

## SA.32 Counselling Practica

APPROVED BY	<b>Academic Board</b>	VERSION	<b>2017 v1</b>
REVIEW STAKEHOLDERS	▪ DEAN	Last reviewed	2017
	▪ HEAD OF TEACHING AND LEARNING	Published	2017
		Review period	3 Years
		Next review	2020
PURPOSE	This policy will guide how students contract placement settings and supervisors, how records will be kept and how practica will be monitored and assessed.		

### 1 PURPOSE

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### 2 RATIONALE

In the Counselling programme, practica are a vital aspect of student learning and occur in a variety of community settings. A policy is needed to guide the establishment, the record keeping and the assessment of practica.

### 3 GUIDELINES

1. A practicum gives the opportunity to students to apply and develop their knowledge, understanding, skills and personal insights in community settings and to reflect on their practice and learning in a professional context. Placement settings should be approved only if they offer a reasonable likelihood of these components being fulfilled.

### 4 ROLE OF PLACEMENT ORGANISATION

2. The role of the placement organisation is:
  - a. to provide support and learning opportunities appropriate to the experience, focus, level and stage of a particular student;
  - b. to enable students to practise according to the ethics of the relevant professional association, and;
  - c. to draw on the student's skills in a way that complements the organisation's purpose.

It is not necessary that the organisation supervise the student's work directly as in accordance with counselling protocols, each student will have supervision from an external supervisor for that purpose.

### 5 PRACTICUM APPROVAL

3. Students must have both their placement organisation **and** external supervisor confirmed by the tutor **before** commencing their practice and supervision hours.
4. Students who undertake one year of practicum in a setting in which they have a pre-existing relationship such as a church or community organisation may be required to undertake subsequent practica in alternate settings.
5. Except where specifically agreed to by the Practicum Coordinator and / or Tutor, students are unable to undertake their first practicum in either a church or primary school setting.
6. Students are unable to have more than two placement settings per practicum.

7. Prior to the commencement of placement, students are required to use the prescribed contract forms to record how the following aspects are going to be understood and addressed through their work. The main points include:
  - purpose and tasks
  - boundaries;
  - confidentiality (e.g. reporting back expectations);
  - parameters for referral to another agency;
  - student counsellor accountability/supervision;
  - fees and charges, and;
  - any other expectations of each party.
8. Each placement setting must appoint a Placement Liaison Person (PLP) who will:
  - be approved by the organisation leadership or board;
  - meet face to face with the student regularly – as often as is necessary and at least monthly to discuss progress of clients in general terms (not personal or confidential details), referrals where needed or appropriate, levels of work with clients, issues relating to the programme, the organisation or the placement relationship;
  - allocate appropriate clients to the student;
  - support students when the level of a client's issue is beyond the student's experience and competence. This may include referral to another counsellor or agency;
  - ensure the student is aware of organisational policy with respect to suicidal clients, abuse, disclosure and other ethical situations.

## 6 RECORD OF COUNSELLING PRACTICE HOURS AND SUPERVISION

9. Each counselling practicum consists of 50 hours face-face counselling. Students must keep a log of all counselling practice hours and supervision hours, as well as when counselling, keep confidential records of all sessions as per agreement with the placement setting.
10. **Supervision**
  - a. **Counselling Practicum 1:**  
All Practicum 1 counselling students are to maintain a ratio of supervision to counselling of 1:5. This ratio must be maintained throughout the practicum with at **least monthly** supervision regardless of counselling hours.
  - b. **Counselling Practicum 2:**  
All Practicum 2 counselling students are to maintain a ratio of supervision to counselling of 1:7. This ratio must be maintained throughout the practicum with at **least monthly** supervision regardless of counselling hours.
  - c. **Counselling Practica 3 and 4 and Graduate Certificate of Counselling:**  
All Practicum 3 and 4 counselling students and those students undertaking the Graduate Certificate of Counselling are to maintain a ratio of supervision to counselling of 1:8. This ratio must be maintained throughout the practicum with at **least monthly** supervision regardless of counselling hours.
11. Graduate Diploma of Family Studies students are to receive at least seven supervision sessions at a rate of one hour of supervision for every seven hours of family support practice over the duration of their practicum.
12. The cost of external supervision is the student's responsibility.
13. External supervisors have to have been full members of the NZAC, NZCCA or another recognised professional body, with a Code of Ethics acceptable to BTI, for a minimum of three years, and be in regular supervision themselves.

14. Supervision is normally to be conducted face to face. Telephone and online supervision are not acceptable for the purposes of student practica. Occasional one-off consultation with supervisors may be conducted by Skype, phone or email.
15. A recording made for supervision or practicum or other assessment must have a signed consent form completed prior and the resulting recording must be kept confidential and secure and then erased or destroyed upon completion of the supervision or practicum task for which it was recorded.

## 7 PRACTICE SETTINGS

16. It is envisaged that practica will be carried out in approved church, school or community organisations where counselling or family support services are already established. Some additional settings are acceptable where placement agreements are negotiated and approved. A proportion of counselling practicum hours may be undertaken in the following additional settings:
  - Facilitating group therapy and/or psycho-educational groups: may be included but is limited to a maximum of 40% of each practicum.
  - Co-counselling: (where the student and a placement colleague equally share the counselling role) one hour of such counselling being one hour of clinical practice up to a maximum of 30% of each practicum.
  - Working with children: Counselling primary and intermediate school aged children is limited to a maximum of 50% of a student's **total** practicum hours (i.e. across ALL practica).
  - Couple-counselling: Couple counselling requires the prior approval of the practicum tutor, and is generally limited to final year practica unless determined otherwise by the practicum tutor on a case by case basis.
  - Assessments: Students may count 20% of initial hourly assessments towards their practicum hours.
17. **Practice as Students**
  - Students are not permitted to engage in counselling other BTI Counselling or Social Work students.
  - Students are not permitted to engage in private practice work as a counsellor unless they have completed a recognised Level 6 Counselling Diploma and are a full or provisional member of NZAC or NZCCA.
  - Counselling in clients' homes: Sessions taking place in clients' homes should only occur when the student counsellor has the approval of the Placement Liaison Person (PLP), has discussed safety strategies with the PLP, and where the student counsellor is confident that there is no foreseeable risk to them meeting in the client's home.

## 8 STUDENT CONDUCT

18. Student conduct, dress, presentation and work in their placement agency are to be professional and consistent with the requirements of the agency.

## 9 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

19. If a student has a concern in their placement or with their supervision, they should talk first to the PLP or supervisor concerned and then to the Practicum Tutor if necessary.
20. If a Placement Liaison Person or supervisor has concerns about a student they should in most cases first raise the concern with the student and then with the Practicum Tutor if necessary.
21. Concerns about the BTI programme, documentation or processes should be raised with the Practicum Coordinator or the Programme Coordinator.

22. Complaints regarding the handling of any concern should be taken up with the Programme Coordinator in the first instance, if further assistance is required the BTI Strategic Leadership Team.
23. Campus indemnity insurance covers students and staff for their work in approved placement settings.

## 10 ENROLMENT IN PRACTICA

24. Successful completion of a practicum is always dependent on sufficient clients being available for the student counsellor, and the student maintaining appropriate engagement with the agency and clients. Enrolment processes are guided by an awareness of those dynamics.
  - i) All Semester 1 practicums (start of the year practicums) will be enrolled as Semester 0 courses with standard Semester 0 course dates.
  - ii) Students will not normally be enrolled in Practicum 2 at the start of the year. Each year, in early June, a Practicum Student Review meeting will take place between the Practicum Coordinator and the Programme Administrator. At this meeting all students' progress will be reviewed and a decision made on whether the student is on target to complete their practicum in a timeframe such that they can be enrolled into the next practicum as a Semester 2 course.
  - iii) If a student has been enrolled in a Semester 2 practicum but at the meeting described in (ii) above, it is clear that they will not be ready to start the next practicum they will be withdrawn from that practicum, Any fees paid will be refunded without an administration fee being deducted. The conversation with the student will need to include a discussion of the implications for student allowances etc.
  - iv) Students to be enrolled in a Semester 2 practicum will have the Semester 2 start and end course dates as normal. If they have not completed this practicum by the end of the course, they will be given an IP grade at the December BoE. If this grade has not changed by the Mop Up BoE (late January), a SCCI code of 5 (practicum still to complete) will be given (extension). The progress report of these students must be brought to the final mop-up BoE and ideally a final grade (either successful or unsuccessful) given by 31 March. In the event of the practicum not being completed by the end of March an 'In Progress' extension may be granted until the end of Semester 1. At the end of the Semester 1 a definitive grade or DNC will be awarded.
  - v) Any student receiving a successful grade at any of the BoEs (July, December, Mop Up & final mop-up) will then be enrolled into the next practicum, as per the course pattern, either as a Semester 0 or single semester enrolment.
  - vi) In the event of a student receiving a Not Satisfactory grade at a BoE, paragraph 29 ii or 29 iii below come into play.
  - vii) In the event of a student receiving a 'Did Not Complete' grade at the final possible BoE (i.e. after approximately 12 months of engagement in the practicum) then the student must re-enrol in the practicum in the next semester paying full fees. If the BoE feels there are demonstrable extenuating circumstances that make a full fee re-enrolment inappropriate, the BoE may choose to charge only an administration fee for the re- enrolment. Academic Board would be notified of this decision.

Extenuating circumstances would include:

- Consistent communication from the student with the Practicum Coordinator regarding state of practicum organisation and hours,
  - Clear efforts to gain hours,
  - Feedback from the Practicum Coordinator that shows there have been challenges in gaining client hours at the placement outside of the student's control.
- viii) Re-enrolments in a practicum follow the same pattern as first time enrolments in that practicum.
- ix) Any student who chooses not to enrol or re-enrol in a Semester 2 practicum, will need to enrol in the practicum as a Semester 0 course in the following year. Any student in this situation, will need to be made fully aware that this could affect their student allowance, depending on their study load and could also lengthen their study programme.

## 11 CONTINUATION OR CHANGE OF PLACEMENT SETTINGS

25. Where it has been agreed by the Practicum Coordinator, a student may continue in their third year in the same placement as in their second year. Despite this, new placement and supervision forms for each practicum are required to reflect the student's progression of learning goals.
26. If a placement or supervisor changes, either during a practicum or between practica in the same calendar year, a new placement and / or supervision form needs to be approved by the Practicum Coordinator prior to commencing with the new placement or supervisor.

## 12 COMMENCEMENT OF SUBSEQUENT PRACTICUM

27. No subsequent practicum can normally commence until the previous practicum is satisfactorily completed, and the new placement and supervision forms are approved.

Where students continue to accrue hours for their practicum after their assessment has been completed, and prior to the commencement of their following practicum, supervised hours are counted as part of the practicum just assessed.

## 13 COURSE COMPLETION

28. Recognition that satisfactory completion of the course has been undertaken occurs when the required practicum documentation has been received and a minimum satisfactory grade awarded following an assessment interview.
29. In the event that the initial assessment is deemed to be 'Not Satisfactory' there are three options, at the discretion of the assessor (after moderation and discussion with another member of the team);
- i) The student may be offered the opportunity to resubmit one or more parts of the assessment components, within the current enrolment. If the resubmitted work is deemed to be of a passing standard the student may gain no more than a 'Satisfactory' grade for the assessment;
  - ii) The student may be awarded a 'Not Satisfactory' grade for the assessment and be required to re-enrol (paying an administration fee) and undertake remediation as determined by the assessor and redo the assessment. In this case the grade would be the appropriate grade for the collation of work accepted as passing from the original assessment plus the redone aspects of the assessment;
  - iii) In the event of the assessor and moderator believing that the work is significantly below standard, the student may be required to re-enrol and re-do the complete practicum, paying full fees.

30. For any final practicum (Prac. 2 for Diploma and Prac 4 for Degree) the minimum passing grade required is Good (refer to policy SA.07)
31. Practica per year:
  - a. Full-time-Degree Students: Practicum courses for full-time degree students are ideally completed within a semester so as to be able to complete all 4 practica within a 2 year period; therefore, a degree student cannot begin and complete more than two practica in an academic year.
  - b. Part-time Degree students and Diploma students: Diploma Students: Practicum courses for these students are year-based courses; therefore, a diploma student or part-time degree student cannot normally begin and complete more than one practicum in an academic year.