# PRACTICUM DOCUMENT 1: General Information

Practicum requirements for the PsyD program are described in the ***PsyD Program Addendum to the School of Psychology Graduate Student Handbook***, and general expectations for all graduate students in the School of Psychology are described in the ***School of Psychology Graduate Student Handbook.*** All PsyD students are responsible for knowing the expectations and requirements outlined in these documents, as well as those in the FIT Catalog; this practicum handbook does not repeat information regarding the practicum that is provided in the primary handbooks governing the clinical PsyD program.

This online practicum handbook provides information about the practicum training opportunities that are available to you in the clinical psychology program at Florida Tech, and information that will alert you to situations that require your special attention. The practica in our system can be searched by browsing through the descriptive pages containing information for all our practica, which can be found at the URL provided above. Alternatively, you can search for practica that have specific experiences you are seeking using a single variable or up to two key variables at one time: e.g. “child, sexual abuse”, or “substance abuse, depression”; the order of your search variables is not important.

As you explore the online practicum database and its search function you will gain more skill in choosing search terms that will yield a list of practicum sites that you can consider for your training.

Each program description should give you a great deal of information about the program, as well as an email address you can use to gain more information about the site. The program description should also tell you what prerequisites the site might prefer if they have any (e.g. assessment experience, group therapy training, etc.) as well as the supervisors on site and their license status. Remember, training at any practicum site that does not provide supervision by a licensed psychologist will require that you attend the Friday 8:00-9:00 Consultation Group, held in the FIT/SoP, that is led by a licensed psychologist. Please pay attention to a site’s preferred method for application. The program description should tell you who to contact first, most often this will be our DCT, who is your primary contact for any practicum related situations or inquiries.

The site page for each practicum also describes the number of hours the site requires each week, number of consecutive semesters they may require, their application requirements and deadlines. Other important information describing their patient population, common presenting problems, and more is on the site page as well.

Each practicum site director is responsible for describing their site page, and maintaining it when there are changes. Since changes can be made on a site page any time during the year, each description should be up to date. If you discover that a site description is not consistent with your experience of it please bring the discrepancy to the attention of the DCT.

**STUDENTS:**  Please be aware that every health care organization, large or small, has their own set of regulations governing their practice. These regulations cover a number of mandated areas, but especially important for you are 1) the way they manage the HIPPA requirements for patient confidentiality, and 2) the guidelines they have for clinical documentation, both regarding substance and form, as well as timeline for posting drafts and supervisory countersignature. You are responsible for learning these requirement (and others the organization might have as well) at the very beginning of your work there. If information about these items is not a part of your orientation to the site, you must ask about them and learn what is expected. **Not knowing them is not an excuse for not following them.** The Scott Center is a facility that is independent of the PsyD program, just as are most of our practicum. You must actively participate in orientation activities and work within the stated expectations of the institution.

**MANDATORY:**  All students registered for advanced practicum or for Supervised Clinical Experience that you wish to count as practicum must submit a copy of a completed Practicum Contract to the Psy.D. Program Office before the Friday of the third week of each semester. This contract allows you and your supervisor to identify the levels of competencies you wish to achieve during the course of the semester. The Link to the Practicum Contract form can be found on the Practicum Webpage. At the end of each semester you and your supervisor should refer to this contract during evaluation review.

MyPsychTrack

The Association of Psychology Postdoc and Internship Centers (APPIC) very strongly recommends that all clinical psychology students track their hours in the MyPsychTrack (MPT) system, and it is provided free to all students in APA accredited Health Service Provider doctoral programs. (Health Service Provider program is the new term for what were formally called clinical, counseling or school psychology programs.)

MyPsychTrack (MPT) is integrated with APPIC member internship applications, with plans to also link it to postdoc applications in the future. Putting your clinical treatment, assessment, and other hours into this system will allow your hours to automatically be imported to your APPIC internship application.

At this time the FIT clinical PsyD program does not require students to use MPT, but we expect that in the near future it will be a required system for students in programs that require them to enter the APPIC Match to find an internship, as we do. Students in the early years of our program should seriously consider using MPT right from the beginning of their training.

In past years students commonly used Time2Track to log their clinical hours, but since APPIC does not recommend that students use this program, FIT clinical program no longer will pay for this service as it has in the past.

**SUPERVISION**

All practicum sites are required to provide 2 hours of face-to-face supervision to our students per week. This supervision can be one-to-one, in a group, or 1 hour of each type of supervision. Supervision must be a scheduled weekly meeting, and cannot **instead** be provided on an “As Needed” basis, but certainly students needing clinical advice between scheduled supervision should feel free to contact their supervisor for a consultation as particular situations arise. A licensed health professional should be onsite at ALL TIMES students are providing service, although the supervisor of record may not be onsite all the time students are providing service.

The APA Commission on Accreditation Implementing Regulations state: “When students are not being supervised on site by doctoral level psychologists, the program must provide on-going weekly opportunities for students to discuss their clinical work with a doctoral level psychologist appropriately credentialed for the jurisdiction in which the program is located.” The majority of our practicum sites are supervised by licensed psychologists. However, exceptions are made when the clinical opportunities at a site are unique and exceptional, and the licensed supervisor is qualified for the particular services. **Hence, students who register for practicum at sites with supervisors who are not licensed as Clinical Psychologists are required to participate in the weekly clinical discussion group scheduled every Friday 8:00 am-9:00 am at FIT.** This discussion group is in addition to the two hours of supervision obtained on site. Also, remember that the psychologist leading this Consultation Group is NOT supervising your work at the practicum, but is providing you the opportunity to consult with the psychologist regarding your cases and the questions that may arise in terms of the ‘best practice’ literature, diversity issues, various conceptual models used to treat the problems under discussion, and other broader issues that contribute to your clinical education. **NOTE:** Do **not** list the psychologist leading your consultation group as a supervisor, or a clinical supervisor, on any documentation of your practicum training!! This person is not responsible for the clinical care you provide to patients at your practicum site. The legally responsible health care provider is your supervisor at your practicum.

# PRACTICUM GRADING

At the beginning of each academic semester, all practicum students and supervisors are expected to agree upon competencies, goals and objectives, supervisory hours, coverage expectations and mutual responsibilities for that particular semester. This agreement is documented as the Practicum Contract and cosigned by the practicum student and supervisor. **The student must submit the Practicum Contract each semester, for each registered practicum site, to Lori at The Office of Clinical Training before the end of the third week of the semester.**

Grades should be a reflection of how well agreed-upon objectives were met. Practica are graded as all other graduate courses, namely on a letter system from A to F. A grade of B represents an acceptable level of work, and the A grade is typically reserved for those students demonstrating outstanding or exceptional performance. A grade of C or below signifies unacceptable work. FIT Clinical Core faculty provide grades for students enrolled in practica supervised by them. Grades are recommended by the off-site supervisors to the Director of Clinical Trainingwho makes the final grade determination. Students obtaining a grade of C, D, or F will meet with the Director of Clinical Training to discuss the practicum experience, supervisor’s evaluation, and determine remediation goals, objectives, and timeline.

**The supervisee evaluation each semester** includes Total # of intervention contact hours, Total # of assessment hours, and Total # of supervision hours. **The Psy.D. student must keep tally of the clinical service hours and the supervision hours in MyPsychTrack, and provide these numbers to the supervisor** who will attest to those hours on the evaluation form. (See the Practicum Student Evaluation form on the Practicum Website.

If a student is required to leave a practicum site based on the student’s performance and/or conduct; 1) a grade of C may be given, 2) it may be determined by the Director of Clinical Training the student may not be allowed to transfer to another practicum that semester and instead may enroll in a class, and 3) a remediation plan may be developed by the student and DCT to be completed before the student enrolls in practicum the next semester. Note: If the student is already enrolled in a second practicum site during the semester when he/she was told to leave a different practicum site, the student may remain at the second practicum site unless the Director of Clinical Training determines the student is not qualified for the second site.

**Practicum hours may not be scheduled before 1 PM on Friday mornings that Colloquium is scheduled** for practica more than 30 minutes driving time from campus. For practica less than 30 minutes driving time from campus practica may begin as early as 12:00. This allows students time to meet briefly with campus faculty following Colloquia.

**REGISTERING for PRACTICA**

The procedures for practicum registration are almost identical to other School of Psychology courses. During the pre-registration period you should consult with your academic advisor to you determine your tentative schedule for the following semester. This discussion should include the number of credits/hours per week of practicum. Take into consideration progress on your DRP, if you have begun that project.

**Note that you may not initiate practicum plans directly with site supervisors unless the DCT has approved such communication.** The DCT will assign students to some sites and will notify students when they may contact practicum supervisors for an interview at other sites.

There are **three important aspects of practicum registration** that distinguish it from other course registration. These are important and need to be noted:

1. If you plan to register for Practicum for the upcoming semester, you must first have it approved by the Director of Clinical Training. Initial approval is needed to help coordinate the various practicum placements and to ensure your overall training plans are met. Failure to obtain this prior approval will result in de-registration for that semester's practicum.

2. Because of our need to coordinate practicum placements with the respective placement supervisors, all practicum registration must occur before the commencement of classes for the semester in question. **That is, registration for practicum is not allowed once academic classes for that semester begin.**

3. When you register for Practicum, you will sign up for PSY 5595. If you are registering at only one practicum site, register PSY5595-F1. However, **if you are registering for two practicum sites in one semester, you must register in two separate sections.** You will register for a specific number of credits at each site. For example, if you are planning to register for 2 credits of practicum at Circles of Care, Inc. and 1 credit at the Women's Center, your registration form would be:

 PSY5595-F1 2 credits

 PSY5595-F2 1 credits

Section F3 is reserved for students registering for three different practicums (not a common occurrence). If you have any questions about the registration procedure, check with Lori at the Office of Clinical Training.

NOTE: A student may NOT register for more than 4 credits of practicum (a total of 20 hours/week) without the approval of the PsyD Program Chair. To request approval to take more hours of practice/week than is allowed, send an email to the Program Chair to request special permission for this excess of practicum hours.

**REMEMBER: YOU ARE NOT OFFICIALLY REGISTERED IN A PRACTICUM UNTIL YOU HAVE SUBMITTED YOUR FULLY SIGNED CONTRACT TO THE CLINICAL TRAINING OFFICE.**

**Background Clearances**

All students are required to obtain a Level II clearance during the fall semester of their first year in the PsyD program.

Note, if you register for practicum at the Brevard County Detention Center, the “clearance application” is a different process (free, but extensive and time consuming.) Check the Practicum Website for a copy of the “Brevard County Clearance Application.”

In addition to the jail, several other sites require **proof of vaccinations, security clearances, and training classes** prior to the beginning of the semester. Students are encouraged to read the practicum description in the Online Practicum Guide, contact the supervisor, and start orientation procedures well before the preceding semester ends.