

Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) Program



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH ALABAMA

Site Supervisor Handbook

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Site Supervisor Handbook

Thank you for partnering with our Counseling Education Program as a Site Supervisor. Your mentorship, clinical expertise, and evaluation are vital to developing the next generation of highly skilled, professional, and ethical counselors. This handbook compiles policies, timelines, and administrative requirements relevant to your role.

You may also access this handbook, the Student Practicum and Internship Handbook, The Counselor Education Program Student Handbook, and Program Vital Statistics Reports via our Counselor Education Program Website: <https://www.southalabama.edu/colleges/ceps/cins/counseling.html>

Counseling Faculty: Core Faculty

Yvette Q. Getch, Ph.D., CRC, Professor, Graduate Counseling Programs Coordinator; Coordinator, Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program; and Clinical Mental Health Counseling Practicum and Internship Coordinator (PIC)

Danny McCarty, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program

Amy W. Upton, Ph.D., NCC, NCSC, Assistant Professor, Coordinator, School Counseling Program and School Counseling Practicum and Internship Coordinator

Affiliated Faculty

James “Tres” Stefurak, Ph.D., Lic. Psychologist, Associate Dean, CEPS; Ryon McDermott, Ph.D., Professor; Meredith Tittler, Ph.D., Assistant Professor

1. Role of the Site Supervisor & Program Leadership

Program Oversight

Dr. Getch serves as the **Practicum/Internship Coordinator (PIC)**. She is the faculty member responsible for vetting and approving all field sites and serves as the primary campus-based clinical supervisor. The PIC (or a designated faculty instructor) provides weekly group supervision to students and coordinates the overall placement process.

Site Supervisor Core Requirements

- Possess a minimum of a master's degree, preferably in counseling, or a related field.
- Hold appropriate clinical licenses and certifications (e.g., LPC, NBCC, or equivalent).
- Have a minimum of two years of post-master's clinical experience in the specialty area.
- Have completed relevant training in counseling supervision (e.g., a supervision course or workshops).
- Demonstrate knowledge of the CMHC Program's expectations, requirements, and formal student evaluation procedures.
- The placement must be strictly vetted to ensure the supervisor is **not** the student's regular employment manager or boss, preventing a conflict of interest or dual relationship.

2. Field Experience Requirements & Hour Demands

Practicum and Internship are governed by two separate contracts. Hours accrued during Practicum **cannot** roll over into the Internship balance. The table below details what is required during each phase:

Requirement Element	Practicum (Summer Semester)	Internship (Min. 2 Semesters)
Total On-Site Hours	100 hours minimum	600 hours minimum (total across experience)
Direct Client Service Hours	40 hours minimum	240 hours minimum
Site Commitment	Must be completed in a single site.	Typically, a single site (exceptions approved by PIC).
Average Student Weekly Hours	Approximately 12 hours per week on-site.	Approximately 18-20 hours per week on-site.
Mandatory Individual Supervision	1 contiguous hour per week.	1 contiguous hour per week.
Special Modality Requirement	The student must lead or co-lead a psychoeducation or counseling group during either Practicum or Internship.	

Defining Direct vs. Indirect Clinical Service

Direct Service

As defined by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2024), direct service consists of the supervised use of counseling, consultation, or related professional skills with actual clients (individuals, couples, families, or groups) for the purpose of fostering social, cognitive, behavioral, and/or affective change.

These activities must involve synchronous, real-time interaction with others across in-person, telephone, or digital/virtual (tele-mental health) modalities. Approved direct service activities include:

- Counseling & Psychotherapy: Individual, group, couples, or family sessions.
- Assessment: Intakes, diagnostic interviewing, and clinical administration of testing/assessment protocols in the presence of the client.
- Psychoeducational Activities: Leading or co-leading structured psychoeducational groups or skills training workshops.
- Consultation: Providing targeted, real-time consultation to others (e.g., parents, teachers, or multidisciplinary care teams) with the explicit, immediate goal of informing or executing a specific client's treatment plan.

(CACREP, 2024)

- **Direct Service (CACREP Definition):** “Supervised use of Counseling, consultation, or related professional skills with actual clients (individuals, couples, families, or groups) for the purpose of fostering social, cognitive, behavioral, and/or affective change. These activities must involve interaction with others and may include: (1) assessment, (2) Counseling, (3) psycho-educational activities, and (4) consultation. The following would not be considered direct service: (1) observing others providing Counseling or related services, (2) record keeping, (3) administrative duties, (4) clinical and/or administrative supervision, and (5) role plays” (CACREP 2024 Standards Guidance Document, pp. 169-170).

Indirect Service

Indirect service encompasses all necessary professional activities completed behind the scenes that support client care and professional development but do not involve active, real-time interaction with a client. Approved indirect service activities include:

- Clinical Documentation: Writing case notes, creating treatment plans, and updating client files.
- Administrative Duties: Billing processes, site orientation, and administrative site training.
- Supervision & Collaboration: Site meetings, consultation with faculty, and individual, triadic, or group clinical supervision sessions.
- Preparation: Developing clinical presentation materials, researching interventions, or planning psychoeducational activities.

(CACREP, 2024)

Clinical Observation Note

Although the program strongly encourages students to shadow senior credentialed professionals—particularly during the initial phase of Practicum—the act of observing clinical services does not satisfy the requirements for direct service hours. All clinical observation must be documented exclusively as an indirect activity.

3. Supervision and Faculty Collaboration

Weekly Individual/Triadic Supervision

Site Supervisors are required to provide **1 contiguous hour** of individual or triadic (one supervisor + two trainees) clinical supervision each week. If individual supervision cannot be provided for more than a single week, the student is under strict policy constraints to report this to their University instructor so a remediation strategy can be discussed.

Biweekly Faculty Progress Checks (Practicum Only)

- **Direct Consultation:** Twice per month, the PIC or a designated faculty member will contact you via phone or email to review the student's clinical progress and address any emerging dilemmas.
- **Faculty Collaboration and communication:** Faculty supervisors and the PIC are available for consultation and collaboration throughout the clinical field placement.

4. Clinical Evaluation and ELC Workflows

Supervisors formalize feedback through milestone evaluations and direct observation tracking via the **Experiential Learning Cloud (ELC)** digital platform.

Milestone Evaluation Schedule

You will complete a total of nine comprehensive online evaluations across a student's full placement:

1. **Practicum Midpoint Evaluation:** Completed around week 5 of the Summer term (typically near July 7th).
2. **Final Practicum Evaluation & Final Disposition Evaluation:** Completed at the conclusion of the Practicum (typically near August 15th).
3. **Fall Internship Midpoint Evaluation & Fall Final Evaluation:** Completed mid-semester in the Fall and near the end of Fall Semester (typically near December 1st).
4. **Fall Counseling Disposition Evaluation** completed near the end of Fall Semester
5. **Spring Internship Midpoint & Final Evaluations:** Completed at the final conclusion of the student's 600 hours (typically near May 1st).
6. **Spring Counseling Disposition Evaluation** completed near the end of Spring Semester

Session-by-Session Clinical Skill Feedback

To help students refine their skills, site supervisors must directly observe students' live work or review audio/visual recordings of their sessions and submit structured evaluations in ELC:

- **During Practicum:** Written feedback is required on at least **2 separate occasions**.
- **During Internship:** Written feedback is required at least **2 times per semester** while the intern is active at your site.

Note: If your agency has strict legal or policy restrictions that completely prohibit audio/video recording, you must utilize live observation to fulfill these requirements.

Under the **2024 CACREP Standards** (specifically Section 4: *Professional Practice*), the requirements for clinical supervision, observation, and feedback emphasize continuous, structured monitoring of student development (CACREP, 2024).

1. Mandatory Methods of Clinical Observation

The 2024 CACREP standards require that the student's actual clinical work be evaluated through direct oversight (CACREP, 2024). Faculty or site supervisors must directly observe clinical skills via one of two methods:

- **Audio/Video Recording Review:** The primary preferred method is the digital or analog recording of synchronous counseling sessions, which the supervisor reviews asynchronously or alongside the student during individual supervision.
 - **Live, Direct Observation:** If agency policies, strict confidentiality rules, or legal boundaries (e.g., in certain medical or correctional facilities) prohibit recording, a supervisor **must** physically sit in on the session, observe through a one-way mirror, or join a live tele-mental health stream to watch the student work in real time.
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2. Frequency and Quantity of Written Feedback

To satisfy CACREP's systemic and formative appraisal, the minimum requirements for documented observation feedback are structured as follows:

- **Frequency:** A minimum of **two (2) separate occasions** of direct observation or tape review must occur during the single-semester Practicum.
 - **Evaluation Responsibility:** **Site Supervisors** complete these reviews. The **University Faculty Supervisor** may share this responsibility in rare circumstances.
 - **The "ELC" Feedback Loop:** Every observation must generate a formal, written clinical skills evaluation. The formal evaluations are to be completed in ELC. Verbally telling a student "you did well" does not satisfy the standard; a structured evaluation rubric mapping specific clinical interventions and counseling dispositions must be submitted and archived.
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3. Individual and Triadic Supervision Structure

The 2024 CACREP standards maintain strict parameters around how feedback is delivered in face-to-face supervision meetings:

- **The 1-Hour Contiguous Rule:** Practicum students must receive a minimum of **1 hour per week of contiguous individual or triadic supervision** throughout the entire placement.
- **Triadic Limitations:** Triadic supervision is strictly defined as one supervisor meeting with **exactly two (2) counseling students**. Meeting with three or more students automatically reclassifies the session as *group supervision*, which does not satisfy the individual supervision requirement.

- **Reviewing the Observations:** A significant portion of this weekly hour must be dedicated to reviewing the written feedback from the 2 observation milestones, playing back session tape segments, and micro-analyzing counseling skills (CACREP, 2024).
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4. Formative Assessment of "Counseling Dispositions"

A major emphasis in the 2024 CACREP framework is the continuous evaluation of **professional dispositions** (e.g., psychological fitness, ethical behavior, boundaries, openness to feedback, and interpersonal skills) alongside counseling techniques (CACREP, 2024).

- **Midpoint and Final Thresholds:** Site supervisors must complete comprehensive evaluation profiles at the **mid-point** and **conclusion** of the practicum semester.
 - **Early Intervention:** If a student fails to meet readiness or dispositional standards during these observation and feedback windows, the supervisor and university faculty must immediately collaborate to address deficits. If necessary, the PIC will initiate an **Individual Remediation Plan**. This formalizes targeted skill development before the student is permitted to finish the 100-hour practicum or advance to an internship.
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Summary Checklist for Site Supervisors (Practicum)

To remain fully compliant with the program and 2024 CACREP rules, please ensure your calendar accounts for:

- Providing **1 hour** of individual/triadic supervision *every week* without gaps.
- Communicate with the faculty supervisor and/or the PIC regularly
 - The PIC or Faculty Supervisor will be in contact biweekly for updates and monitoring of students
 - The PIC and/or Faculty Supervisor are available for questions or concerns
 - Please contact the PIC or Faculty Supervisor if any concerns arise
- Directly observing or reviewing recordings of the student on at least **2 distinct occasions**.
- Submitting a formal clinical skills evaluation in ELC for each of those observations.
- Reviewing and signing the student's digital hours logs *every week*.
- Submitting comprehensive **Midpoint** and **Final** evaluations mapping both clinical skills and professional dispositions.

Summary Checklist for Site Supervisors (Internship)

To remain fully compliant with the program and 2024 CACREP rules, please ensure your calendar accounts for:

- Providing **1 hour** of individual/triadic supervision *every week* without gaps.
- Communicate with the faculty supervisor and/or the PIC regularly

- The PIC or Faculty Supervisor will be in regular contact for updates and monitoring of students
- The PIC and/or Faculty Supervisor are available for questions or concerns
 - Please contact the PIC or Faculty Supervisor if any concerns arise
- [] Directly observing or reviewing recordings of the student on at least **2 distinct occasions** each semester.
- [] Submitting a formal clinical skills evaluation in ELC for each of those observations.
- [] Reviewing and signing the student's digital hours logs *every week*.
- [] Submitting comprehensive **Midpoint** and **Final** evaluations mapping both clinical skills and professional dispositions.

Weekly Log Verification

Students are required to document their hours digitally in ELC every week. We ask that you review these to make sure students are logging hours you approve. Near midterm and at the end of the practicum, Internship 1, and Internship 2, you will be sent a summary log through ELC to sign. Your signature certifies that the student actually performed the documented hours and engaged in the specified clinical or administrative tasks. Up to date logs and verification are important so the PIC and faculty supervisors can monitor students' experiences and cumulative hours.

5. Site Matching, Onboarding, and Paperwork

The Site Matching Process

Placements are managed through a centralized matching system handled by the university faculty. Students submit preferences, interview with 2–4 potential sites, and submit rankings. Sites simultaneously interview students and send rankings/feedback directly to the PIC. The PIC, in conjunction with Program Faculty, makes the final matching decisions based on student goals and preferences, site rankings and capacity, and faculty insight.

Onboarding and Documentation Rules

- **Immediate Action:** Once a match is confirmed, students are instructed to contact the site supervisor immediately to begin background checks, drug screenings, orientations, or any site-specific onboarding.
- **The Agreement Form:** Before a student can logging a single hour, a formal **Practicum or Internship Agreement Form** must be executed. This form specifies your credentials, expected hours, and date ranges. It must be signed by the student, you (the site supervisor), the PIC, the University faculty supervisor, a University administrator, and typically, a site administrator. A separate agreement form is required if the student transitions from Practicum to an Internship at your site.

6. Professional Expectations, Ethics, and Conflict Resolution

Ethical Accountability

Students have completed foundational ethics coursework and have signed agreements to strictly follow the **American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics**, as well as all local, state, and federal laws. Students are instructed to seek immediate consultation from you or university faculty the moment an ethical dilemma or clinical gray area arises.

Conflict Resolution and Program Intervention

- **Directive Discrepancies:** If your site's internal procedures or instructions conflict with university manual rules, the student is instructed to notify their University supervisor immediately so a resolution can be coordinated between institutions.
- **Performance and Remediation:** If you have significant concerns regarding a student's interpersonal skills, ethical behaviors, professional conduct, or counseling dispositions, please notify the PIC immediately. If a student falls below acceptable training standards or fails to secure an internship continuation match due to poor performance, the university will step in to build a formal **Individual Remediation Plan** or targeted skill development framework.

7. Experiential Learning Cloud (ELC)

Experiential Learning Cloud (ELC) is the platform the program uses to collect and store data. This system is used for all documentation including evaluations, time logs, insurance, etc. Site supervisors will receive information on ELC including how to log into the system.

- Please notify the faculty supervisor or PIC if you experience difficulties with ELC.
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References

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