

Department of Family Therapy

STUDENT EXTERNAL PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

Students will intern at a practicum site in the community for two trimesters or more to complete the required hours of clinical experience for graduation. Practicum sites offer students the opportunity to specialize in work with individuals, couples, and families of culturally diverse backgrounds. These practicums are within the community where students work in schools, hospitals, agencies, private practice, and many other settings. Student interns deal with a variety of issues such as marital problems, a child experiencing school problems, families coping with a chronically ill family member, and other such issues. The opportunity for intense, closely supervised, and varied clinical experience is an important feature of our program.

To complete the M.S. in Family Therapy, students must complete 500 hours of direct face-to-face client contact, 200 of which must be relational, with couples and families. They also must accumulate at least 100 supervision hours, 50 of which must be based on direct observation, videotape, or audiotape. At least 25 of the 50 must be based on direct observation and/or videotape. Students are responsible for documenting their clinical and supervision hours, using the forms provided on our KPCOM website.

Before students begin their Practicum experience, they must have a copy of the practicum contract signed by the student, their practicum site supervisor, faculty supervisor, and the Program Director. Students must also make sure that they are covered by the Department's professional liability insurance. A copy of this insurance can be obtained from the Internship Coordinator's office. There are four pieces of information that must be provided to the Internship Coordinator before starting at a field placement: 1. the original signed copy of the practicum contract; 2. a resume of the on-site supervisor to demonstrate that he or she has at least a master's degree in a mental health profession and is a licensed mental health professional with a copy of their state license, or any other applicable certificates proving eligibility; 3. a brochure or written information about the practicum site; and 4. a written description from the on-site supervisor about practicum duties and responsibilities. Any other site information may be provided as it pertains to the student's practicum experience. The student is responsible for letting his/her faculty supervisor and the Internship Coordinator know of any administrative changes that may take place at the practicum site affecting their placement. Additional documentation may be required for transitional purposes.

Students should plan on a minimum of 15 client contact hours a week to be sure of completing the required client contact hours on time. Most students will need to schedule additional time at the practicum sites to complete paperwork, allow for missed appointments, etc; thus, 20 hours a week committed to the practicum site is reasonable. This time may include weekdays, evenings, and weekends based on site requirements. If students are unable to commit this much time to a site, they should make preparations to accrue more hours with additional practicums, or arrange for an extended period at their site. Students must continue to be enrolled and receive credit until they have accumulated the required client contact and supervision hours for graduation.

Students are expected to keep track of their client contact and supervision hours throughout the program. At the end of each trimester, students must properly complete documentation of the hours on the designated sheets provided by the program, which can be obtained from the Student Resources section of the KPCOM website. Students will need to sign and date all forms before turning the form in. It is also the student's responsibility to make sure that the site supervisor has initialed, signed, and dated the appropriate spaces on the forms before giving the sheets to the NSU faculty supervisor.

Students will turn in supervision hours from their site supervisors as well. However, only hours spent in supervision with an AAMFT Approved Supervisor will be counted towards graduation requirements. Students must record the hours spent in supervision with their faculty supervisor or any other AAMFT approved supervisor that may be supervising them.

Practica are evaluated by site supervisors and faculty supervisors using the program's practicum evaluation forms. These forms were designed to closely assess students' clinical skills. A copy of the practicum evaluation form is made available to all practicum students, and students will be given the opportunity to assess their own performance as well.

There are three forms that must be completed by the end of the trimester in the evaluation process. The first evaluation is the site supervisor's evaluation. The student will need to submit this evaluation to his/her site supervisor three weeks prior to the end of the trimester. The student should schedule a time to review the completed evaluation with the site supervisor by the end of the trimester. The form will need to be filled out completely, signed, and dated by the site supervisor and the student prior to turning it in to the faculty supervisor. The faculty supervisor will then fill out a separate evaluation based on the student's site supervisor's recommendations and his/her personal supervision experience with the student. The Faculty supervisor will then review the evaluation with the student who will also be given the opportunity to make comments on the form. The student will need to sign and date this form as well. The third evaluation is the student's evaluation of his/her practicum site. This evaluation is required to provide practicum administrators with information on the student's experience at the site and will only impact the student's grade if it is not turned in. This evaluation process does not replace the online course evaluation that must be completed by students at the end of each trimester.

All paperwork must be turned in within one week subsequent to the end of the trimester. If paperwork has not been turned in by the time grades are due, a grade of "F" will be assigned to the student until the required paperwork has been received.

Note: Occasionally some students may have more than one site. A separate client contact hours form must be filled out for each site. This also applies to the supervision form if a student has more than one AAMFT approved supervisor within a trimester.