



## **GUIDELINES FOR COLLEGE COUNSELING PLACEMENTS**

The Department of Counseling views college counseling as a practice of counseling designed to facilitate the academic, career, social, interpersonal, and sociocultural development of individuals as they enter and progress through higher education settings. College counseling encompasses the well-being of the whole individual and is designed to facilitate a students' understanding of the various factors (e.g., racial, gender, cultural, socioeconomic, sexual orientation, familial, political, religious, age, etc.) that contribute to their higher education experience. By facilitating their students' holistic understanding of themselves, college counselors work towards empowering students with the insights, skills, resources and choices needed to have a personally meaningful and fulfilling experience in higher education.

To achieve this type of training experience, placements accepting students from the College Counseling program in the Department of Counseling at San Francisco State University must fulfill the following requirements:

- 1) **Hours:** Students in first year placements must be in the field for a minimum of 12 and maximum of 16 hours per week. Students in second year internships must be in the field a minimum of 16 hours and maximum of 20 hours per week. If an agency requires more than the maximum hours requirement, students must confer with the Fieldwork Coordinator. Agencies need to negotiate with students regarding continuing clinical work during the winter recess between Fall and Spring semesters.
- 2) **Contact Hours:** For accreditation purposes, direct contact hours are face-to-face (in-person or through video telehealth) counseling contact between student and client(s). Indirect hours include time spent on activities not limited to documentation, weekly supervision, case conference, staff meetings, trainings, workshops, reading and research preparation for clients, client advocacy, and other professional activities at the fieldwork site.
  - a. **Students in their first-year placement** are required to complete a minimum of 40 direct client contact hours in their field site in the fall semester and an additional 60 direct client contact hours in their 2nd semester. This breaks down to a minimum of 3 direct client contact hours per week in the fall and 4 direct client contact hours per week in the spring during the 12-16 hours per week commitment. We expect that students will have the opportunity to work with clients in an ongoing basis to help cultivate their clinical skill development.
  - b. **Students in their second-year placement** are required to complete a minimum of 90 direct client contact hours in their field site in the fall semester and an additional 90 direct client contact hours in their 2nd semester. This breaks down to a minimum of 8 direct client contact hours per week in the fall and 8 direct client contact hours per week in the spring during the 16-20 hours per week commitment (presuming students may not see clients for the first 3 weeks of the semester due to training). We expect that students will have the opportunity to work with clients in an ongoing basis to help cultivate their clinical skill development.

- 3) **Nature of Work & Contact:** College counseling fieldwork provides a rich and diverse spectrum of services – counseling, advising, teaching, workshops, trainings, outreach, fairs, orientations and so forth. All of these experiences are vital to exposing students to the scope of work that college counselors conduct. However, as a program focused on counseling, all sites must provide interns with opportunities to engage in counseling experiences of socioemotional and interpersonal depth. Sites that rely solely on information-giving are not feasible because they do not provide the counseling skills development that is required of our students. Although some of the sessions may involve information giving and dissemination of technical (academic, career, resources) knowledge, there must be counseling sessions with more depth that require relational skills not simply transactional skills. It is possible that some sites may need to design services that interns provide that the regular staff do not provide, if the site does not involve much counseling.
- 4) **Coaching Sessions:** Students engaged in first- or second-year placements will be enrolled in practicum or internship classes concurrently. In addition to the group supervision and instruction provided in the class, the student will have individual class-based, coaching sessions with their instructor approximately 5 times/year. Students in the first semester of their first year placement will engage in 5 sessions of mock counseling. The practicum/internship instructor will also serve as a liaison with the internship site supervisor.
- 5) **Field Supervision:** All students are required to have a minimum of 1 hour of individual supervision per week from an on-site supervisor. This will be a time to review student recordings and provide them with the necessary feedback to facilitate their growth. Supervisors must have a master's degree in counseling or a closely related field that included counseling training and at least 1 year of supervised counseling internships. Additionally, the supervisor must have at least two years of counseling work experience post degree. For supervisors working with trainees earning hours for college specialization it is preferable that the supervisor be trained in college counseling or, minimally, receive consultation regarding college counseling appropriate to the site. See "College Counseling Specialization Field Placement Criteria" for details regarding the scope of college counseling traineeships as defined by the Department of Counseling.
- 6) **Recordings & Private Space:** Recordings are a critical part of a student's development, and it enables both supervisors and instructors to monitor the actual work of the student – rather than simply relying on student's recollections. Sites must be willing to allow interns to record sessions and provide them with appropriate guidance for ensuring client consent for recording and a private space that enables clear recordings. Students are required to record a minimum of client sessions and must have at least 5 recorded sessions each year to present to a practicum instructor at the university. In first year, internship these generally will all be recorded in the spring. In the second-year internship, these are spread across the academic year. While the department is mindful of the work involved in doing so, all fieldwork supervisors are highly encouraged to use recordings during supervision since this critical means of facilitating counseling skills development as well as ensuring the quality of services provided at your institution.
- 7) **Risk Assessment:** Sites must have a clear protocol for client/student risk assessment and identify how the intern will be supported should that situation arise (e.g., including instructions given to intern, scope of responsibility, person in charge if supervisor is unavailable, etc.) Our expectation is that students will be supported in assessing risk to the degree appropriate to the setting and, at the very least, will receive supervision on triage responsibilities to assess the urgency of referral and referral process appropriate to the situation.
- 8) **Staff Participation:** There should be an opportunity for student participation in staff meetings, in-service training, and relevant interpersonal and inter-professional contacts.

9) **Stipends:** Given the breadth of services that counseling interns provide and increasing financial challenges of both higher education and the Bay Area, all sites are encouraged to explore the possibility of providing their student interns with some form of financial compensation or stipend.

Additional detailed guidelines can be found in the [Department of Counseling Practicum and Trainee Handbook](#)