

Defining the Practicum

Practicum: The practicum is the first set of supervised practical training experiences in the sequence of professional training in psychology and is designed to meet the training goals of the graduate program. The practicum comprises all supervised pre-internship training experiences conducted under the auspices of the graduate program in settings providing professional psychological services^{1,2}. The practicum promotes the integration of academic knowledge with practical experience, and prepares the student for future training in professional psychology, particularly for the internship that follows. On practicum, students apply and extend the knowledge, skills and attitudes learned in the program's didactic and classroom-based experiential components to produce increasingly sophisticated levels of understanding and skill.

Goal of Practicum: Through the practicum, the student attains levels of competence in the core foundational and functional competency domains needed to make effective use of future training experiences in the practice of professional psychology, particularly the internship, as envisioned in the training goals of the graduate program³.

Objectives of Practicum: The practicum assists students in integrating academic knowledge with applied experience in settings providing professional psychological services, contributes to the development of competence in the basic skills of professional psychological practice, and enhances the effective use of training experiences. The practicum furthers growth of the student's identity as a professional psychologist.

¹ This definition incorporates supervised pre-internship experiences that some graduate programs call assistantships or externships.

² Services include: Assessment, treatment, consultation, management and administration, supervision, advocacy, education, program development and evaluation. Service recipients may include individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations and communities.

³ Specific guidance on practicum competency goals is available in the CCTC Practicum Competencies Outline and the Assessment of Competency Benchmarks, available at (<http://www.psychtrainingcouncils.org/documents.html>). Practicum administrative recommendations are available at this site.