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**PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
A Manual for Interns and Supervisors**

The UNH Psychology Department offers advanced undergraduate majors the opportunity to gain experience in the area of human services through a field placement program, Psychology 793 (Internship). In addition to providing students an opportunity to apply concepts and principles acquired in previous psychology courses to the world of work, the program facilitates career orientation, exploration, and definition. It also helps some students gain entry into programs of graduate education and/or employment in human services.

Prerequisites for admission to the course are: psychology major, Psychology 762-Counseling (as pre- or co-requisite), suitable internship placement, and tentative learning agreement. Enrollment is limited to 15 students. Preference is given to seniors who submit an approved learning agreement by the announced deadline.

Overview

The program offers a broad range of educational experiences. Cooperating agencies include public and private schools from preschool through university levels, day care centers, state and local departments of probation, state hospitals, local and private hospitals, community mental health clinics, drop-in centers, departments of welfare, diagnostic and rehabilitation centers, half-way houses, adolescent centers, and industrial personnel departments. Work performed by interns is hands-on and supervised by personnel in the agency.

Within a general framework provided by the course syllabus and instructor, an intern tailors the field placement experiences to his/her own needs and interests and to the interests and expertise of the agency and agency supervisor. The experiences are guided by a learning agreement written by the intern in consultation with the supervisor. The instructor provides suggestions for agency placements, facilitates and encourages the intern's understanding of concepts and theory related to human services, is available for consultation with both the supervisor and intern, and coordinates the evaluation/grading of the intern.

In addition, interns participate in a 3-hour per week seminar that includes readings and 3 or 4 assigned papers. The seminar provides classroom instruction on beginning counseling skills as well as discussion of interns various experiences at internship sites.

Credits and Field Placement Hours

Internship is offered for a total of 4 to 8 credits. Internship students report that the more hours they put into their placement activities, the more they learn. Taking Psychology 793 for 4 credits typically does not permit the kind of sustained and deep involvement with clients and staff that an 8-credit commitment permits. For this reason, most former interns recommend taking Psychology 793 for 8 credits.

For each credit, 2 hours of agency placement time is required. Thus, 4 credits equal 8 hours of agency work per week or a minimum of 120 hours per semester; 8 credits equal 16 hours per week or 240 hours per semester, etc. Travel time from home or UNH to the agency is not included in the placement hours, nor is at-home reading time. Only activities at the agency or other professional activities such as visits to client's homes, interagency meetings, etc. are included in the placement hours. A student who

enrolls in internship after the first week of classes or who, for whatever reasons, misses one or more scheduled days of work at the agency must make up the missed days, such that all of the required placement hours are completed by the last day of classes.

Some placements require a minimum involvement of more than 8 credits per semester. In these instances, students can take 8 credits of Internship combined with up to 4 credits of Independent Study. Prior approval by the instructor is necessary for such arrangements.

No more than two psychology 793 interns may work at a particular agency during a given semester. This guideline serves the purpose of insuring that many different agencies are represented in the course. It is the responsibility of the potential intern to check with the agency and make certain that this guideline is observed. Exceptions to this guideline can be made by permission of the instructor.

Advanced Internship (Psychology 794), which can be taken for 4 to 8 credits, typically is offered each spring semester. When arranging an agency placement for the fall, students interested in enrolling in psychology 794 in the spring may wish to mention this possibility to agency staff, particularly the intern supervisor.

Approval of Agency and Supervisor

Agencies that have never hosted a UNH psychology intern, or that have not hosted an intern during the last 3 years, must be approved, or reapproved, by the course instructor. The instructor must receive, either from the student or prospective supervisor, a copy of the latter's resume and a special brief form that, when completed, describes the nature of the agency and its suitability for hosting a UNH psychology intern. Copies of the form can be obtained from the Psychology Department office. Approval of the agency and supervisor by the instructor should be obtained *before* the learning agreement, described below, is submitted to the internship assistant.

Learning Agreement

By the announced deadline each semester, *two* copies of an agreement between the intern and supervisor, signed by both parties, must be submitted in *typewritten* form to Internship Assistant Donna Hardy, 113 Conant Hall. The agreement should specify clearly all requirements of both the intern and supervisor. In conjunction with the course syllabus, the agreement constitutes the working structure of the course. The learning agreement should not be considered inflexible. It can be revised/alterd at any time by simply discussing the changes with the supervisor and submitting a copy of the proposed changes to the instructor for approval. Learning agreements generally are about two typewritten pages, plus or minus a paragraph or two. The following format is suggested:

Student Information. Student's name, local address, email address, phone numbers (home and cell).

Course Information. Number of credit hours for the course; placement starting and stopping dates; weekly work schedule at agency.

Supervisor Information. Supervisor's name, title, agency, agency address, email address, agency phone number, and times most easily reached. A copy of the supervisor's resume should be attached if the Department does not have a current one on file. Check with the internship secretary to see if a copy of the resume must be included. The supervisor probably has one on hand. If not, the resume should include such

relevant information as degree(s) earned, field in which degree was earned, previous work experiences, additional training, and type of current work and responsibilities. This information should be submitted to the Internship Assistant.

Course Goals and Methods of Reaching Goals. The intern should give careful thought to what he or she wishes to learn and then discuss with the supervisor these wishes in the context of what can and cannot be taught in the field placement. Then, a list of goals, typically 4 to 6 in number, should be agreed upon along with activities designed to help the intern achieve each goal. In this way the intern and supervisor should be able to relate most of the intern's activities and responsibilities to specific learning goals. Some examples follow:

- Goal #1:* To determine if I have the potential and interest to become an effective counselor.
Activities: I shall work as counselor-in-training with 3 to 5 residents of Granite State Home (GSH). This will involve seeing each resident for 1/2 hour per day, 2 days per week. These contacts will be directed toward establishing rapport with residents, helping them to better interact with staff and other residents, helping them to leave the institution on shopping trips with me as chaperon, and helping them to think about eventual discharge. My supervisor will help me address questions and problems I encounter while engaging in these activities.
- Goal #2:* To understand the relationship of state supported institutions to needs and services in the community.
Activities: I shall seek information on joint planning between GSH and community agencies by attending inter-agency conferences on a weekly basis, and by interviewing directors of community relations, admissions, patient follow-up services, and public relations.
- Goal #3:* To learn and understand how GSH's Research Department conducts research projects, to gain some (albeit minimal) hands-on experience in mental health research, and to determine whether or not I want research to be part of my future (i.e., career).
Activities: I will be sitting in on research interviews to observe how the interviewers rate the clients' physical and psychological behavior. I will become familiar with the Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale (BPRS) prior to the interviews, and I will help out in various ways (e.g., data entry) to see each research project succeed.
- Goal #4:* To learn and understand Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT).
Activities: I will be attending DBT sessions every Tuesday and review DBT charts every Wednesday.

The learning agreement can be altered at any time by the mutual consent of the supervisor and the intern and by sending a statement of the changes to the instructor.

Supervision. Describe the type (individual or group), frequency and length of meetings with the supervisor. This is a most important aspect of the learning agreement and should be *spelled out clearly*. If at all possible, indicate a specific meeting time (or times).

Evaluations. The learning agreement should include a statement, initialed or signed by the supervisor, indicating the supervisor agrees to submit both a mid-course evaluation containing an "estimated grade-so-far" and an end-of-course evaluation that includes a grade representing overall intern performance.

One copy of these evaluations is to be sent to the instructor and a second copy presented to and discussed with the student. The copy sent to the instructor should be mailed in care of the Internship Secretary but with the instructor's name on the envelope also.

In addition, the intern should make a statement regarding his or her intention to write at the end of the semester an evaluation of the internship experience that conveys impressions of the agency, overall quality of work performed there, and the quality and quantity of supervision received. For the dual purposes of maintaining a quality internship program and informing potential interns about various internship possibilities, interns are strongly encouraged to write candid evaluations. The evaluations will be read by the instructor and made available to students seeking information about agency placements. In some cases having an intern evaluate the agency and supervision might place the intern in a difficult, possibly compromising position. For this reason, the statement of intention to write an evaluation of the internship experience is not binding, and accordingly, the evaluation statement is not a requirement for successful completion of Psychology 793. Interns who do not wish to submit an evaluation of their agency must discuss this option with the course instructor.

Supervisor's Responsibilities

In agreeing to supervise an intern the supervisor accepts two responsibilities: that he or she will 1) meet regularly with the intern and 2) assess the intern's performance.

Meetings. The supervisor should arrange regular meetings which allow for planning and monitoring of the intern's work, and for answering the intern's questions and concerns. The intern will generate a learning agreement from the initial planning sessions which will formalize the semester's activities. Subsequent meetings should provide the intern with opportunities to ask questions, to address any difficulties and problems encountered with clients or staff, and to receive feedback.

Part of the learning agreement may include a *brief* bibliography containing readings that familiarize the intern with agency treatment approaches, philosophy, research, types of clients served, and so on. The bibliography is brief, as the intern is expected to spend most of his/her time engaged in "hands on," experiential learning.

Assessment of Intern Performance. The supervisor is responsible for writing two evaluations of the intern's work, one at mid-term and the other toward the end of the semester. The most relevant criteria for such an evaluation will be the several goals included in the intern's learning agreement. Other criteria might include goals stated in the initial paragraph of the Psychology 793 syllabus. Still other possible areas of evaluation include facility in dealing with clients, use of constructive criticism, clinical acumen, industry and curiosity, any special strengths and weaknesses, and so on. Supervisors should select criteria and guidelines they consider relevant for providing an evaluation appropriate for the particular setting and intern.

The supervisor is also expected to provide an estimated grade-so-far for the mid-semester evaluation and an end-of- semester grade for the final evaluation. The supervisor should send the mid-semester evaluation to the instructor by the second Monday of October or first Monday of March, and the end-of-semester evaluation by the first Monday of December or last Monday of April. The evaluations are sent to the instructor and a copy given to and discussed with the intern. Approximately 40 percent of the final course grade is based on the end-of-semester grade provided by the internship supervisor.

Seminar

Interns attend a weekly seminar conducted at UNH. The seminar provides a learning setting where students acquire basic counseling skills, discuss common difficulties and concerns, and both give and receive personal and professional support. Attendance at the seminar is *required*. Participation in the seminar and related assignments count for about 60 percent of the final course grade.

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