

Clark University

Clinical Psychology Program

Externship Manual

Table of Contents

Externship Program Description	2
The Application Process	2
Externship Application Checklist	3
Sample cover letters	4-5
Evaluation form	9

Externship Program Description

Advanced Therapy Practicum/Externship (PSY 382) involves a half-time placement at one of several affiliated training sites. Students work with more complicated clinical cases under close supervision in the context of working clinical agencies. These external practicum sites are reviewed to assure that our training sites are clearly committed to training and supervising our students. Students provide regular feedback about their practicum experiences both by means of official evaluation surveys and through regular meetings with the Clinical Coordinator. Although there is a list of established externship site placements, trainees can work with the Clinical Coordinator and DCT to identify other potential sites that may be more appropriate fits with their clinical interests.

There are several factors to consider when choosing externship sites: (1) approval by the Director of Clinical Training, (2) appropriate fit, and (3) history of working with Clark externs.

First, the Clinical Psychology training committee has several requirements and preferred characteristics of externship sites. Trainees must be supervised by a licensed, doctoral-level Clinical Psychologist., workload should not exceed 20 hours per week, and externship supervisors must be willing to release trainees to attend Clinical Workshop. It is the preference of the Training Committee that externship placements show a commitment to training, provide supervision within the context of a cohesive theoretical model, and provide additional training experiences (e.g., didactics, grand rounds, etc.) that augment the trainee's clinical experiences.

Second, selected externship sites should provide clinical opportunities that are consistent with trainees' professional goals. For instance, if a trainee's goal is to work in a big hospital setting, that trainee should look for opportunities in that setting. Similarly, in some cases, attractiveness as an internship candidate depends on where the trainee did externship. For example, most internship directors at college counseling centers prefer that candidates have had prior college counseling experience. Other factors consider are caseload and number of hours per week, as well as predominant model, amount of supervision, amount of assessment, diversity, networking opportunities, paperwork, and educational opportunities such as workshops and clinics.

Finally, there are several sites that have a long history of working with Clark trainees. There are some advantages to pursuing these opportunities. For example, the application process for these sites may be easier to negotiate since Clark has already established working relationships with these sites and is familiar with application procedures. Also, previous externs have provided evaluations of these externship experiences that are available for review. Prospective externs can learn additional information about sites that may not be present in the site's own literature. That said, trainees have a great deal of flexibility in pursuing externship opportunities that best fit their clinical training needs and are able to choose new placements pending approval by the DCT.

The Application Process

For most practicum sites, the application process involves submitting a CV, a letter of interest, and letters of recommendation in the Fall of the third year of training. Some externship placements require the completion of particular forms, and application deadlines vary by site. It is important to contact the externship site directors prior to submitting applications to confirm the site's applications procedures, as policies may change from year to year. Interviews typically are conducted in late Winter/early Spring, and range in format from a single one-on-one interview with a supervisor to group interviews.

Sample List of Externship Placements

Child, Adolescent, and Family Placements

- [Brookline Mental Health Center](#): The Center provides comprehensive outpatient treatment services for adults, children, and families for a wide range of emotional problems and diagnoses.
- [Child Witness to Violence Project](#), Boston Medical Center: The internship training experience is especially well-suited for 2nd year master's level students with interests in working with young children (0-8) and families affected by domestic violence and/or community violence using a range of treatment modalities that include parent/child psychotherapy, play therapy, family therapy, and parent guidance.
- [Cambridge Hospital](#): Trainees receive one-to-one supervision of their individual, group, family, child/adolescent, and couples therapy. In addition to psychotherapy, the program emphasizes the development of psychodiagnostic and clinical inference skills.
- [Children's Friend](#): The Ellsworth Child and Family Counseling Center is the largest program at Children's Friend. It provides high quality mental health services to children ages 0 – 22 and their families to address a wide range of emotional and behavioral problems, from depression to severe behavioral disorders.
- [Community Healthlink](#), Youth and Family Services: Worcester Youth Guidance Center merged with Community Healthlink, Inc., a local non-profit behavioral healthcare organization that provides mental health, substance abuse, and homeless services. Interns provide outpatient individual and family therapy to children and adolescents at Community Healthlink.
- [Walker School](#): The Walker School is a Chapter 766-approved academic day program for children with histories of high-risk behaviors, chronic mental illness, language disorders, learning disabilities, and/or high-functioning autism spectrum disorders. Typical students at Walker School may have also suffered from severe trauma, histories of sexual, physical or emotional abuse, disrupted foster placements, and psychiatric hospitalizations.
- [Cambridge Guidance Center](#): Interns provide individual therapy, group therapy and school-based services for schools in the Cambridge Public School District. The center serves children from birth to age three who have or are at risk of developmental delays, emotional or behavioral difficulties, problems resulting from a difficult or premature birth, conditions such as Down syndrome or Cerebral Palsy, environmental and/or social concerns that pose a threat to a child's development.
- [YOU Inc.](#): Youth Opportunities Upheld, Inc. (Y.O.U., Inc.), is a leading child welfare and behavioral health organization located in Central Massachusetts. Externs see an average of eight clients per week. There are opportunities to conduct individual and family therapy, in addition to psychological evaluations.

Adult Placements

- [AdCare Hospital](#): AdCare Hospital treats individuals with substance use disorders, including patients with complex medical or psychiatric needs. Externs have the opportunity to work in the inpatient, partial hospital, and outpatient services, and gain experience in individual and group therapy, in addition to consultation.
- [Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial VA](#): The practicum placement is a VA medical center. There are three tracks of practicum training: Center for Integrative Psychotherapy (CIP); a split track involving CIP and the Domiciliary program for homeless veterans; and the neuropsychology program. The CIP provides a range of short-term and longer-term individual and couples psychotherapy, incorporating dynamic, cognitive, behavioral, experiential, and humanistic/transpersonal perspectives in an integrative approach to treatment
- [Holy Cross College Counseling Center](#): Externs gain experience in wide range of psychological counseling, career and consulting services to college students at Holy Cross.
- [McLean Hospital](#): Externs gain experience leading groups and providing brief consultation to patients in the Behavioral Health Partial Hospital Program.
- [UMASS Dartmouth College Counseling Center](#): Externs gain experience in wide range of psychological counseling, career and consulting services to college students at UMass Dartmouth.
- [UMASS Lowell College Counseling Center](#): Externs gain experience in wide range of psychological counseling, career and consulting services to college students at UMass Lowell. The majority of training is in cognitive-behavioral therapy.
- [Wellesley College's Stone Counseling Center](#): Externs gain experience in wide range of psychological counseling, career and consulting services to college students at Wellesley College. Externs participate in individual clinical supervision, group supervision, several training seminars, clinical team meeting, a trainee support group, and additional opportunities for participation in larger activities of the Stone Center and the Wellesley Centers for Women.

Externship Application Checklist

Action	Date	Complete
Identify potential externship sites (typically 3-4 sites)	October/November	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact the “contact person” to inquire about new deadlines, openings, required application materials, etc	October/November	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ask references for letters of recommendation: Provide letter-writers with a CV, list of sites being applied to, and due dates	October/November	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide Dan Barrows with names of letter writers and externship site information. Include names of references, application sites, contact person at the sites, addresses, and due dates	November/December	<input type="checkbox"/>
Submit applications	Varies (Dec 1 – Jan 31)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interviews	Varies (Spring)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choose placement	Spring	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note. Due dates and application procedures may change from year to year at some externship sites. Be sure to verify information regarding the application process and due dates with the contact person.

Sample Cover Letters

December 5, 2007

Jane Director, Ph.D.
Chief Psychologist
Fantastic Externship Site
95 Igot Drive
Worcester, MA 01610

Dear Dr. XX,

I am writing to express my interest in a practicum placement on the adult team at XX for the 2008-2009 academic year. My clinical interests center on working with diverse adults with a range of psychopathology and utilizing a variety of treatment modalities. I hope to continue my clinical training at XX where I would have the opportunity to work with a team of top-quality professionals who treat a diverse client population.

Currently, I am in my third year in Clark University's clinical psychology doctoral program. While studying at Clark, I have acquired a variety of clinical experience. I began my training by conducting intellectual and personality assessments with adults. I continued with intellectual and emotional assessments with children in my second-year assessment practicum. This experience included providing feedback to parents and teachers. In my second year, I worked with individual undergraduates in psychotherapy with presenting issues ranging from college adjustment to chronic depression and identity development. I am currently conducting couples therapy using an acceptance and change model. I believe that there are several strengths of my training thus far. First, it has allowed me to utilize a variety of models and treatment modalities. Second, I have been exposed to multiple theoretical frameworks through my participation in different research groups that has strengthened my ability to conceptualize cases from diverse perspectives. Third, as part of my coursework, I was exposed early on to the strengths of empirically-supported treatments.

I am particularly interested in working with adults within both psychodynamic and cognitive-behavioral frameworks. I have sought opportunities to learn more about each of these approaches but am excited about the potential to refine my clinical skills by working with clients in a setting where community mental health is done well. Your site has a long and impressive history of providing needs-sensitive mental health services to the diverse clients in the surrounding community. I am looking to augment my clinical experience by treating a diversity of psychopathology and by collaborating with talented mental health professionals. I am also excited about working in a hospital setting because of the opportunity for enhanced learning through seminars, workshops, and outside speakers. In addition, I am attracted to the potential for unique training experiences, such as incorporating behavioral medicine and psychological testing into my work.

In sum, I am excited about your training program because it involves working with a diverse population, being apart of an interdisciplinary treatment team, and because there is a wide range of unique training opportunities available. I would love to visit your site and learn more about the center and your adult outpatient treatment. I can be contacted at myemail@clarku.edu or by phone at (508) xxx-xxxx. I have enclosed my curriculum vitae and 3 letters of reference. Clinical writing samples are available upon request. Thank you in advance for considering my application and I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

December 15, 2007

John Doe, Ph.D.
Counseling Center
123 University Way
Worcester, MA 01610

Dear Dr. Doe,

I am writing to express my interest in the half-time practicum position for the 2008-2009 academic year. XXX has an excellent academic reputation and a successful counseling center that offers services to many in the undergraduate population. I would love to continue my training in a counseling center environment with a range of quality supervisors that serve a student population.

Currently, I am in my third year in Clark University's clinical psychology doctoral program. While studying at Clark, I have acquired a variety of clinical experience. I began my training by conducting intellectual and personality assessments with adults. I continued with intellectual and emotional assessments with children in my second-year assessment practicum. This experience included providing feedback to parents and teachers. In my second year, I worked with individual undergraduates in psychotherapy with presenting issues ranging from college adjustment to chronic depression and identity development. I am currently conducting couples therapy using an acceptance and change model. I believe that there are several strengths of my training thus far. First, it has allowed me to utilize a variety of models and treatment modalities. Second, I have been exposed to multiple theoretical frameworks through my participation in different research groups that has strengthened my ability to conceptualize cases from diverse perspectives. Third, as part of my coursework, I was exposed early on to the strengths of empirically-supported treatments.

I am particularly interested in working with the young adult population. I think it is critical to provide needs-sensitive services to young people transitioning from the family to the independent academic environment. In my previous work with undergraduates, I conducted long-term humanistic therapy for coming-out issues, cognitive therapy for chronic depression, and psychodynamic therapy for identity development. I am enthusiastic about your site because of the opportunity to work with bright, motivated individuals, work I have enjoyed in the past. At the same time, I am excited about the potential for refining my clinical skills through work with diverse supervisors.

I would love to have an opportunity to visit your site and learn more about the program and the opportunities for trainees. I can be contacted at myemail@clarku.edu or by phone at (508) xxx-xxxx. I have enclosed my curriculum vitae, and below are the names and phone numbers of two individuals who can be reached for a reference. Thank you in advance for considering my application and I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Externship Evaluation Form

Externship Evaluation: Evaluation of Supervisor

Externship Site: _____

Supervisor: _____

Trainee: _____

Inclusive Dates: _____

Amount of supervision: Average number of hours of supervision with supervisor named above

Individual: _____ hrs/week

Group: _____ hrs/week

Please rate the following dimensions (quality, teaching, relationship) using the scale below:

1	2	3	4	5
Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent

Qualities:

- _____ Reliable (e.g., had regular supervision meetings; arrived in a timely manner)
- _____ Available in emergencies
- _____ Able to appropriately challenge the trainee to advance his/her understanding and skills
- _____ Promotes a sense of acceptance and support
- _____ Models appropriate professional and ethical behavior

Teaching:

- _____ Interest and enthusiasm for teaching
- _____ Offers suggestions appropriate to trainee's level of training
- _____ Instructs trainee in how to integrate different techniques
- _____ Raises ethical and legal considerations
- _____ Assists therapist in making theoretical case formulations

Relationship:

- _____ Accepts disagreement well
- _____ Establishes clear and reasonable expectations of therapist performance
- _____ Processes any conflicts that arise in the supervisory relationship
- _____ Gives criticism constructively
- _____ Is aware of trainee's objectives

Overall :

- _____ Overall quality of supervision

What are the supervisor's primary strengths? (Please list at least two.)

What changes could the supervisor make to improve the training experience? (Please list at least two.)

Additional comments or other remarks:

Trainee Name

Date