

MACO

**PRACTICUM/
INTERNSHIP
MANUAL**

2026-2027



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SECTION I: MISSION STATEMENT, OBJECTIVES AND LICENSURE

MASTER OF ARTS IN COUNSELING MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to equip effective, competent, ethical, and reflective counselors who integrate counseling theory with Christian faith so that their knowledge and skills will be actualized in professional practice with diverse and marginalized communities.

OBJECTIVES

This manual is designed to provide information that will guide a student to fulfill the Practicum (CO863), Internship I (CO865A), and Internship II (CO 865B) requirements and accompanying Professional Seminars: Practicum (CO871), and Internship (CO873), within the MACO program.

The counseling practicum and internship are designed to place students in settings where they can become familiar with the roles, missions, operations, and activities associated with being a professional counselor in the mental health field. Students will have the opportunity to bridge the gap between the academic theories presented in the classroom and the actual practice of counseling in the field. It is also an opportunity for students to gain insight regarding individual strengths and challenges and to explore future professional goals and employment.

This experience is the culmination of your theoretical and practical skills training, allowing the faculty to assess your ability. We hope that, in doing so, students will grow both personally and professionally.

It is your responsibility to read this Manual in its entirety. If you have questions concerning practicum or internship requirements, please contact the Clinical Practicum/Internship Coordinator.

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LICENSURE INFORMATION

The MACO program provides an opportunity to earn a degree and equips students to pursue licensure as a mental health counselor; however, the degree program does not guarantee licensure or certification, as most states require at least two years of supervised practice after earning the degree to obtain independent licensure. Although the program degree requirements, coursework, practicum, and internships are based on typical state licensure requirements, national and state statutes and licensure requirements change periodically. We remain current on licensure requirements in Massachusetts. We also provide most of the courses other states require, but the program may not meet licensure requirements in all states.

In accordance with federal law, the MACO program provides information regarding licensure in any state where a student resides at the outset of their study. Please review the information for the state(s) where you intend to pursue licensure. Students must sign a Licensure Disclosure Statement attesting that they have been provided with professional licensure information for the state where they are pursuing licensure as a mental health counselor.

The Clinical Practicum/Internship Coordinator provides licensure advice, including information on licensure requirements, laws, and the application process. Students may also speak with the Academic Advisor at any time about licensure questions. Students may access the State Licensure document on the GCTS website and on the MACO HUB and P/I HUB on Canvas.

LICENSURE BY STATE

<https://www.gordonconwell.edu/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/MACO-Hamilton-Educational-Requirements-for-Licensure-by-State-Updated-August-2026.pdf>

MASSACHUSETTS LICENSING BOARD INFORMATION

<https://www.mass.gov/lists/statutes-and-regulations-allied-mental-health>

NATIONAL BOARD FOR CERTIFIED COUNSELORS, INC. (NBCC)

<https://www.nbcc.org/>

SECTION II: OVERVIEW AND PREREQUISITES

Practicum/Internship Overview

The MACO degree program requires 700 clock hours of clinical counseling experience under a qualified licensed clinical supervisor.

The program includes six Clinical Counseling courses. CO863 Practicum, CO865A Internship I, and CO865B Internship II are clinical experience courses. While enrolling in clinical counseling experience courses, students must simultaneously enroll in a Professional Seminar (Pro-Sem). CO871 Practicum Pro-Sem or CO873 Internship Pro-Sem are taught by counseling faculty.

Prerequisites for Practicum (CO 863)

The student is required to complete the following coursework with a B- or above prior to registering for a Practicum:

- CO500: Introduction to Counseling
 - CO507: Clinical Counseling Skills
 - CO710: Psychopathology
 - CO790: Professional Standards and Ethics
 - CO712: Multicultural Diversity in Counseling
- AND
- Attend the Practicum Internship orientation. *Internship Resume Workshop optional.*
 - Fill out the MACO Application for Practicum.

Professional Seminars

Professional seminars (Pro-Sems) are a small-group experience with a counseling faculty member to clarify issues and develop an advanced understanding of the role of the Mental Health Counselor. These classes provide the group supervision hours required for clinical experience and are counted towards the total hours required for clinical experience. All professional seminars are offered via Zoom as a 1.5-2-hour class. There can be no more than 6 students per section. Syllabus requirements vary depending on whether a student is in a Practicum, Internship I, or Internship II.

Professional seminars are offered in Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters. Please note: Summer professional seminars run for 8 weeks for 2 hours per week, with 16 total hours of group supervision.

Several sections are offered every semester so that students can register for a time and day that works best for them.

Practicum students must register for CO871 Professional Seminar Practicum sections only. Internship students must register for CO873 Professional Seminar Internship sections only.

Each clinical practicum and internship course is three credit hours. Professional seminars are 3 credits for Practicum and 1.5 credits for Internship courses for a total of 15 credit hours.

Course Number	Practicum and Internship Classification	Clock Hours Required	Direct Hours Required	Credit Hours Awarded
CO863	Clinical Counseling Practicum	100	40	3
CO865A	Clinical Counseling Internship I	300	120	3
CO865B	Clinical Counseling Internship II	300	120	3
		700 total	280 total	9 credit hours total
CO871	Professional Seminar for Practicum	16-16.5 hours per semester	1.5 hours weekly	3
CO873	Professional Seminar for Internship I	16-16.5 hours per semester	1.5 hours weekly	1.5
CO873	Professional Seminar for Internship II	16-16.5 hours per semester	1.5 hours weekly	1.5
		Total: 49 hours Professional Seminar Hours		Total: 6 credit hours

Registering for Practicum with Pro-sems:

- Each student needs to register for one semester of Practicum. The practicum must be completed prior to starting an internship.
- During each semester that you are registered for Practicum, you also need to register for a Professional Seminar (“Pro-sem”), which you will be doing in conjunction with your Practicum.
- Students should register for them as follows:
Clinical Practicum: CO 863 (3 cr.) **AND** Practicum Pro-Sem: CO 871 (3 cr.)

Students select the specific Pro-Sem section they are registering for (HA1, HA2, HB1, or HB2). For example, CO871 HA1 would mean you are in the HA1 section.

Registering for Internship with Pro-sems:

- Each student needs to complete two semesters of Internship.
- During each semester that you are registered for Internship, you also need to register for a Pro-Sem, which you will be doing in conjunction with your Internship.
- Each semester of Internship is 3 credits and each semester of Pro-Sem is 1.5 credits (i.e., your entire Internship experience with Pro-Sems will count as 9 credits).
- Students should register for Internships and Pro-sems as follows:
Clinical Internship 1: CO 865A (3 cr.) **AND** CO873 Internship Pro-Sem (1.5 cr.)
Clinical Internship 2: CO 865B (3 cr.) **AND** CO873 Internship Pro-Sem (1.5 cr.)
Students select the specific Pro-Sem section they are registering for (HA1, HA2, HB1, or HB2). For example, CO873 HA1 would mean you are in the HA1 section.

Technology and Live Participation Requirements

All Professional Seminar courses meet entirely on Zoom. These class meetings require live virtual attendance, as participation and substantial interaction are required.

Students who enroll in the MACO program must have a laptop or desktop computer with audio and video capability that has reliable, high-speed internet access and is able to download files and stream multimedia presentations. Additionally, students must be able to access the internet from a secure and private location. Except for rare situations, it is not acceptable to attend classes virtually from a public space. The seminary utilizes Canvas (a digital Learning Management System) to communicate with students, provide course information and lessons, and upload and grade assignments. Minimal hardware and software requirements for the program include:

- Windows or Mac desktop or laptop (preferably less than 5 years old).
- Webcam, microphone, and speakers (if not already built into your computer)

- Access to reliable, high-speed internet
- Web browser: Google Chrome or Firefox to access Canvas, our online classroom learning management system. Browsers should be updated to the most current version.
- Software: The Seminary provides students with the Microsoft suite at no charge (OneDrive, Teams, PowerPoint, Outlook, Word, and Excel). Contact tech@gordonconwell.edu to access this free benefit. At a minimum, students must have Word, Apple Pages, or another word processor that can save documents as .docx or .pdf. Students must also have Microsoft PowerPoint, Apple Keynote, or other presentation software that can save in .pptx or .pdf. Those using Apple Pages must export documents to .docx. Those using Apple Keynote must export documents to .pptx or .pdf. Adobe Reader is required for reading PDF files.
- Online Collaborative Tools required: Microsoft OneDrive; free Zoom videoconferencing account (sign-up instructions are in Canvas); Panopto video (provided within Canvas). Tutorials are provided on Canvas for these online resources.
- During clinical training practicum and internship courses, students utilize Time2Track, an online platform for logging and reporting clinical training hours, provided by GCTS.

Professional Ethics:

Students are expected to have read and abide by the ACA code of ethics. American Counseling Association (ACA)-The ACA Code of Ethics and ACA Standards of Practice are found at: www.counseling.org/resources/ethics.

American Association of Christian Counselors-The code of ethics is found at: https://aacc.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/AACC_Code-of-Ethics-2023_FINAL.pdf

Confidentiality and HIPAA Security Requirements

This is the primary focus of our professional ethics codes, federal and state laws, and HIPAA, including Protected Health Information (PHI). As a counselor, you have a professional ethical and legal duty to protect client welfare and confidentiality and to safeguard personal client information. These principles include how counselors interact with clients and discuss their information, including Protected Health Information (PHI). Students must understand the legal limits of confidentiality and follow laws and ethical codes, especially when addressing confidentiality issues.

Given the frequent daily use of technological devices, along with the rapid advancement of technology and the security attacks and breaches associated with it, security has become an important consideration in our field. Students must strengthen security when using technological devices so client information and confidentiality are not compromised.

Professional Seminar classes require a written and oral case presentation. All written case presentations (as well as oral presentations) must be de-identified to protect the confidentiality of clients. This includes utilization of pseudonyms (not initials) and changing identifying demographic information, such as age, race, and location. Additionally, this course requires a video/audio recording of a session. Formal consent to record from the client is required.

Students must follow the guidelines of HIPAA and utilize securely encrypted devices and programs for recording and transmission of the information. Record all audio/video to a hard drive and NOT to the cloud. Transport all devices containing client protected health information in a locked bag. Delete or shred all confidential information after a case presentation. In case of a HIPAA breach, immediately notify the site supervisor and the professional seminar faculty supervisor.

Policy for Student Retention, Remediation and Dismissal from Program

The MACO Program is charged with the task of preparing students to become professional counselors in a variety of settings and to assume leadership in the mental health field and in the church. To fulfill these responsibilities, the MACO Program has the following Policies and Procedures for student retention, remediation, and dismissal from the Program. Faculty members and the program administrator review MACO students at least annually and before graduation based on (1) academic integrity and performance, (2) ethical practice and clinical skill development needed for delivery of competent clinical services, and (3) professional dispositions, which are defined as students' commitments, characteristics, values, beliefs, and interpersonal behaviors that influence their professional growth and interactions with clients and others.

A MACO student's progress in the program may be interrupted for failure to comply with the Community Life Statement or for a violation of Academic Integrity. In addition, a MACO student's progress may be interrupted if a student's GPA falls below 3.0, if a student fails to abide by the ACA or AACC Code of Ethics or fails to make progress in the development of clinical skills needed to provide competent professional services to a range of diverse clients, if a student is not able to demonstrate mastery of key skills as measured by Key Performance Indicators, or if a student's professional dispositions interfere with education or training-related requirements. Failure to receive a grade of B- in a core required counseling class or professional field experience will require a re-take of the class or field experience.

Program Expectations

In reviewing students, the counseling program faculty members and program administrator will consider a wide range of knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviors requisite to the academic and professional development of students, including (but not limited to) the following:

1. Academic integrity and performance

- a. Academic discipline: Does the student demonstrate engagement in his/her learning?
 - b. Professional Knowledge: Does the student demonstrate the knowledge needed to provide competent professional services to a range of diverse clients?
 - c. Academic excellence: Does the student demonstrate academic excellence, such as the integration of the best available resources, fair-mindedness toward differing views and evidence, and capacity for reflection on and critical evaluation of current trends within the discipline of counseling?
 - d. Academic Integrity: Does the student demonstrate academic integrity, such as avoiding plagiarism and avoiding cheating?
 - e. GPA: Does the student maintain a 3.0 GPA?
2. Ethical practice and Clinical skill development
- a. Professional Orientation: Is the student developing the roles, functions and identity of a competent member of the counseling profession?
 - b. Ethical Practice: Is the student practicing ethical decision-making skills in matters related to client welfare and interagency collaboration and consultation consistent with either the ACA or AACC Code of Ethics?
 - c. Social and Cultural Identities and Experiences: Is the student providing competent, culturally relevant counseling and advocating to eliminate social injustices?
 - d. Lifespan Development: Is the student implementing developmentally relevant and strengths-based approaches in counseling?
 - e. Career: Is the student equipping clients for career decision-making and life planning across the lifespan?
 - f. Counseling Practice and Relationships: Is the student providing evidence-based counseling, informed by theories and best-practice models?
 - g. Group Counseling and Group Work: Is the student providing evidence-based group counseling and group process, informed by theories and best-practice models?
 - h. Assessment and Diagnostic Processes: Is the student skilled at conducting assessment of clients' cognitive, affective, behavioral and social functioning by means of reliable and valid measures and approaches?
 - i. Research and Program Evaluation: Is the student reflecting critically on research to evaluate counseling practices and programs?
 - j. Integration: Is the student integrating counseling theory and practice with the historical and theological dimensions of the Christian faith as consistent with the Gordon-Conwell Statement of Faith?
3. Professional Dispositions
- a. Spiritual formation and growth: Does the student demonstrate continued spiritual formation and growth?
 - b. GCTS Community Life Statement: Does the student comply with the GCTS Community Life Statement?
 - c. Interpersonal behaviors: Do the student's interpersonal behaviors (including but not limited to relationships with faculty, staff, peers, site supervisors, and clients)

- contribute to their professional growth and interactions with clients and others?
- d. Professional character: Does the student's professional character (including but not limited to self-awareness, self-regulation, maturity of judgment, and conceptual and behavioral flexibility) contribute to their professional growth and interactions with clients and others?
- e. Academic attitudes: Do the student's academic attitudes (including but not limited to teachability, open and non-defensive stance with professor(s), staff, and others) contribute to their professional growth and interactions with clients and others?

Purpose of reviews

The annual review serves two main purposes:

1. To provide students with information related to their progress that will enable them to build on strengths and remediate weaknesses in academic and professional development
2. To provide MACO faculty with information about the progress of students that will inform decision-making in the best interest of students, the counseling profession, and the public.

Review Procedures

Informed Consent

GCTS counseling program faculty members and program administrator bear the ethical responsibility to make students aware of these expectations. Please be aware that it is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the contents of this handbook.

Schedule of Reviews

Student review is an ongoing and continuous process. Any GCTS faculty member may raise questions about a particular student's academic or clinical performance or professional dispositions at any time, including during scheduled program staff meetings. Discussions of student performance progress will be held in "closed session" with only MACO faculty and staff in attendance, and input from a faculty member and program administrator familiar with the student's academic, clinical skills, or professional dispositions will be obtained. However, the program formally reviews each student annually and before the student graduates.

- The first-year review will include feedback from all faculty members and the program administrator, with particular attention to feedback from faculty who have taught the student Introduction to Counseling and Clinical Counseling Skills.
- The second- and third-year reviews will include feedback from all faculty members and the program administrator, with particular attention to feedback from faculty who have taught the student Professional Seminar(s), Professional Standards and Ethics, and from the student's site supervisor. Attention will also be paid to the student's case presentation and participation in Professional Seminar and the site supervisor's evaluation.
- The last summative evaluation review may include feedback from all faculty members

who have taught the student in other courses as well as professors outside of the MACO program and from the program administrator.

The annual or summative review results in the following possible outcomes. The student will be notified of the outcomes in writing and in a timely manner.

Outcome:

- *Satisfactory Progress:* The faculty and program administrator deem that the student is making satisfactory progress on program expectations, including but not limited to academics, ethical practice, clinical skill development, and professional dispositions.
- *Performance Feedback:* The faculty and program administrator deem that the student is struggling in some areas and warrants a discussion with faculty to bring it to the attention of the student and follow up as needed. This includes, but is not limited to, academics, ethical skills development, and disposition.
- *Remediation:* The faculty and program administrator deem that the student is making unsatisfactory progress on program expectations including but not limited to academics, ethical practice, clinical skill development and professional dispositions. At least one faculty member will meet with the student to inform the student of the problem area(s), to develop a plan for remediation, and to set up ongoing monitoring of the plan. The designated faculty member will monitor the student's completion of the plan.
- *Probation:* The faculty and program administrator deem that the student's performance is deemed illegal, unethical, substandard, and/or professionally unbecoming but remediable. At least two faculty members will meet with the student to review the identified problem area(s), to develop a plan for remediation, to review criteria for determining the outcome of the remediation plan, and to set the length of probation. The plan will be in writing and will be signed by both the student and the faculty members. Successful completion of the plan within the specified time will be required for continuation in the program. A plan may or may not require the student to suspend coursework or clinical work for some or all of the probation period. The designated faculty members will monitor the student's completion of the plan.
- *Voluntary Resignation:* The faculty and program administrator deem that the student's performance is illegal, unethical, substandard, and/or professionally unbecoming, and irremediable at this time. At least two faculty members will meet with the student to notify the student in writing of the recommendation that the student resign from the program. If a student chooses to resign, the recommendation to resign will not be placed in the student's permanent file.
- *Dismissal from the Program:* The faculty and program administrator deem that the student's performance is egregiously illegal, unethical, substandard, and/or professionally unbecoming and irremediable at this time. At least two faculty members will meet with the student to notify the student in writing about the dismissal recommendation which will be made to the Academic Dean.

Notifications

Every student will be informed by email regarding the outcome. If the outcome is *Satisfactory Progress*, the student will be notified:

MACO faculty and the program administrator met on _to review your progress in the MACO program.

The outcome of the review is “Satisfactory progress,” which means that the faculty and program administrator deem that you are making satisfactory progress on program expectations, including but not limited to academics, ethical practice, clinical skill development, and professional dispositions. If you have any questions, please contact your faculty advisor.

If the outcome is any outcome besides *Satisfactory progress*, the student will be notified:

MACO faculty and the program administrator met on _to review your progress in the MACO program.

The MACO faculty would like to meet with you to inform you of a recommendation from the faculty and the program administrator for your continued growth and development. Please contact the director to set up an appointment for additional information.

SECTION III: CACREP STANDARDS AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

Definition of Terms

Practicum

The first clinical experience placement is an introductory experience to professional counseling, designed to provide a safe environment to help a student explore and develop professional skills and a professional orientation. The student will begin to learn about integrating theory and practice, critical thinking skills, and local/ national issues confronting the counseling profession.

Internship

The continuation of experience to professional counseling, designed to deepen students' professional experience and facilitate their development as professionals in the field. The student continues to develop the skills learned at the practicum level and adds to these leadership skills, job search strategies, familiarity with legal and ethical issues, and the establishment of a professional counselor identity among other professionals in the field.

Clinical Site

A professional setting is one in which actual counseling occurs; i.e., counseling services are offered to an identified clientele on a regular basis.

Professional settings shall include, but not be limited to, such public and private settings as: mental health centers, hospitals, elementary and secondary schools, university and community college counseling centers, and supervised independent practices. See Appendix for a definition of site types.

Such experience does NOT include vocational guidance services, academic school guidance counseling, industrial or organizational consulting services, teaching or conducting research.

Clinical Site Supervisor

The clinician provides one hour of weekly individual supervision at the clinical site.

Contract Supervisor

The person provides clinical supervision at a location other than the clinical site. This supervisor must have all the credentials required to be an approved supervisor and have written documentation that the site approves of this supervisor.

Supervision Training

Training in supervising interns. All clinical supervisors must complete supervisor training, including online supervision, to be considered approved supervisors. If a supervisor does not have that training, the school provides a free one-hour online training, which also provides supervisors with a free CEU.

Individual Supervision

Consists of one hour of weekly face-to-face contact between the student (supervisee) and the clinical supervisor. Areas discussed and critiqued during supervision include counseling experience, raw data such as live observation, co-counseling, and clinical case review.

Group/Professional Seminar Supervision

Consists of 1.5-2 hours of weekly group supervision. Provided by professional seminar faculty. See syllabus, available on P/I HUB on Canvas, for requirements of Professional Seminars. Additional group supervision hours may be provided through the clinical site.

Direct, Individual/Group Supervision, and Indirect Hours

The counseling experience hours consist of three main categories: direct hours (client contact), Supervision (individual and group supervision), and indirect hours.

Direct Hours

Direct Client Contact Service is defined as face-to-face interaction (either in person or in real time) with individuals, couples, families, and groups, with the intent of fostering social, cognitive, behavioral, systemic, and/or affective change and conforms to the Mental Health Counseling scope of practice. A direct client contact hour is considered at least 45 minutes, which may be composed of segments of at least 15 consecutive minutes.

Includes:

- Face-to-face counseling or consultation (in person or virtually) with individuals, couples, and families
- Co-counseling with a clinical supervisor or a licensed clinician (*student must be an active participant in the session for this to count*)
- Co-facilitating/facilitating group therapy*
- Client Assessment and/or Intake
- Psycho-educational activities with client or group

*Note: All students are required to run a group at least once during their practicum/internship. If the clinical site cannot provide a group, a student can apply to run a group off-site with faculty supervision. See group application in Appendix.

Supervision

All students must receive one hour of individual supervision weekly throughout the duration of the practicum/internship (semester) from an approved clinical site supervisor. Please note that group supervision/case staffing at the site is not a substitute for individual supervision.

Supervision must be face-to-face (either in person or virtually) in real time.

Group Supervision is provided by attending Professional Seminars. Additional group supervision can be provided at the site.

Indirect Hours (Administration/ Preparation/Training)

Includes:

- Orientation and training required by the site or clinical supervisor
- Mandated site and/or supervisor obligations or requirements
- Clinical documentation
- Diagnosis and treatment planning
- Preparation for session or group work
- Site group/ staffing supervision and required staff meetings
- Counseling seminars/workshops, research, psychoeducation presentation, etc.

Time Span for Completing Practicum/Internship

Students must complete a minimum of a full year of Practicum/Internship since they will register for Practicum for one semester, Internship I for one semester, and Internship II for one semester. Students must start their Practicum a minimum of a year before graduation.

When arranging the clinical schedule, the student should keep in mind that some sites do not guarantee consistent hours week to week. Clinical hours can and often do vary for many reasons, such as no-shows, cancellations, reschedules, holidays, illness, etc. Therefore, students must arrange their schedules to accommodate this.

The student contracts to train at a site for at least one semester. The student, the clinical supervisor, and the site will work out a consistent schedule (days and hours) in which the student agrees to be at the site for clinical training. The student should be prepared to begin no later than the first day (week) of the semester and continue until the very last day of the semester. This is a contract, and the expectation is for the student to continue at the site until their last scheduled day of the semester.

Students in Practicum (CO 863) should be prepared to be at the clinical site at least 10 hours per week to ensure attainment of hours required. Students in Internship I (CO 865A) and Internship II (CO 865B) should be prepared to be at the clinical site 20 or more hours a week to ensure attainment of hours required.

Student Membership in Professional Counseling Association and Liability Insurance Requirements

Practicum/Internship students are required to be members of a counseling association AND have student liability insurance. Counseling Association membership and liability insurance must be current for the duration of clinical experience in Practicum and Internship.

(ACA) American Counseling Association

<https://www.counseling.org/>

Membership \$105 annually – offers complimentary liability insurance.

(AMHCA) American Mental Health Counselors Association

www.amhca.org

Membership \$84 annually –offers complimentary liability insurance.

(MaMHCA) Massachusetts Mental Health Counselors Association

<https://www.mamhca.org>

Membership \$60 annually. They will direct you to CPH Insurance.

(AACC) American Association of Christian Counselors

<https://aacc.net/>

Membership \$74 annually with liability insurance

Membership \$54 annually without liability insurance

(CSI) Chi Sigma Iota

<https://www.csi-net.org/page/membership>

Membership \$50 annually with acceptance to the society.

Application and Induction ceremony are offered through MACO in the Spring semester.

CPH Insurance

<https://cphins.com/individual-mental-health/>

Student insurance is available for \$24 annually.

Liability Insurance

All students in the counseling program will be required to obtain appropriate liability insurance prior to beginning the practicum and continue (renew annually) until the Clinical Practicum and Internship requirements are completed. An annual liability insurance policy of \$1,000,000/\$3,000,000 (minimum of \$1,000,000 incidental coverage and \$3,000,000 aggregate) must be purchased. Students will submit documentation evidence of liability insurance and upload it to the Time2Track file.

SECTION IV: CLINICAL SITE AND STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

Selecting a Site:

The MACO program places the responsibility of finding and securing a training site and clinical supervisor on the student, although the Clinical Practicum/Internship Coordinator works to facilitate this placement as much as possible. The Counseling Department has a list of approved clinical placement sites/clinical supervisors (located on Canvas P/I HUB) that students can contact. A required Practicum/Internship Orientation provides further guidance. You must also fill out a practicum application form (link on P/I HUB) as well as schedule individual advising with the Clinical Practicum/Internship Coordinator.

Please keep in mind that more students, including students from other programs, are seeking clinical placements at some of these sites. A useful option is for the student to seek out potential sites and clinical supervisors that reflect their interest. If a site of interest is not on the department list, a student must contact the Clinical Practicum/Internship Coordinator and fill out a New Site form to seek approval of the new site. This experience is similar to finding professional employment in the mental health field after graduation. Students typically remain at the same site for all clinical placements.

Factors to consider when choosing a training site and clinical supervisor:

- The match of interest between the site and the student
- The reputation of the training opportunities
- The breadth of clinical populations available
- Diversity in the clinical training experience
- Quality of supervision
- Time expectations or scheduling issues
- Treatment approaches offered to clientele
- Location of site

Clinical Site Requirements:

The site must provide integrated programs for clinical mental health and have clearly established provisions for supervision by qualified licensed supervisors (LICSW, LMFT, LMHC, as well as Psychologist and /or Psychiatrist) with a minimum of three years post-licensure experience. Site supervisors provide weekly one-hour supervision during the practicum and internship.

The site will offer trainees opportunities for face-to-face direct service hours, whether in one-on-one counseling, telehealth, and/or group. For a practicum, a minimum of 40 direct hours and for an internship, a minimum of 240 direct hours.

The site will provide at least 100 hours of training experience for the practicum (approximately 10 hours per week over one semester) and 600 hours for the internship (approximately 20 hours per week over two semesters). The exact number of hours per week is adjustable to the requirements of the site.

The site/supervisor will track the progress of the student through forms found on Time2Track, including Contract, Supervisor Verification Form, Student Evaluations, and Time Logs.

The site provides opportunities for students to become familiar with a variety of professional activities and resources, including technology.

The site will provide the student with an orientation covering policies and procedures, including emergency protocols and contacts. Practicum/Internship students may **ONLY** see clients when there is a clinical supervisor or emergency contact available. The site will retain full responsibility for patient and client care and welfare.

Emergency Contact and Procedures

Because of the nature of helping professions, you may work with individuals who could pose a risk to themselves or others. Approved sites must provide access to emergency contacts and a clear understanding of the facility's specific safety protocols.

Emergency action steps for an intern in a mental health facility focus on ensuring the safety of patients and staff while staying within their scope of training. Interns must prioritize immediate containment of danger (assess for safety – yours included), *immediately notify their supervisor*, and follow established facility-specific protocols for emergencies, such as psychiatric crises, medical emergencies, or security threats. Do not do anything outside your scope of training unless you are acting under direct supervision.

Students should familiarize themselves with emergency procedures and always have emergency contact information readily available.

New Site/Clinical Supervisor Approval Process

To approve a new potential site/clinical supervisor who is not on the database list, the student must submit a completed Potential Site/Supervisor Approval Form. See Link on P/I HUB. For all new sites, the Clinical Practicum/Internship Coordinator will contact the potential supervisor and provide GCTS Site/Supervisor Requirements. Supervisors must meet the requirements of approved supervisors, and the site must provide clinical mental health counseling. These extra steps mean that timely submission of the form is necessary.

Considerations when Contacting Clinical Sites and/or Supervisors.

Understand the organizational system: Collect information about the site and be aware of their mission, the client population served by the facility, training requirements, how it operates, etc. This will demonstrate your interest in their organization and enable you to speak to them concerning specific details of the practicum/ internship.

Understand your training goals: What clinical placements have you previously completed, what theories/models have you learned, what skills and techniques have you acquired, and what are your goals in these areas for the clinical placement you are pursuing?

Understand yourself: Consider your strengths, challenges, interests, philosophy, and vocational goals and determine whether they match the needs, philosophy, and practices of the organization that you are considering. Seek guidance if you need assistance.

Contracting with Clinical Site:

See listing of sites and contact information provided in the P/I HUB. Available sites and contact information are made available at the beginning of January for Summer/Fall. Most sites review resumes and applications between Jan-March and make decisions by the end of March for Summer/Fall start. For Spring practicums, a student must contact sites no later than October for a January/February start. Finding a site typically requires an application 3-6 months prior to the start date.

SECTION V: CLINICAL SUPERVISOR AND SUPERVISION

Supervisor Qualification

A practitioner with *three years* of full-time or the equivalent part-time *post-licensure* clinical Mental Health Counseling experience who is also a:

- a) Massachusetts Licensed Mental Health Counselor;
- b) Massachusetts licensed independent clinical social worker;
- c) Massachusetts licensed marriage and family therapist;
- d) Massachusetts licensed psychologist with Health Services Provider Certification;
- e) Massachusetts licensed physician with a sub-specialization in psychiatry.
- f) Massachusetts licensed nurse practitioner with a sub-specialization in psychiatry; **OR**
- g) where practice and supervision occur outside of the Commonwealth, an individual who is an independently licensed mental health practitioner with a license or registration equivalent to one listed under 262 CMR 2.02: Approved Supervisor(a) through (f).

Per CACREP requirements, supervisors are also required to have training in supervising students

Responsibilities of the Clinical Site Supervisor

The clinical site supervisor agrees to provide the student with orientation to the work site, including applicable policies and procedures, and to provide clarification of the student's relevant roles, functions, and relationships. The clinical supervisor agrees to provide the student with one hour of weekly supervision and provide feedback on the student's performance.

The clinical site supervisor agrees to use Time2Track (provided by the school) to approve students' clinical hours and submit paperwork.

The clinical site supervisor will review and discuss the midterm student self-evaluation and complete a final supervisor evaluation during the last supervision session.

The clinical site supervisor and the student's assigned Professional Seminar faculty supervisor will communicate during the semester regarding the student's performance, skills, preparation, and level of progress, ethical stance, behavior, or attitude.

The Professional Seminar faculty and Clinical Practicum/Internship Coordinator agree to contact the student's site clinical supervisor whenever concerns arise.

The Clinical Practicum/Internship Coordinator visits sites annually in person or virtually.

The Clinical Supervisor - Student Intern Relationship*

1. Understand that mutual needs exist.

What a clinical supervisor needs from student interns: Honesty and integrity, ethical conduct, openness to suggestion, respect for the supervisor's conscientious work, reflection, and willingness to listen even if there is disagreement

What (student) interns need from clinical supervisors: Support, patience, knowledge of the field, guidance, accessibility, modeling, direct teaching of information, involvement, some autonomy, trust, openness, and a willingness to listen.

2. Understand the importance of clarifying expectations.

Clarifying expectations from the outset for both student interns and clinical supervisors is vital to prevent confusion and support the most beneficial learning experience. Among the expectations delineated as clearly as possible are the following:

- The frequency and timing of supervision sessions.
- The content of supervisory sessions (how case reviews will be conducted, utilization of raw data, other modalities of supervision such as didactic instruction in topic areas, informal personal exchanges, etc.).
- The theoretical models/techniques that the intern is expected to learn and how specifically this learning will be demonstrated and assessed.
- The extent to which personal issues of the (student) intern or clinical supervisor are addressed, as part of supervision.

*Adapted from: The Internship, Practicum, and Field Placement Handbook by Brian N. Baird.

SECTION VI: GETTING STARTED

Practicum Application

Students must fill out a practicum application form as soon as they have attended a Practicum/Internship orientation. See link on Canvas P/I HUB.

Resume and Cover Letter

Students begin by determining which sites best align with their interests. Students will follow the instructions of the clinical site in applying, which may entail providing a cover letter, resume, and any references requested. Students will be called back for interviews. Please allow clinical sites at least ten days before following. See sample resume and cover letter in Canvas P/I HUB and appendix. We suggest applying to three or four sites to ensure practicum/internship site confirmation.

Counseling Intern Interview Questions

Counseling internship sites are generally looking for a non-judgmental attitude, empathy, and strong interpersonal skills. Strong intern candidates include relevant experience, a strong desire to help others, the ability to speak other languages, and passion for counseling and aspects of that specific site. See example interview questions and answers in the appendix.

New Site Application (if applicable)

If a student would like to use a site that is not in the current approved clinical internship site list, they must fill out the New Site Application form so that the Clinical Practicum/Internship Coordinator can approve the site and supervisor. Link provided on Canvas P/I HUB.

Site Confirmation Form

Once a student has accepted a clinical site, they must complete the *Site Confirmation Form* and submit it to the Clinical Practicum/Internship Coordinator. The form includes the site name and address, supervisor credentials, and supervisor email. (Link to form in Canvas P/I HUB). This allows the coordinator to update the site/supervisor in the Time2Track database and provide the information the student and supervisor need to create a Time2Track account.

Time2Track Account Set Up

The Clinical Practicum/Internship Coordinator will provide the information and guidance to register for a Time2Track account. Time2Track training is also provided and recorded. Students have access to the training video on Canvas P/I HUB. After submitting a Site Confirmation Form, students receive a voucher code to create an account. The institution covers the cost of the Time2Track account. Clinical Supervisors will receive an invitation to create an account directly from Time2Track once the Clinical Practicum/Internship Coordinator has updated all their information.

SECTION VII STUDENT EVALUATION & REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

All required forms are located on Time2Track and completed digitally. A copy of all forms can be found on the P/I HUB on Canvas. Refer to course syllabi for due date and submission information.

Documentation of Hours/Time2Track

Students must keep a log of all clinical hours accumulated utilizing the Time2Track tool provided by the school. At the end of every month, students will submit their log for approval to their clinical/site supervisor. The student's clinical supervisor can approve each log electronically. Logs are reviewed by the Clinical Practicum/Internship Coordinator. At the end of the semester, students must have all semester hours logged and approved by the clinical supervisor by the last day of written work for the semester. Refer to the course syllabus for due date and submission information.

Students who are unable to finish the required hours by the end of the semester must request an official extension through registration and notify their semester Professional Seminar Faculty of the extension. Students will submit their final log upon completion of their hours and before the start of the following semester. Students who do not complete the extension will not be allowed to register for the next semester.

All hours completed during this period shall count toward the student's final calculation of previous semester hours. Students can count Between-Semester hours if they are being supervised weekly by a clinical site supervisor and are in communication with the Clinical Practicum/Internship Coordinator.

Required Forms located on Time2Track

The student should review the *contract* with the clinical site supervisor immediately after securing a site.

Practicum/Internship Documents required each semester:

- Practicum/Internship Contract
- Supervisor Verification Form
- Mid-Semester Student Self-Evaluation
- Supervisor Evaluation of Student
- Student Evaluation of Site and Supervisor

It is the student's responsibility to send forms to the Clinical Supervisor through Time2Track. The Supervisor Verification form does not require the student's signature and goes directly to the Professional Seminar faculty and Clinical Practicum/Internship Coordinator. The Student Evaluation of Site and Supervisor also goes directly to the Professional Seminar faculty and Clinical Practicum/Internship Coordinator. All other forms are signed by the student, site supervisor, Professional Seminar faculty, and Clinical Practicum/Internship Coordinator.

Practicum/Internship Contract

The school, the site supervisor, and the student enter into a contract. The contract delineates the field experience requirements as well as the students' goals and objectives for the practicum/internship clinical experience. Students must meet with their site supervisor to discuss and sign the contract, which is submitted through Time2Track, within the first two weeks of the semester.

Supervisor Verification Form

This form verifies that the supervisor has the required credentials and supervisor training to be considered an approved supervisor. Supervisors complete and sign this at the beginning of the semester. If a supervisor does not have supervision training, they must complete the supervision training provided by the MACO program, which is available online and provides a free CEU.

Mid-semester Student Self-Evaluation

The student completes a self-evaluation at the midpoint in the semester and discusses this formative evaluation with the clinical site supervisor. The student and supervisor sign the evaluation through Time2Track. This evaluation is reviewed by the Professional Seminar faculty. If concerns are identified, the faculty member will contact the site supervisor to discuss and consider any needed remedial efforts.

Supervisor Evaluation

At the end of the semester, the site supervisor provides a summative evaluation of the student's performance. The supervisor will discuss the student's progress, and both will sign the evaluation through Time2Track. This evaluation is reviewed by the Professional Seminar faculty. If concerns are identified, the faculty member will contact the site supervisor to discuss and consider any needed remedial efforts.

Student Evaluation of Site/Supervisor

The student evaluates their clinical experience both at the site and with the clinical supervisor and submits the evaluation through Time2Track. The evaluation is reviewed by the Professional Seminar faculty and Clinical Practicum/Internship Coordinator and is used to continuously assess the appropriateness of the site for clinical fieldwork placement.

SECTION VIII: APPENDIX

Practicum/Internship Requirement Information (Summary)

Group Application

Sample Cover Letter

Sample 1-Page Resume

Site Definitions

Examples of Intern Interview Questions and Answers

PRACTICUM & INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Training for Master of Arts in Counseling Requirements:

PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE:

A distinctly defined, pre-Internship, supervised curricular experience. Time involvement for minimum 10 weeks (semester) and must include a minimum of:

100 clock hours.

- 40 hours of direct service work with clientele
- 10 hours of individual supervision by an approved clinical supervisor
- 16-16.5 hours of group supervision provided through Professional Seminar at Gordon- Conwell Theological Seminary. Professional Seminar groups consist of 6 students with a faculty. Additional group supervision may be received at the site
- 35 indirect hours fulfilled through training, paperwork, etc.

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE:

A distinctly defined, post-Practicum, supervised curricular experience. Time involvement for two semesters and must include a minimum of:

600 clock hours.

- 240 hours of direct service work with clientele.
- 30 hours of individual supervision by an approved clinical supervisor.
- 33 hours of group supervision provided through Professional Seminar at Gordon- Conwell Theological Seminary. Professional Seminar groups consist of 6 students with a faculty. Additional group supervision may be received at the site
- Extra indirect hours fulfilled through training, paperwork, etc.

APPROVED CLINICAL SUPERVISOR

A practitioner with *three years* of Full Time or the equivalent Part Time *post-licensure clinical* Mental Health Counseling experience, *supervisor training* and who is also:

- (a) a Massachusetts Licensed Mental Health Counselor;
- (b) a Massachusetts licensed independent clinical social worker;
- (c) a Massachusetts licensed marriage and family therapist;
- (d) a Massachusetts licensed psychologist with Health Services Provider Certification;
- (e) a Massachusetts licensed physician with a sub-specialization in psychiatry;
- (f) a Massachusetts licensed nurse practitioner with a sub-specialization in psychiatry; **OR**
- (g) where practice and supervision occur outside of the Commonwealth, an individual who is an independently licensed mental health practitioner with a license or registration equivalent to one listed under 262 CMR 2.02: Approved Supervisor(a) through (f).

ACCEPTABLE CLINICAL SITES

- Department of Social Services/Public Health Facilities
- State and private hospitals
- Mental health clinics and programs
- College/university mental health counseling programs
- Private group practice

Application for co-leading a psycho-educational group

Your name:

Your student co-leader:

_____ Check here if you are open to the Counseling Office matching you with another student

Your faculty supervisor:

Expected Group format

- At a minimum, the group should run 5 weeks (1 hour each week).
- At the beginning of the first group meeting and subsequent meetings, you will discuss the importance of confidentiality.
- A psychoeducational group educates group members about skill(s). It focuses on developing understanding and changing behaviors. It is structured with specific content.
- The leader of a psychoeducational group is focused on leading discussions and practice. The co-leader is focused on the welfare of the group members.
- An open group allows members to join throughout the group. A closed group does not allow new group members after the first meeting.

What kind of group do you anticipate leading?

☐ Closed

☐ Open

What psycho-educational group are you interested in leading? (Check only one.)

- ☐ Managing academic anxiety
- ☐ Managing depression
- ☐ Living and studying in the U.S.
- ☐ Coping with stress
- ☐ Setting boundaries to maximize good relationships
- ☐ Conflict management
- ☐ Building self-esteem for academic achievement
- ☐ Grieving loss
- ☐ Being the first graduate student in your family
- ☐ Other _____

Turn this form into the Counseling Office with a DRAFT flyer. (A template for the flyer is below.) Deadline for Fall semester group: September 1

Deadline for Spring semester group: December 1

Deadline for Summer semester group: April 15

Student signature and date: _____

Faculty signature and date: _____

Are you an international student new to the United States and Gordon- Conwell Theological seminary?

Come and join a group that discusses
topics relevant to your transition and
adjustment

1. Time difference
2. Hierarchy issues
3. Individuality vs. community
4. What is friendship to an American and
other cultures?
5. Achievements

Group will be led by [REDACTED] MACO
final year student

When: Nov 9 - Dec 7 (On Saturdays) @7pm

Where: Retreat House living room

Contact Info:

Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

SEMMY NARIAN

777 Marsh Drive – Essex, MA

99999 (978)646-0000 ·

snarian@gordonconwell.edu

November 1, 2023

Whoville Adult Day Treatment Center
Services 1 Main Street
Whoville, MA 00000

Dear (Named person or Whoville Adult Day Treatment Center),

As an M.A. in Counseling student at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, I recently learned from our Counseling Department about an internship opening with your agency. I was very excited to learn about it, as I recently read about your innovative programs for adults in the Boston area featured in the online *Journal of Dual-Diagnoses*. It's clear you want to make a genuine difference in people's lives through your agency's services.

My attached resume shows a variety of experiences working with children and youth, both professionally and as a volunteer. I have greatly enjoyed my work with young people and am particularly eager to expand my clinical knowledge and skills with adults, many of whom are parents managing their disorders and seeking to parent in the midst of recovery. While I am strongly empathetic, I am also grounded and able to remain objective when working with clients. I have a strong work ethic and a sincere interest in working with your agency.

I am excited about the prospect of serving with you at Whoville Adult Day Treatment and would welcome the opportunity to meet to discuss how we can work together to support the goals you have for the people you serve. My contact information is above, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Semmy Narian

SEMMY NARIAN

777 Saltmarsh Drive - Essex, MA 00000
(978) 000-0000 - snarian@gordonconwell.edu

OBJECTIVE

To provide superior mental health care to consumers as part of a well-respected professional team expressing genuine empathy, respect, and fostering of consumer dignity.

Internship Learning Goals:

- Building proficiency in interacting with clients in a milieu setting.
- Experience in one-on-one counseling of addicts with major mental illnesses,
- Mastering assessment and intakes.

Strengths & Skills:

- Understand basic counseling theories & techniques.
- Calm, compassionate and effective in crisis situations.
- Experience in group counseling.
- Proficiency in statistics and software.

EDUCATION

MA in Counseling (2022-present) Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA
- *Mental Health Counselor & Marriage & Family Therapy Tracks*. Expected graduation May 2026

Sample of Courses completed:

Introduction to Counseling (research paper on PTSD)
Clinical Skills
Psychopathology (research paper on Paranoid Schizophrenia)
Multi-Cultural Diversity in Counseling (cultural immersion: Armenians)
Professional Standards (ethical dilemma paper on dual relationships)

BA in Art History, Psychology Minor - Undergrad University, Underhill, VT 2019

EXPERIENCE

Children's Program Teacher & Coach - Alliance Christian School, Underhill, VT 2021-2022

- Researched, selected and taught age-relevant religious curriculum every week to 2nd and 3rd graders focusing on character and faith development.
- Served as counselor and coach for summer elementary summer camp, leading small groups, counseling individuals and coaching soccer team(s).

Worked supportively and collaboratively with Education and Camp Directors as part of a 6-person team.

OTHER - Enjoy working with children and young adults. Member of Armenian Cultural Society; strong conversational proficiency in the Armenian language.

REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

Site Definitions

Community Behavioral Health Centers (CBHCs) are one-stop shops for a wide range of mental health and substance use services and treatment. The statewide network of CBHCs includes centers across Massachusetts that offer immediate, confidential care for mental health and substance use needs.

Group private counseling practice is a team of therapists who work together to treat clients, often specializing in various mental health conditions. Group practices offer a range of services for clients, including treatment for anxiety, depression, ADHD, bipolar disorder, and more. May or may not take insurance.

Partial hospitalization (PHP) is a short-term, outpatient program that offers psychiatric services as an alternative to inpatient care. It's more intensive than therapy in a doctor's office, and it's designed for people who need a higher level of care than traditional outpatient services. Patients receive treatment during the day, such as group and individual therapy, and return home at night.

Emergency Services Program (ESP) provides 24/7 crisis assessment, intervention, and stabilization services for people of all ages. ESPs are available to anyone, regardless of insurance status.

Mobile Crisis Intervention (MCI) provides 24/7 crisis assessment and intervention for youth experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis.

School-based mental health services can help students access the services needed during the school day. For students with more serious mental health needs, school-linked mental health services can connect them and their families to more intensive community resources.

CBHI, or the Children's Behavioral Health Initiative, is a Massachusetts program that provides behavioral health services to children, youth, and their families. CBHI's goal is to improve access to mental health services for children in Massachusetts by integrating services into the community. Helping MassHealth children with behavioral, emotional, and mental health needs and their families with integrated behavioral health services and a comprehensive, community-based system of care.

"In-home counseling services" in Massachusetts refers to a type of mental health therapy where a licensed clinician provides treatment to a child or youth, along with their family, directly in their home or community setting, focusing on addressing behavioral, emotional, or social challenges by strengthening family dynamics and utilizing a team approach to support the entire family unit; this service is often provided through the **"In-Home Therapy (IHT)"** program under MassHealth, allowing for flexible scheduling and intensive interventions tailored to each family's specific needs. Unlike traditional therapy, in-home counseling actively *engages the whole family* in the treatment process to address issues affecting the child's behavior in the home.

Therapy sessions primarily happen in the child's home, allowing the clinician to observe

and address challenges in the natural setting. A team of professionals, including a therapist and a therapeutic support worker, may collaborate to provide comprehensive support and interventions.

CANS Training and Certification

MassHealth Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI), Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS)

CANS training is for clinicians in certain levels of care who will be providing behavioral health assessments to MassHealth children and youth under the age of 21. These clinicians are required to complete this training and certification in order to provide behavioral health assessments to MassHealth children and youth under the age of 21 if they are enrolled as a MassHealth provider or as network providers in one of MassHealth's contracted managed care entities.

Internship interview questions

According to training directors and other experts, here are the top five questions to be ready for:

1. Why do you want this internship?

"If your response to this question is, 'Because I want to work with a diverse group of clients' or 'Because this is the best training facility in the country,' you might as well just get up and leave," says John T. Carlsen, PsyD, the director of the Professional Development Institute in Chicago. Instead, be specific. If you're interested in diversity, name the types of clients the clinic attracts and why you want experience work with them. If you want to learn about particular interventions or approaches the site is known for, name them — that shows you've done your homework, he says.

This question enables you to demonstrate your match with an internship site, says David Jacobs, PhD, who conducted internship interviews at a training site in Southern California. He recommends that you make two lists: One should include facts about the site — who it treats and how — and the other should include your own training experience and future goals. Compare the two lists to find connections, Jacobs says, and then practice articulating those connections in a way that emphasizes your experience and what you hope to learn in the future. You might, for example, say, "I use applied behavior analysis to foster social skills in children with autism, but you use a modified version of the therapy with a higher success rate. I'd like to learn more about your techniques."

"A specific connection like this blows interviewers away," says Carlsen.

2. Tell us about a good and bad experience with another person

The answer to this seemingly innocuous question can be critical to a successful interview, and people often botch it, says Nissley. "Many students shy away from sharing their weaknesses or an intervention that didn't go well because they know they're competing with a group of equally talented and skilled students," he says.

That's a mistake, because training directors don't expect you to be perfect. Rather, they want you to demonstrate a penchant for self-reflection and a willingness to learn and grow, says Nissley.

When an interview board asks you about a less-than-ideal client interaction, dive in, Williams-Nickelson suggests. Be specific, saying where you went wrong, how you consulted a supervisor for advice and what you learned from the mistake. For the positive example, also be specific, demonstrating growth and self-reflection, she adds.

3. What is your professional philosophy?

Interviewers ask this question to get a glimpse into your character and background, says Williams-Nickelson. Discuss your history and pick out an event or two that motivated you to pursue counseling, she says. Start with a succinct statement such as, "I believe in using a client's strengths and tap their own resources," says Williams-Nickelson. Then go into detail on how you came to believe this. As with all these questions, however, don't go off on a tangent or over-share, she adds.

This question also presents a good opportunity to share any professional work you might do on your own time, says Jacobs.

4. Where do you see yourself in five years?

Demonstrate that you have a big-picture plan for your career, says Williams-Nickelson, but also tell the interviewer what you will do immediately following the internship. Do you plan to work in a rural practice or join the National Service Corps to pay down student-loan debt? Do you hope to open your own practice? Let your interviewers know your long-term aims, says Carlsen, and explain how their site can help you realize these goals.

This question also gives you another opportunity to elaborate on what you hope to learn from the internship and demonstrate the fit between what you need and what they have to offer, Williams-Nickelson says.

5. Do you have any questions for us?

"No" is the wrong answer, says Jacobs. Especially in today's competitive climate, internship interviews go both ways: While the panel is deciding whether you are a good fit for them, you should be working out whether their site is a good fit for you. So, ask about the site's day-to-day operations or inquire about possible opportunities to work with clients outside your primary area of interest. For example, if you'll be working at a center that treats a wide variety of clients and you specifically want to work with children who have developmental disabilities, ask how many hours a week you may get to see them, says Jacobs.

You may also want to ask, "Which people will I specifically be training with?" says Carlsen. Or, "What is this site's training philosophy?" In addition to helping you decide whether the site will be No. 1 on your list, such questions allow you to demonstrate a strong work ethic and a desire to expand your knowledge, he says.

"Good questions about a site and the opportunities it can provide let a training director know that you're the type of person who will challenge their own assumptions and keep them on their toes," says Williams-Nickelson. "And that's the type of person who people want to work with."

Counseling Intern Interview Questions

Counseling internship sites are generally looking for a non-judgmental attitude, empathy, and strong interpersonal skills. Strong intern candidates include relevant experience, a strong desire to help others, the ability to speak other languages, and passion for counseling and aspects of that specific site.

Counselor Interview Questions and Answers

Q: What is leading you to pursue a career in counseling?

A: It's important to get a good idea about a potential student's motivation for an internship. This is especially true for counseling situations in which a counselor has to have the patience and perseverance to work with difficult clients. A prospective intern should demonstrate a strong desire to help others better themselves using motivation and personal experience.

- A strong desire to help others
- The motivation to follow a challenging career path
- An understanding of what counseling entails

Example:

"After seeing some of my friends struggle with depression, I knew I wanted to help others have access to the counseling they need."

Q: What qualities do you possess that, in your belief, would make you a good Counselor?

A: Many characteristics make a good counselor, and it is important for an intern to be aware of those so that you can strive to implement them in themselves. This question tests an applicant's maturity and ability to self-reflect as well as give insight into their personality. Apart from being a good listener, candidates should mention patience, empathy, or emotional intelligence as character traits they possess. Possible answers:

- Honesty
- Self-reflection and introspection
- Non-judgmental attitude and empathy
- Teachability

Example:

"I have excellent written and verbal communication skills. My multicultural competency and ability to see different perspectives enable me to meet people where they are. I've always been there to support those around me in their time of need and consider myself to be a very caring individual."

Q: Tell us about how you approach counseling treatment and how you individualize treatment for a client.

A: If a site wants an intern to provide customized treatment and not follow a cookie-cutter method, flexibility is paramount. Know what they use as a modality if relevant. This way, they can be sure your clients can benefit from a comprehensive approach to treatment that suits their needs and temperament. A prospective intern shows this by talking about their love for the counseling field and giving a spontaneous answer, rather than a rigid, strict answer about treatment in general. See the following:

- Genuine interest in the unique attributes of people
- Desire to continuously educate themselves
- Willingness to consult with other counselors when necessary

Example:

“One of the things I love about counseling is that each client brings a unique situation. I consider the ability to adapt and change to each client a healthy challenge for me, and I have looked forward to it.”

Q: What would you do if you are unable to provide the level of counseling a client needs?

A: If a counselor encounters a client whom they can't personally help, it is crucial that they do not make the client feel as if their problems are unsolvable. Instead, they must seek their supervisor's advice, use the skills they have, and refer the client to a specialist with more experience in that situation. Prospective interns should express how they'll always work with their peers to help a client succeed.

- An approach that puts the client's needs first
- An inclination to work with specialists
- A willingness to make the failure about the counselor's skill set, not the client

Example:

“I would speak to my supervisor and, if necessary, explain to the client that there are other counselors who may be able to help them better than I could and assist them with the referral process.”

Q: How do you separate studies, internship, and personal time to maintain your mental health?

A: Interns will potentially work with a range of clients, including clients with mental illnesses and people recovering from traumatic experiences or life changes. Because of the nature of the internship, students need to have coping strategies or habits that help them maintain their mental health. This question allows interviewers to gauge a candidate's ability to separate work from personal life so they can continue to make a positive impact on others' lives. The candidate's answer should emphasize:

- Compassion for others
- Acknowledgment of how the job can impact mental health
- Example of work-life balance

Example:

"There was a situation when I was working as a youth leader where a member was going through a traumatic loss. It was challenging not to think about them throughout the day or during personal time. I had to remind myself that they had a support system in the form of extended family members, and I was fulfilling my role as a spiritual mentor to help them understand and cope with their loss. I've found that activities like running, gardening, or cooking with family help to restore my positive mindset and remind me of all the beautiful parts of life