

## Prepracticum/Practicum

Through practicum experiences students have opportunities to apply their knowledge of psychological and educational theory and ethical principles to practice. The practicum components of the program are designed in such a way that students can attain competencies in such areas as observation and evaluation of individual clients with varying educational needs. Students also practice formulating recommendations, and planning for and evaluating selected interventions. Activities practiced in the school setting may encompass individual and group counseling, tutoring, behavior management, social skills training, consultation with teachers, parents, and other professionals, and evaluation of research. Practicum can occur in a variety of settings such as the public schools, the *Psychoeducational Diagnostic and Intervention Clinic* (PDI Clinic) and within other clinics and agencies. The sequence of experiences offers a systematic orientation to the practice of school psychology.

Students are expected to be involved in practicum experiences from very early in their programs and to continue such experiences until they enroll in internships. For example, during the first year, students receive a general orientation to the practice of school psychology and public schools and other agencies by observing, attending case conferences, etc., during the prepracticum experience. As specific competencies are attained through accompanying course work, students progress to activities such as psychoeducational evaluation, development and evaluation of interventions, social skill development, etc.

Students must log a minimum of five hundred clock hours in practicum experiences throughout their course of study at Ball State. These hours are exclusive of hours spent in individual assessment courses.

Students ordinarily enroll for a total of 4 hours of Prepracticum during their first year and a minimum of 4 hours of practicum credit (EDPSY 689 – 3 and EDPSY 688 - 1) during their second year on campus. They must obtain permission from the practicum director before enrolling for credit. Students are required to successfully complete practicum requirements including a portfolio review and exit interview with the practicum director before advancing to internship.

More specific information and course requirements are available in the following documents:

### ***Practicum Manual School Psychology Programs***

#### **Syllabi:**

EDPSY 687 Prepracticum in School Psychology

EDPSY 688 Practicum in Consultation

EDPSY 689 Practicum in School Psychology

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### Practicum Settings

Practicum students are offered a variety of applied experiences. Placements in field-based settings and within the PDI Clinic are available. Depending on the individual needs of students, their placements can be in a school setting, in the PDI Clinic, or in both. Doctoral students typically spend at least one semester of their practicum experience in the clinic, whereas Ed.S students typically spend both semesters in a school placement. Placements are made based upon the competencies of each student, student preferences, geographic location of the site, and approval of the Practicum Coordinator.

Practicum students with school placements are provided with either off-site supervision by school psychology faculty or on-site supervision by a licensed school psychologist on a weekly basis. An on-site supervisor is usually the primary supervisor. Each student is required to meet with his/her primary supervisor for face-to-face supervision for no less than two hours each week. Practicum students assigned to the PDI Clinic are typically supervised by an advanced doctoral student and/or licensed psychologist. Each student is required to attend group supervision on a weekly basis. The Practicum Coordinator conducts group supervision. Many practicum students elect to combine their practicum with a field-based assistantship. Graduate students participating in field-based assistantships spend the equivalent of 20 hours in the school-related activities per week. Practicum students who participate in field-based assistantships are paid a stipend for the academic year and receive tuition remission for the academic year and

summer. If the student is combining his/her practicum with a field-based assistantship, the number of hours within the school setting is increased to reflect both the practicum and assistantship hours required.

Field-based practicum activities include administering and interpreting tests, writing reports, and conducting functional behavioral assessments. In addition, the students are expected to consult with teachers and/or parents, develop and implement interventions, conduct classroom observations, and participate in case conferences. Students may also be asked to conduct other school psychology related activities. Specifically, each field-based practicum student is required to do the following:

- Administer, score, and interpret accepted individual and group diagnostic instruments to assess different abilities, (i.e., Woodcock-Johnson Educational Diagnostic Batteries; the Wechsler Batteries; etc);
- Write reports based upon testing and generate relevant recommendations from the diagnostic instruments and other assessment techniques to promote the individualizing of instruction;
- Design and implement educational and psychological interventions;
- Attend case conferences;
- Provide educational and psychological consultation with teachers and parents;
- Develop and implement academic and behavioral interventions; and
- Develop and implement a prevention program at the system, building, and/or classroom level.

### Supervision

Practicum students who are assigned to the PDI Clinic have a clinic supervisor who, in conjunction with the clinic director, monitors and approves all phases of practicum requirements. Learners are asked to review their schedules and experiences with the practicum coordinator on a regular basis throughout the semester. Practicum students assigned to a field-based site receive supervision from a licensed school psychologist, licensed psychologist, and/or school psychology faculty. Students and supervisors maintain an ongoing dialogue to help resolve conflicts as they arise. Differences that cannot be resolved by the dyad are discussed with the Practicum Coordinator, who may need to serve as a mediator.

### Rationale and Assumptions Regarding Supervision

- Learners are responsible and will attain competence at different rates.
- The most effective learning takes place within the context of an accepting

environment and a relationship of mutual respect and trust between teacher and learner.

- Modeling is a key factor in learning. Supervisory staff endeavor to model behaviors that have been identified in the literature as facilitative of learning.
- Ongoing evaluation is crucial in any teaching/learning endeavor. It is recognized that the learners must have input into the process to maximize its effectiveness.
- The philosophy of supervision is endorsed based on a constructivist view of the learner as being an active participant in his/her own learning. However, the first responsibility of supervisor and supervisee alike is to the client.