolved through discussion. More serious conflicts may arise, however. The following procedures are in place to help both the supervisor and the student.

When conflicts or differences arise, the concerned individual should:

1. Discuss the problem directly with the person in question.
2. Discuss the problem with the placement internship director (if there is one).
3. If neither of the above two options is feasible and/or fruitful, arrange for a confidential interview with the Director of Clinical Training (currently Dr. Judy Silver).

The Counselling Program recognizes the right of a student, after consultation with the Director of Clinical Training, to terminate a placement should the student realize that it is very unsuited to his or her individual needs or that the placement cannot adequately provide the training experience previously promised (e.g., insufficient client contact hours, inadequate supervision).

Similarly, the Counselling Program recognizes the right of the placement setting, after consultation with the Director of Clinical Training, to terminate the practicum or internship of individual students if the student intern's behaviour is unacceptable and client/patient care is being compromised. In such circumstances, the supervisor will advise the Director of Clinical Training in writing of the reasons for this decision.

Should either a student intern or a placement supervisor request the termination of a placement, the following procedures should be followed:

1. The Director of Clinical Training should be contacted.
2. The Director of Clinical Training may hold meeting(s) with the student, the supervisor, the placement internship director, the practicum course instructor, and other appropriate persons, to clarify the reasons for requesting withdrawal, the nature of the student's learning needs, and the setting's resources and ability to meet those needs. The Director of Clinical Training will document the process and the outcome of any such meetings.
3. If the Director of Clinical Training is unable to help the two parties resolve their differences so that the student can continue in the placement, a written request for withdrawal is to be made to the Director of Clinical Training by the person initiating the request.
4. When circumstances warrant it, the Director of Clinical Training will assist the student in finding an alternative placement in the same academic year. Should there be a question about the student's competence, the Director of Clinical Training will consult with the Counselling Program Planning Committee, the practicum course instructor (if appropriate), and the student, to establish any necessary conditions to be met before the student can renegotiate another placement. Students who need to withdraw from a counselling practicum course should consult the OISE/UT Bulletin for final dates allowed for withdrawal from courses.

2.3 VULNERABLE SECTOR SCREENING

Some placements require students to complete a Vulnerable Sector Screening with their local police. Please be advised that most school boards are now requiring that practicum students submit a *Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Screening*, obtained from the student's local police force. This check usually takes about 12-14 weeks to process. If you are planning a practicum placement in an elementary or high school starting this September, please check with the school to determine if you need to arrange this ahead of time. If you are a Toronto resident (with a postal code starting with "M") you can go to the OISE Graduate Studies Office (4th floor) with 2 pieces of ID to get the form completed that starts the process. See the following website for further info and details of ID requirements:

http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/ro/Police_Checks/index.html

Here is the relevant RCMP website:

<http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cr-cj/vulner/index-eng.htm>

2.4 LIABILITY INSURANCE

The University of Toronto provides liability insurance to students on UNPAID field placements in the amount of up to \$5,000,000. Placements requiring documentation can contact the CP Director of Clinical Training and documentation will be sent by email.

For students completing PAID placements, it is generally expected that the placement site will provide liability insurance since the student will be a paid employee. These students are also encouraged to arrange personal liability insurance -- try contacting one of the following:

BMS Group and HPIA

1-855-318-6038

psy.insurance@bmsgroup.com

McFarlane Rowlands Insurance

380 York St., London, ON N6B 1P9

Fax: 679-9744 Ph# 519-640-1254

hgimson@mcfri.ca

2.5 RELEVANT LINKS

CPRO – Sean Knight – Video Presentation

https://play.library.utoronto.ca/rtoP6_N0BP8K

A Beginner's Guide to Private Practice - Video Presentation

<https://media.library.utoronto.ca/play.php?NpDqNLaXYldK&id=26382&access=public>

A Beginner's Guide to Private Practice - PowerPoint Presentation

<https://media.library.utoronto.ca/play.php?dDZzCD4ibeMG&id=26386&access=public>

For further information about practicum placements contact:

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