



# Office of Clinical Training

**2019-20**

**MA Counseling Psychology**

Student Practicum Handbook



JOHN F. KENNEDY UNIVERSITY

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## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

To the Student,

This Practicum Handbook is designed to provide you with information about the Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology Programs' fieldwork and psychotherapy requirements.

Supervised experience in a practicum setting is a significant component of graduate education. Practicum involves working directly with individuals, organizations, and communities. This kind of hands-on work promotes the integration of theoretical and experiential knowledge in practical work settings.

The specific requirements for Masters in Counseling Psychology Programs' practicum placements are described in detail in the following pages. Differences between the MA MFT Program and the Holistic Program requirements and processes will be noted.

The basics of the practicum programs are described in the Introduction Section of the handbook, and specifics follow. Please keep this handbook for reference while in the MA in Counseling Psychology Programs. Although policies and procedures can change, the information in this handbook is essential at certain points in your education, and it is the student's responsibility to know about program components such as practicum, exams and graduation requirements.

The Office of Clinical Training, including the Clinical Training Coordinators, are at your service for support in negotiating your way through the practicum process and grappling with the rules and regulations of the State of California's Board of Behavioral Sciences. The MA in Counseling Psychology Chairs, (MA MFT and Holistic Programs), your Academic Advisers, and core faculty are all available to assist you as well.

Please note that it is ultimately the student's responsibility to assure compliance with frequently changing board regulations and to obtain the most recent version of board forms.

Timothy Ford, M.A., LMFT  
Executive Director  
Office of Clinical Training



## PRACTICUM BASICS

In this handbook, information is included for both the MA MFT program, which currently runs for 10 quarters (2.5 years) as well as, the MA Holistic Program, which runs for 12 quarters (3 years). Where there are differences between the programs, this will be noted.

In order to become an approved external site for practicum level field experience, an agency must meet not only the Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) legal requirements, but must also fulfill College of Psychology criteria for placement approval (inclusive of the Office of Clinical Training and guidance from the Chairs of each MA in Counseling Psychology programs). All these requirements will be discussed in this handbook.

### To Begin With

The practicum component of the MA in Counseling Psychology Programs occurs after all of Phase I coursework has been successfully completed. It is the student's opportunity to apply their knowledge in real-world situations, and is a major and integral aspect of the graduate programs.

MA MFT Program Phase I required courses occur during the first four quarters of the program curriculum. Students begin their practicum in the Fall of their second year, *after the student is assessed by the faculty as being ready for face to face client experience*. Students who begin their graduate program during other quarters than Fall must still meet minimum course requirements before starting practicum. Please confer with your faculty and academic counselors for the particulars of your workflow and readiness for practicum.

MA Holistic Program students start their practicum in the Fall of their 3<sup>rd</sup> year after taking required courses and *being assessed by faculty as ready for face to face client experience*. Students who begin their graduate program during other quarters than Fall must still meet minimum course requirements before starting practicum. Please confer with your faculty and academic counselors for the particulars of your workflow and readiness for practicum.

Students at a practicum setting have the chance to work in established agencies that directly serve their communities. Training opportunities range from school-based programs to residential and dual-diagnosis treatment facilities, and include mental health clinic experience, crisis intervention, child, couple and family therapy, and the opportunity to work with a wide variety of agencies to provide direct mental health and counseling services. Students receive supervision and training directly related to the work they are doing in the field, from licensed



clinicians who are dedicated to their profession, and are eager to support practicum-level students as they continue their growth as therapists.

Working at one of our many approved sites, students have the opportunity to broaden their network outside of the JFK University community, and to make connections and develop specializations that will serve them well in their post-master's journey toward licensure. In this Handbook, we hope you will find all the information that is necessary to successfully complete the practicum requirements for the MA in Marriage and Family Therapy Programs at JFKU.

Please note that MA in Psychology students who are receiving a nonclinical degree do not have a practicum requirement and are therefore not mentioned in this Handbook. A nonclinical MA in Psychology degree will not qualify for the Board of Behavioral Sciences licensure as either an LMFT or LPCC.

## A Note on JFKU's Graduate & MFT Associate Program

In addition to external practicum sites, The Office of Clinical Training (OCT) hosts Community Based Programs (CBP).

The JFKU OCT Graduate Trainee & MFT Associate Program provides counselors with the opportunity to complete their mandated practicum and licensure hours and prepare for the state licensing exam. The program requires a one-year (4 quarter) commitment. Currently, the program offers two start dates, one in the Fall quarter (October) and the other in the Spring quarter (April). MFT Associates may also be accepted into the program on an as-needed basis.

Participants are typically required to work at least 20-25 hours per week, which includes a minimum of 10 client hours per week, paperwork, supervision, and trainings. However, this can be negotiated for Graduate Trainees and MFT Associates who work and or are in other practicums.

JFKU OCT provides comprehensive trainings that introduce counselors to the policies and procedures of the Community Based Programs and familiarize them with HIPAA compliancy regulations and an Electronic Medical Record Keeping System. In addition, on-going clinical trainings support the growth of Counselors as mental health clinicians by covering topics related to theory, cultural competency, law and ethics, crisis and trauma, depression, parenting issues, countertransference and various other issues that often occur in therapy.



## Required Coursework to be Eligible for Practicum

BBS guidance states that students must have at least 18 quarter units before they can start practicum. In addition, students must pass all required courses before they can begin a practicum experience. All students will be assessed by their faculty to determine if the student is ready for practicum experience. This formal readiness assessment will be shared with the Office of Clinical Training.

The required courses for the MA MFT Program are as follows:

- 5403 Diagnosis and Assessment of Psychopathology A
- 5303 Child, Adolescent and Family Therapy: Assessment and Treatment A

Note: The B's of both these courses are concurrent with the start of practicum.  
B and C must be taught by the same instructor.

- 5230 Clinical Skills Training A: Self as Clinician
- 5231 Clinical Skills Training B: MFT Techniques I
- 5232 Clinical Skills Training C: MFT Techniques II

- 9000 Child Abuse Assessment and Reporting Workshop
- 5635 Ethics & Law

- 5115 Theories for MFT Practice I
- 5156 Theories for MFT Practice II
- 5157 Theories for MFT Practice III

Students missing the following classes can still start practicum with prior faculty and Office of Clinical Training approval:

- 5054 Research Methods
- 5620 Multicultural Competence  
Family Life Cycle

The required courses for the MA Holistic Program are as follows:

- 5105 Therapeutic Communications A
- 5106 Therapeutic Communications B
- 5101 Group Process A
- 5102 Group Process B



- 5103 Group Process C
- 5235 Ethics and Law
- 9015 Child Abuse Assessment

All MA Holistic students must take a seven-unit Child Abuse Assessment class in addition to their regular coursework. This class must be completed prior to starting practicum. MA Holistic students should check with their academic adviser or the Office of Clinical Training staff for a list of continuing education programs that provide the child abuse assessment course. The student is responsible for the cost of this class. The student must provide certificate of completion of the class to the Office of Clinical Training. The student must also sign up for the child abuse assessment zero-unit course (9015) so that the Child Abuse Assessment course is noted as part of the official academic transcript, as the child abuse assessment class is a requirement of the BBS for licensure.

## Course Requirements During Practicum

Once a student starts practicum, students need to enroll in a clinical case seminar class in their second quarter of practicum.

## Required Practicum Hours

### MA DEGREE LEADING TO THE MFT LICENSE

The BBS defines a graduate student at a practicum setting as a *trainee*.

Per BBS requirements, students pursuing the MFT license must complete a minimum of 225 hours of practicum work. Of these 225 hours, 150 must be face to face client contact hours. The remaining 75 hours can either be client advocacy hours or face to face hours, or a combination of both.

Face to face client hours can be individual, couples, children, family, group, or telehealth. All other hours are considered by the BBS as nonclinical hours. All hours, whether face to face or nonclinical, are accepted by the BBS toward the 3000 hours necessary for licensure. For the MFT license, both pre-graduate (trainee) and postgraduate (associate) hours qualify as license eligible hours.



In addition to the face to face hours, students will need to have the necessary supervision units. A trainee must receive one supervision unit for every five hours of face to face client contact (5:1 ratio). A supervision unit is either one hour of individual, one hour of triadic, or two hours of group supervision. All sites approved by JFKU for the MA in Counseling Programs must provide a minimum of one hour of individual /triadic supervision and two hours of group supervision, so that JFKU trainees are covered for up to 10 hours of face to face client contact time. Where possible with practicum sites, the preference of the Office of Clinical Training is individual supervision versus triadic.

While these minimum hours are required for degree conferral, students will end up accruing many more hours than the minimum face to face time.

### MA DEGREE LEADING TO THE LPCC LICENSE

Students pursuing the LPPC license must complete a minimum of 280 face to face hours. Unlike the MFT license, these 280 hours do not count towards the LPC license, since all 3000 hours for the LPC license must be completed post graduate degree.

An LPPC Trainee must also meet the 5:1 ratio of supervision as the MFT trainee. A trainee must receive one supervision unit for every five hours of face to face client contact (5:1 ratio). A supervision unit is either one hour of individual, one hour of triadic, or two hours of group supervision. All sites approved by JFKU for the MA in Counseling Programs must provide a minimum of one hour of individual /triadic supervision and two hours of group supervision, so that JFKU trainees are covered for up to 10 hours of face to face client contact time. Where possible with practicum sites, the preference for the Office of Clinical Training is individual supervision versus triadic.

Students pursuing a post master's LPPC license may need to do an additional quarter of supervised practicum experience in order to meet all the hours necessary for the degree as stipulated by the BBS.

While these minimum hours are required for degree conferral, students will end up accruing many more hours than the minimum face to face time.

Note: According to BBS rules, a Trainee is permitted to earn a maximum of 1,300 hours of experience overall prior to the degree being awarded. Up to 750 hours of counseling (including diagnosing and treating couples, families and children, and individual or group psychotherapy) and supervision are permitted within the 1,300-hour maximum. The remaining 550 hours may only consist of non-clinical experience.



**Note:** Many students pay for an online hour tracking service called Track Your Hours. This web based program allows you to track hours both pre-graduate and postgraduate and is able to print out all the forms needed by the BBS for hours documentation.



## Beginning Practicum

*Students may begin the fieldwork requirement any time after successful completion of the required coursework and assessment by faculty of their readiness for client work.*

Some students enter the MA in Counseling Programs out of cycle, and so may have a different academic workflow to completion of their degree. These students should work closely with their faculty, academic adviser, and clinical training staff to ensure that all requirements are met for graduating.

Before students can begin practicum, they are required to obtain individual liability insurance prior to starting practicum. If students become members of CAMFT, the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, they can receive the first year of liability insurance free with their CAMFT first year membership. The student is responsible for the cost of CAMFT membership and liability insurance.

All students participating in the Master's in Counseling Psychology programs at JFKU must complete a background check process before being approved to begin practicum. Previously, this involved a Livescan fingerprinting process; however, JFKU has recently transitioned to a new vendor called CastleBranch for our background screening. This new process is more convenient for students as it is a "name based" check and does not require fingerprinting.

The cost for the screening is \$68.00, paid directly to CastleBranch. The Clinical Training Coordinator will provide you with instructions which explains how to access the JFKU customized portal on the CastleBranch website to "place an order" to initiate this screening process. The CastleBranch website also has tutorials and additional information to assist you with navigating the CastleBranch website.

## Practicum Sequence

Practicum involves four quarters of placement experience totaling one year on average. During these four quarters, students must be enrolled in a practicum course per BBS guidance. These courses are titled Practicum A – D. If a student is short on necessary minimum hours, they may do an additional quarter of practicum and will enroll in the course Practicum E if Holistic student, or Supplemental if MA MFT student.

The Practicum courses A-D total 9 quarter units of practicum courses, which is a requirement of the BBS for the graduate degree. Students should keep in mind that both the quarter units and the minimum face to face hours must be met per BBS guidance. Students should note that



school-based programs sometimes only run from August to June of the following year, so that students will be short the summer quarter of practicum. It will up to the student to have a second practicum situation for the summer only quarter.

For the MA MFT Program:

- 5249 Supervised External Field Practicum A
- 5250 Supervised External Field Practicum B
- 5251 Supervised External Field Practicum C
- 5252 Supervised External Field Practicum D
- 5266 Supplemental Supervised Field Experience

For the MA Holistic Program:

- 5301 Supervised Field Practicum A
- 5302 Supervised Field Practicum B
- 5303 Supervised Field Practicum C
- 5304 Supervised Field Practicum D
- 5305 Supervised Field Practicum E
- 5150 Supplemental Field Work

Note: Students' lives are unique and sometimes it becomes necessary for a student to complete their degree requirements out of the usual sequence. For example, some students focus on getting all their degree course requirements done, short of the clinical case seminars and doing practicum. These students then remain for an additional four quarters to focus only on practicum completion. Students have seven years to complete all requirements towards a graduate degree at JFKU. When in doubt or when students have questions, please contact either core faculty, your academic counselor, or Office of Clinical Training staff to explore options to completion of practicum requirements.

## Supplemental Practicum

Supplemental Practicum is defined differently by each MA in Counseling Psychology program.

MA MFT students, after having completed their necessary practicum sequence (Practicum A-D) and having their minimum face to face hours towards graduation, can continue on in practicum while completing coursework in the last two quarters of their program, in order to accrue additional BBS hours. Students can also add an additional quarter of supplemental practicum if they do not have the minimum face to face hours needed for their intended license post-



graduation. These additional quarter practicums are considered *supplemental* practicum quarters and the student adds a supplemental practicum course for one unit in each additional quarter in which they continue practicum experience. The course number is 5266, Supplemental Supervised Field Experience.

The MA Holistic Program students who need additional minimum required hours post 5304, Supervised Field Practicum D, can sign up for an additional quarter of practicum, 5305, Supervised Field Practicum E. If a Holistic student wants to continue in practicum to accrue more hours post Practicum E, they can sign up for 5150, Supplemental Fieldwork.

Further, the MA Holistic Program allows for early practicum start (before the Fall of year three) if certain requirements are met (please check with the Clinical Training Coordinator for the early practicum start checklist). These additional quarters of practicum before the start of the A-D (or A-E) sequence are considered supplemental practicum quarters and require the necessary supplemental practicum course, 5150, Supplemental Fieldwork.

In addition, Holistic students who – with permission from their core faculty and Office of Clinical Training, work at two practicum sites, must designate one practicum site as part of the A-D (or A-E) sequence, and the other as a supplemental practicum, and must enroll in both practicum courses.

Please note that MA Holistic students can only count hours accrued at A-D (or A-E) practicum sites towards their minimum hours for the degree in order to graduate. The supplemental practicum hours will not count towards graduation minimum requirements, but hours will count towards BBS total license hours.

*Early practicum start must be approved and signed off by Holistic program core faculty, and the student needs to be evaluated by Holistic faculty as ready to perform face to face client work. BBS guidance states that students must have at least 18 quarter units before they can start practicum. Holistic Program students please confer with your core faculty regarding early practicum start. The Office of Clinical Training must be given at least one quarter time notice before a student can be placed in practicum.*

## Practicum Sites

Each practicum site is expected to provide training and appropriate supervision, in addition to client work opportunities.



Practicum sites vary in regard to population served, the type of work performed, training, supervision, etc.

Practicum sites must be approved by the Office of Clinical Training and must provide hours towards California licensure as an MFT or LPCC.

Practicum hours may be accrued in non-profit and charitable corporations, schools, colleges, universities, governmental agencies, and licensed health facilities. Practicum hours may not be accrued in a private practice setting while a trainee per BBS guidance.

Trainees need to work in the same “work setting” as their employer. However, the supervisor does not need to work in the same location where the trainee’s work is being performed. The supervisor must be employed by the trainee’s employer on either a paid or voluntary basis. An off- site supervisor must sign a letter of agreement with the agency employing the trainee. To continue clinical work when the supervisor is on vacation or unavailable, trainees must receive supervision from a delegated supervisor with appropriate licensure and experience.

Per BBS regulations, students must take practicum coursework while engaging in their fieldwork.

The BBS allows students to count their practicum hours during gaps between practicum courses of as many as 89 days, such as when the school is closed for vacation or the student will soon graduate, or the weeks between quarters. The student can continue to work at their practicum site during the one or two weeks between quarters while at JFKU, and these hours will count towards BBS license hours.

Many clinical practicum programs run on a yearly cycle, starting in September. To begin a practicum in September, students should optimally begin researching their fieldwork options by the Winter prior to the desired September start, as some practicums have a late Spring deadline for receiving applications for the upcoming September start.

The total hours of practicum work must be between 14-24 hours per week total in order to meet the minimum hours for graduation in four quarters.

Students must be approved to initiate practicum *before* applying to sites. After approval, students research potential placements in their geographical area and apply to work at sites that appear to be a match. Students should consider this process much like looking for employment, having a current resume and possible references lined up before approaching agencies for job openings.



Many practicum sites have already been approved by JFKU Office of Clinical Training. Sites new to the school first need to be evaluated and then approved to ensure that they provide appropriate work, supervision, and training.

Current jobs may be used as practicum only if they meet all requirements for approved sites and have been approved by the Office of Clinical Training. The position must provide experience, supervision, and training appropriate for assisting in one's development as a psychotherapist trainee. All sites must provide experience which is within the scope of practice of a marriage and family therapist or licensed professional clinical counselor.

Students may not use their personal therapist, close friend, or relative as a clinical supervisor. JFKU's practicum requirements complies with the statutes and regulations governing the practice of psychotherapy in California, only. Students residing in other states, or outside of the United States, must contact their local licensing board to determine eligibility and additional requirements for licensure, as state and country regulations vary regarding educational and internship requirements for professional licensure.

Note: Each of the 50 states have licensure requirements for either MFT or LPCC or both, but requirements for licensure vary from state to state. It is extremely important whether the student stays in California or moves to another state for students to make sure they keep copies or originals of all documents, including course syllabi. In regards to practicum, other states may want to see copy of weekly signed time sheets, to verify number of hours done while in practicum.

*Students who engage in any form of counseling or healing practice outside of a JFKU approved practicum placement as an approved trainee may not represent that work as having any affiliation with John F. Kennedy University.*

## ARRANGING PRACTICUM

Clearance to begin practicum is dependent upon the following:

**Current Enrollment Status:** Only registered students may initiate fieldwork. Students on a leave of absence may not accrue hours toward fulfilling the fieldwork requirement.

**Completion of Required Coursework:** Students may begin accruing practicum hours after the successful completion of their required coursework, and assessment and approval of program faculty that the student meets minimum capacities to begin therapeutic work with clients.



Additional Requirements: s0tudents must also have personal liability insurance and a LiveScan process done before staring practicum.

Before applying to practicum sites, students must first submit a completed Practicum Application form along with their resume and flow chart. Concurrently, core faculty will have done a practicum readiness evaluation and submitted the evaluation to the Office of Clinical Training.



## PERSONAL PSYCHOTHERAPY HOURS

Students in our MA in Counseling Psychology Programs are preparing for careers in the helping professions providing counseling or psychotherapy services. Consistent with this career goal, most of our graduates go on to complete the MFT license or the LPCC license, which permits them to work as private practitioners in the State of California. In order to ensure the highest quality of training for work in this field, the College of Psychology, MA in Counseling Psychology Programs, expects that its students will participate in their own personal therapy while in the program. This adjunctive, non-credit training requirement provides the student with the experience of being a client and with the opportunity to work on any personal issues that may arise during his or her course of studies.

The total hours needed to meet the personal psychotherapy requirement is 48 hours.

It is highly recommended that the student begins personal therapeutic work at the same time as beginning practicum, or before, in order to complete required hours. Every student will be challenged by their clients, and counter transference issues will inevitably surface. The student will have the added resource of addressing personal issues within the context of their own private work.

JFKU's requirement allows students to see Licensed or Associate-level therapists (but not student trainees) to meet this psychotherapy requirement; however, in order to claim psychotherapy hours towards licensure using Option 2, the BBS requires psychotherapy with a licensed therapist.

## DOCUMENTATION OF PRACTICUM

### Supervision Agreement

Per BBS:

“All hours of experience gained as a trainee shall be coordinated between the school and the site where the hours are being accrued. The school shall approve each site and shall have a written agreement with each site that details each party's responsibilities, including the methods by which supervision shall be provided. The agreement shall provide for regular progress reports and evaluations of the student's performance at the site.”



All students will complete a supervision agreement that is signed by the student, the site clinical director, and the Office of Clinical Training. The supervision agreement should be completed before the student can begin to see clients at the agency.

## Quarterly Evaluations

In order for the student to receive practicum course credit, a quarterly evaluation will be reviewed by the Office of Clinical Training Staff. The student will evaluate the supervisor and the supervisor will evaluate the student, and the student will self-evaluate. In addition, the student will evaluate the site in the 1<sup>st</sup> and Last quarter. If the student has different clinical supervisors for individual and group supervision, then there will be two separate evaluations of the student, one from each clinical supervisor.

Credit for practicum will be given contingent on the recommendation of the clinical supervisor(s) which is found within the quarterly evaluation form.

Students are encouraged to engage in these evaluations as these evaluations are for the benefit of the student and their progress as a new counselor and therapist.

Quarterly evaluations are due on the last day of each quarter. Completed and signed evaluations can be scanned and emailed to the Office of Clinical Training staff, mailed, or dropped off in person.

*It is the responsibility of the student to inform Office of Clinical Training staff if the evaluations will be delayed or if there are issues with fulfilling the practicum site requirements. If the student evaluation by supervisor is not forthcoming, it will result in either an Incomplete grade or No Credit given for that particular quarter.*

Students are encouraged to reach out to the Office of Clinical Training staff at any time should they feel there are issues with the practicum site.

## BBS Eligible Hours Documentation

For every license eligible hour, there are three BBS forms that must accompany that hour.



One: *The Responsibility Statement for Supervisors* is a form that is filled out by the clinical supervisor on or before the first day of BBS eligible hours. The form can be downloaded from the [bbs.ca.gov](http://bbs.ca.gov) website.

Two: *Marriage and Family Therapist Trainee / Associate, Weekly Summary of Experience Hours, Option 1 – Streamlined Method* records actual worked hours and is signed by the same clinical supervisor that filled out the Responsibility Statement prior to hours accrual. This form is sometimes referred to as a weekly time sheet. The form can be downloaded from the [bbs.ca.gov](http://bbs.ca.gov) website.

Three: *Weekly Summary of Experience Hours Form, Option 1* is a summary form that is based on the weekly time sheets and correlates with the weekly time sheets. The same clinical supervisor that filled out the responsibility statement, and signed the weekly time sheet, should sign this form. The form can be downloaded from the [bbs.ca.gov](http://bbs.ca.gov) website.

(As noted, up to 1300 hours can be accrued prior to the graduate degree being completed).

When the associate applies for licensure, the applicant must submit the Responsibility Statement along with the Experience Verification Form to the BBS, in the original. The applicant keeps the Weekly Summary of Experience Hours Form in case they are audited by the BBS. In some instances, licensing boards in other states have requested to see copies of the weekly time sheets. Students are encouraged to store in a safe place their weekly time sheets for future documentation.

There is an online database service that students can pay for that assists with documentation of hours, including printing of BBS forms. This service is called Track Your Hours and is recommended to all students since hours both pre and post graduate degree can be documented.

Note: LPCC license hours must all be done post-graduation. While students must complete 280 face to face hours for the graduate degree, the BBS will not accept these hours towards licensure. Students applying to the BBS for the LPCC license should still document hours using the above stated forms as documentation of these hours must still be done for graduate degree documentation purposes.



## Practicum Graduation Documentation BBS Hours and Personal Psychotherapy

Students must petition to graduate with the Registrar's Office for the quarter in which they plan to complete all graduate degree requirements. Students should sign up for the Post Master's Prep Class or Field Placement Checkout depending on program for the quarter in which they finish.

The Clinical Training Coordinator is responsible for verifying that students have met the minimum face to face hours requirements as determined by the BBS for the Master's degree in Counseling Psychology. These hours are 225 face to face hours for the MFT and 280 face to face hours for the LPCC. The Clinical Training Coordinator is also responsible for verifying Personal Psychotherapy Hours for degree completion.

Students must submit to the Clinical Training Coordinator copies of their signed *Weekly Summary of Experience Hours Form* as soon as possible towards the end of the quarter in which they are graduating. These forms will be used to verify minimum hours requirements as stated above.

Once these hours are verified, the Clinical Training Coordinator will let the Registrar's Office know that the student has met graduation requirements.

Personal Psychotherapy hours are reviewed and the student is given credit for this under the Personal Psychotherapy course for each program in the quarter when the student supplies documentation of completed hours to the Clinical Training Coordinator.

Please feel free to reach out to the Clinical Training Coordinators or staff of the Office of Clinical Training if you have any questions, concerns, or issues with practicum practice.





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