University of Massachusetts Boston
College of Education and Human Development
Department of Counseling and School Psychology

School Counseling Program

Practicum Handbook
PRACTICUM IN SCHOOL COUNSELING

In June of 2016, CEHD adopted a college-wide field placement policy that applies to all programs within the College, and is located at: https://www.umb.edu/editor_uploads/images/college_education/CEHD_field_placement_policy_FINAL_2-24-16.doc. Within this document are important policies relating to student conduct and how to address issues that may arise during field-based experiences. The policies contained in this Practicum handbook supplement and enhance the CEHD field placement policy, but do not replace any of the policies elaborated within it. Please be sure to consult the CEHD Field Placement Policy, in addition to this handbook.

**Definition**

A practicum is:
- a pre-internship experience
- one semester
- a supervised 100 clock hour field experience over the course of one semester
- 40 hours of direct service including experiences in individual counseling and group work
- completed in an accredited K-12 school
- an introduction to the role and function of school counselors

**Purpose**

The purpose of a practicum is to expose students to the operation and activities within a school, and an opportunity to develop counseling skills under supervision. For those who have school experience, the intent is to expose the student to a new environment and new information about models of providing school counseling services.

**Prerequisites**

- Students must have a Grade Point Average of 3.00 in all coursework taken during the school counseling graduate program.
- Students must complete the following as prerequisites to the practicum course: COU 630 Orientation to Professional School Counseling and COUNSL 614 Counseling Theory and Practice I.
- Students should not have more than one incomplete course grade at the time of entering the practicum.

**Course Description**

**COUNSL 688(S): School Counseling Practicum**

The purpose of the practicum is to expose the student to her/his particular field in counseling through actual placement in a facility where appropriate supervision is provided. Class discussions include a review of on-site observations and experiences and discussions of current issues in the field. **Prerequisites:** COU 614,
COU 630, COU 650 should be taken prior to or concurrent with practicum. Field Placement--100 Hours; Lecture Hours, 3 Credits.

**Placements**
For the on-campus school counseling program, all practicum students are placed at the TechBoston Academy or Urban Science Academy in the Boston Public School District. For the online program, appropriate practicum placements with a qualified supervisor are arranged near the student’s place of residence. A Criminal Offender Record Investigation (CORI) check may be required by the school system.

**Restrictions**
The purpose of the practicum is to allow you to be exposed to schools, services, and populations you have not had an opportunity to experience previously. For online students, a possible exception to using your work site as a practicum may be when you work in a school with several distinct programs. In such situations when there is minimal interaction between programs, you may complete a practicum with the approval of your faculty advisor. You must petition the Program Director and submit a letter from relevant supervisors and administrators at your place of employment agreeing to release time for your school counseling practicum.

**Supervisor Qualifications**
A school counselor who holds a professional license in school counseling (as defined by Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education or as defined by the state’s licensing or certification body) is qualified to be a practicum supervisor.

**Weekly University Seminar**
The seminar serves two purposes: 1) to support students in the experience of being a practicum student (e.g. beginning entrance and socialization into the school counseling profession, understanding school functioning, interpretation of ethical issues, etc.); and 2) introduce students to the Massachusetts Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs. An important course requirement is completing a case presentation.

**Student Responsibilities**
- School counseling candidates are required to **comply with Procedural Policies of the Placement School and the University**
- Candidates must **receive a B grade** in the Practicum Seminar. (Calculation of the grade includes input from On-Site supervisor.)
- Candidates must be aware at all times that they have **ethical responsibilities to students** of the School and to the **school**. Students should refer to the American School Counselor Association Ethical Codes for guidelines of ethical conduct.
- Attendance at the practicum site is mandatory for all days of assignment (determined in agreement between the student and practicum site). Candidates
are expected to notify the on-site supervisor whenever there is an illness or other types of emergencies, which interfere with attendance.

- Candidates are expected to become aware of and follow school rules, requirements, and regulations.
- Candidates are required to attend a weekly Practicum Seminar held either at the University of Massachusetts Boston, on-site, or online and to complete additional course requirements as outlined in practicum syllabus.
- Candidates assume the responsibility of complying with all the rules, policies, and regulations, approved codes of conduct and behavior, and legal and ethical standards of their respective professional state and national associations, as well as the University, College, and Department policies and regulations.

If the candidate is terminated from a Practicum site for ethical misconduct, a grade of F will be assigned by the faculty supervisor unless good cause is shown for withholding the F grade. In addition, the student will appear before the DEPARTMENTAL ADHOC ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT COMMITTEE to determine a remedial plan and decide a future plan of action.

If either an On-Site supervisor, in collaboration with an On-Site administrator, or the University faculty supervisor has determined that a candidate is not performing satisfactorily in a Practicum placement, efforts by participating supervisors will be made to identify problem areas with specific recommendations to the candidate for improvement. However, if the problems persist, the candidate may be subject to termination from the Practicum Site.

Practicum Site Responsibilities

- To determine their own criteria for accepting students for placement and to identify a procedure for selecting students (e.g. interviews)
- To develop appropriate observational experiences which meet University requirements for practicum.
- To collaborate with the University faculty supervisor in evaluating the student’s performance at the practicum site.
- To impart expectations for the student’s professional and ethical conduct while at the particular practicum site.
- To facilitate a successful learning experience for practicum students at the school site. This includes opportunities for participation in meetings, case conferences and workshops.
- To provide appropriate office and desk space while at the practicum site.
- To provide individual supervision of at least one hour every week to the practicum student designed to enhance the student’s learning.

Refer to the COUNSL 688 syllabus for further information regarding practicum requirements
Practicum Documentation

The forms required to apply for, document, and evaluate the Practicum experience are provided in the pages that follow, and are also available online at https://www.umb.edu/academics/cehd/counseling/resources.

The required forms are:

School Counseling Practicum Agreement (online students only)

School Counseling Practicum Student Assessment
Name: ___________________________ is eligible to engage in a school counseling (guidance) practicum having completed prerequisite coursework. Simultaneous with the practicum, the student will be enrolled in a seminar conducted by a school counseling program faculty member. The student is required to complete 100 hours of supervised field experience.

The student will:

1. Abide by all school rules, policies, and regulations.

2. Exhibit professional behavior and adhere to ethical codes of conduct.

3. Maintain strict confidentiality of information obtained during practicum.

4. Attend all days of assignment and notify both the University and site supervisors in case of absence due to illness or other emergencies.

5. Attend all staff meetings as the practicum requires.

6. Maintain a daily log to be submitted at the end of the field experience.

7. Attend all supervision sessions at the practicum site and weekly seminars at the University.

8. Receive a grade of B or above to complete practicum requirements. A grade of F will be assigned if dismissed from practicum due to ethical violations.

(see next page)
I have reached an agreement with the field site that the setting will provide practicum experiences to demonstrate school counseling competencies outlined in the *Massachusetts Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs* and/or the *American School Counselor Association National Model*. The practicum will be supervised by a licensed school counselor.

**Field Supervisor:**

Name:_________________________   Title:_________________________

School Counseling License Level (e.g., Initial, Professional): _________

Licensed in State of:___________   License Number:___________

E-Mail:_________________________   Phone:_________________________

School Address:______________________________

Grade levels in this school:______________________________________________

___________________________________________

Student signature   Date   Field Supervisor   Date

___________________________________________

University supervisor   Date   Authorized School Administrator   Date

___________________________________________

UMB Online Program Coordinator   Date

Rev. 9/2018
Candidate:_______________________________________UMS#__________

Practicum Site:_____________________________________________________

Site Supervisor:_____________________________________________________  

University Supervisor:_____________________________________________  

Dates of Practicum:__________________________________________________

Total Number of Practicum Hours Completed:__________

The academic expectations of candidates in the School Counseling Program are embedded within the UMass Boston Professional Education Unit conceptual framework. The goal is to foster a candidate's professional development as a thoughtful and responsive counselor who demonstrates commitments (by upholding ethical behaviors, pursuing lifelong learning, dedicating oneself to serve others, and acknowledging human resiliency and capacity to learn); understandings (by possessing breadth and depth of content, theoretical, assessment, and technical knowledge; and practices (by demonstrating caring behavior, collaborating productively with others, reflecting on improving professional practices, and promoting social justice).

Practicum students should have the opportunity to observe and participate in delivering a guidance curriculum (standards-based lessons and activities), in providing responsive services (interventions that address immediate crisis needs of students), in assisting with individual planning, and in supporting systems (activities to establish, maintain, and enhance school programs). Please refer to the Massachusetts Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. The practicum student, in consultation with the site and University supervisors, should set specific learning objectives to increase knowledge and skills in the four components of a school counseling delivery system to be addressed during the practicum experience. Supervisors should rate progress toward accomplishing the objectives using the following key:

5 High: The practicum student performed extremely well in this area. (Distinguished)
4 High Average: The practicum student's performance level is more than adequate in this area.
3 Average: The practicum student possesses adequate competence in this area. (Proficient)
2 Low Average: The practicum student possesses competence in this area, but needs to improve performance.
1 Low: The practicum student clearly lacks competence in this area. (Needs Improvement)
NO: No opportunity to assess or not observed. Activities may vary depending on grade level assignments, or school counselor roles and functions.

Rev. 9/2018
For below average rankings of 1 or 2, please offer specific goal(s) for growth in the area.

**Assessment of Dispositions of School Counseling Practicum Students**

Please use the following key to rate the school counseling practicum student's commitments, understandings, and practices.

5 **High**: The practicum student performed extremely well in this area. (Distinguished)

4 **High Average**: The practicum student's performance level is more than adequate in this area. (Proficient)

3 **Average**: The practicum student possesses adequate competence in this area.

2 **Low Average**: The practicum student possesses competence in this area, but needs to improve performance.

1 **Low**: The practicum student clearly lacks competence in this area. (Needs Improvement)

**NO**: No opportunity to assess or not observed. Activities may vary depending on grade level assignments, or school counselor roles and functions.

For below average rankings of 1 or 2, please offer specific goal(s) for growth in the area.

**I. Guidance Curriculum Learning Objective(s):**

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Goal(s): ________________________________________________________________

**II. Responsive Services Objective(s):**

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Goal(s): ________________________________________________________________

**III. Individual Planning Objective(s):**

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Goal(s): ________________________________________________________________

**IV. System Support Objective(s):**

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Goal(s): ________________________________________________________________

Rev. 9/2018
Goal(s):

1. COMMITMENTS (Personal traits that motivate an individual to be a good school counselor)

Performance Criteria: The school counseling practicum student provides evidence of commitment by the following:

1. A. Ethical Behavior: Behaves in a manner consistent with ASCA and ACA professional and ethical standards.

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Goal(s):

1.B. Life Long Learning: Takes advantage of professional growth activities.

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Goal(s):

1.C. Dedication: Shows enthusiasm for professional work in school counseling.

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Goal(s):

2. UNDERSTANDINGS (Motivation to appropriately apply a school counseling knowledge base)

Performance Criteria: The school counseling practicum student provides evidence of understanding by the following:

2.A. Content: Applies and adapts the Massachusetts Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks as appropriate for circumstances.

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Goal(s):
2.B. **Pedagogy:** Modifies or develops school counseling services to meet the needs of all students.

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Goal(s): ____________________________________________

2.C. **Assessment:** Recognizes necessity of ongoing assessment to monitor student progress and evaluate school counseling program outcomes.

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Goal(s): ____________________________________________

2.D. **Technology:** Promotes the responsible use of technology to increase the efficiency or effectiveness of school counseling services.

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Goal(s): ____________________________________________

3. **PRACTICES** (Personal and professional conduct in working with pupils, other professionals, and parents)

**Performance Criteria:** The school counseling practicum student provides evidence of practices by the following:

3.A. **Caring:** Acknowledges the uniqueness of individuals yet respects community and cultural loyalties.

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Goal(s): ____________________________________________

3.B. **Collaboration:** Appreciates the importance of working with other to create a community.

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Goal(s): ____________________________________________

3.C. **Reflection:** Uses self-reflection to adjust or improve practices.

Low Average High
Goal(s):__________________________

3.D. Social Justice: Sees role as a social change agent to increase accessibility and equity in education.

Goal(s):__________________________

Please comment on the practicum student’s opportunity to engage in a guidance curriculum, responsive services, individual planning, and system support.

Do you have any specific recommendations for this student’s internship experience?

Do you have any recommendations regarding the professional preparation of this practicum student? Your feedback is valued and will be used to enhance future training.

Student Name ___________________________ Student Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Supervisor’s Signature ___________________________ Supervisor’s Name ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Thank you for your assistance and support of the school counseling program!