

RUTGERS SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM

PRACTICUM HANDBOOK

Introduction

School Psychology is a general practice and health service provider specialty of professional psychology that is concerned with the science and practice of psychology with children, youth, families; learners of all ages; and the schooling process. The basic education and training of school psychologists prepares them to provide a range of psychological assessment, intervention, prevention, health promotion, and program development and evaluation services with a special focus on the developmental processes of children and youth within the context of schools, families, and other systems.

School psychologists are prepared to intervene at the individual and system level, and develop, implement, and evaluate preventive programs. In these efforts, they conduct ecologically valid assessments and intervene to promote positive learning environments within which children and youth from diverse backgrounds have equal access to effective educational and psychological services to promote healthy development.

The Rutgers School Psychology Program trains its students to be competent systems level thinkers who are data oriented in their problem solving. Students are trained to think psychologically about the nature of schooling and to design and implement interventions at the individual, small group and systems levels. They learn to evaluate evidence in terms of its technical reliability, validity, and scientific meaningfulness, and to make professional decisions in accordance with ethical principles of professional functioning. In addition to addressing knowledge and skill training domains, the Program addresses the personal and interpersonal domains of the psychologist-to-be. The Program seeks to inculcate students with the understanding that self is a mediating variable in functioning as a psychologist and that addressing context is critical for effective practice.

The training curriculum is organized along several dimensions that reflect the theoretical and empirical bases of the profession and the process of disciplined inquiry. School psychological methods and procedures, service delivery systems, and professional identity are emphasized. Students are introduced to the notion of provision of services beyond the individual level early in the curriculum, during the first year through a course that introduces the profession, as well as through courses in organizational psychology and community psychology. During the second year, a course in school-based intervention emphasizes the importance of evidence-based practice and attention to organizational and other context issues in intervention implementation. A course in consultation and non-traditional school psychology roles emphasizes service delivery at the group and systems level, as well as prevention. During the third year, a year-long sequence in program planning and evaluation adds to students' understanding of how to function professionally at a systems level. Electives in various approaches to psychotherapeutic intervention, as well as in organizational diagnosis and intervention, are available to strengthen students' knowledge and skills in areas of special interest related to delivery of preventive mental health services.

School Psychology Program Goals, Objectives, & Competencies

Goal 1. To understand and engage competently in the professional practice of school psychology at the individual, group and organizational levels in schools and related settings.

Objective 1.1 To understand and engage appropriately in psychological assessment, so that relevant and accurate information is gathered, analyzed, and used in making decisions in the service of students.

Competency 1.1 Formulates and conducts psychological assessments of students that are technically adequate, accurate, relevant to student problems and issues, and useful for decision making and student planning purposes.

Objective 1.2 To understand and engage appropriately in intervention and prevention so that the psychological development and educational achievement of students may be enhanced.

Competency 1.2 Selects, develops, implements, and evaluates interventions in classrooms and schools that are relevant to the student, problem, and context, and that are empirically supported.

Objective 1.3 To understand and engage appropriately in classroom and school consultation so that teachers, administrators, parents, and other stakeholders are provided with guidance and advice in support of the psychological development and educational achievement of students.

Competency 1.3 Provides useful guidance, advice, and technical assistance to teachers, administrators, parents, and other stakeholders in defining educational, social and emotional problems and needs of students, and determining viable ways for those problems and needs to be addressed appropriately.

Objective 1.4 To understand and engage appropriately in program planning and evaluation so that programs, products, and services can be designed and implemented that will add value to students, staff and other stakeholders in schools and related settings.

Competency 1.4 Provides consultation and technical assistance to administrators and other stakeholders so that custom designed programs, products, and services can be linked to the needs and contexts of clearly defined target populations, monitored in terms of implementation, and evaluated with respect to worth and merit of outcomes.

Goal 2. To understand and apply the scientific method of empirical inquiry as this method relates to psychology and education, in order to foster research-referenced practice and data-based decision making in school psychology.

Objective 2.1 To define and clarify problems, decision situations, or gaps in knowledge pertinent to research and practice in school psychology.

Competency 2.1 Defines and clarifies problems, with consideration of problem background and context, prior to consideration of problem solution.

Objective 2.2 To consider alternative methods of addressing problems, decision situations, and/or gaps in knowledge using both quantitative and qualitative frames of reference.

Competency 2.2 Considers, in a systematic manner, a range of alternatives that may be used in problem solution or in the development of new knowledge.

Objective 2.3 To consider the efficacy and effectiveness of alternative ways to solve problems, address decision situations, or develop new knowledge.

Competency 2.3 Selects and implements methods appropriate to address problems, decision situations, or gaps in knowledge using sound quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Objective 2.4 To draw appropriate conclusions from empirical methods of investigation that are consistent with the quantitative or qualitative framework used, the contextual conditions, and the resulting data.

Competency 2.4 Accurately and cogently interprets data and research and draws appropriate conclusions.

Goal 3. To understand and apply thinking about systems to school psychology research and practice at the individual, group, and organizational levels.

Objective 3.1 To understand and appreciate the impact of context and systems on problems of children and adolescents in schools and on service delivery.

Competency 3.1 Assesses and evaluates problems in a manner which indicates understanding of the impact of multiple systems on the development of students and on the functioning of school personnel.

Objective 3.2 To understand and appreciate how to develop solutions to problems and challenges facing students and schools, which address multiple systemic influences.

Competency 3.2 Develops problem solutions and accompanying implementation strategies that address the impact of systems variables at multiple levels.

Goal 4. To understand human diversity, especially in terms of students in schools, and to develop skill in working with individuals and groups from diverse racial, cultural, ethnic, linguistic, socio-economic, and gender-related backgrounds.

Objective 4.1 To recognize that diverse backgrounds and contexts are basic factors in the influence of behavior in school settings and are fundamental reference points for the design and delivery of school psychological services.

Competency 4.1 Incorporates the relevance of culture, ethnicity and other dimensions of diversity in designing, implementing, and evaluating programs, products, and services that relate to school psychology practice and research.

Objective 4.2 To recognize the implications of diversity for working with, respecting, and helping students in schools.

Competency 4.2 Interacts respectfully, appropriately, and productively with people of diverse backgrounds and contexts in school and community settings.

Goal 5. To apply collaborative problem solving and communicative skills within school and community contexts, in the service of the psychological development and educational achievement of children and adolescents.

Objective 5.1 To participate comfortably and effectively as part of multidisciplinary teams with the intention of working to enhance the psychological development and educational achievement of students.

Competency 5.1 Listens attentively and respectfully, allowing others to present their views, during interactions with students, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders in school psychology services.

Objective 5.2 To communicate ideas and opinions effectively regarding the nature of student problems and conditions, and about potentially effective solutions.

Competency 5.2 Synthesizes the views of others and offers accurate, cogent, practical ideas about student problems and potential solutions in team and group problem-solving situations.

Goal 6. To understand ethical practice and social responsibility.

Objective 6.1 To understand ethical issues in school psychology practice.

Competency 6.1 Makes practice decisions that are based on ethical guidelines, standards, and laws related to school psychology.

Objective 6.2 To understand and appreciate the importance of schooling and healthy development of all children and adolescents.

Competency 6.2 Expresses professional respect for students, teachers, and other stakeholders of school psychology services, and makes professional decisions based on the intention of enhancing their functioning and quality of life.

The School Psychology Program Curriculum

Education and training for school psychology practice is sequential, cumulative, graded in complexity, and designed to prepare students for further organized training. Theoretical and research foundations are integrated with practice issues, while didactic training is integrated with field experiences throughout the curriculum. As students progress through the Program, courses on the various aspects of school psychology professional functioning build on knowledge and skills learned in earlier courses. In each successive year of the program, practicum courses offer opportunities to practice an expanding set of school psychology professional skills. Early in the Program, orientation to the profession and the culture of the schools is stressed, along with development of psychological foundational knowledge and basic professional practice skills. Later in the curriculum, more advanced professional practice skills are emphasized, such as those related to systems/organizational interventions and professional leadership, and students increase their depth of knowledge in selected specialty practice areas.

During the first year of the Program, courses focus on theoretical and empirical psychological foundational knowledge necessary for effective professional practice, on introducing the student to professional functioning, and on developing knowledge and skills in assessment. Foundational courses include: Human Development, Adult Psychopathology, Child Psychopathology, Psychopharmacology, Theoretical Foundations of Analytic Intervention, Theoretical Foundations of Behavioral Intervention, and Theoretical Foundations of Organizational Intervention. Practice-related courses during the first year include: Introduction to School Psychology, Cognitive Assessment, Systematic Observation and Interviewing, Child Behavioral Assessment, Child Personality Assessment, and Exceptional Children. During the second semester of the first year, a school psychology practicum introduces students to the various roles of the school psychologist, the school context, and provides opportunities to practice assessment skills.

The second year of training focuses on building knowledge and skill in the foundational area of research design, data analysis, and critical evaluation of research, and in the practice functions of direct and indirect intervention, including multidisciplinary team collaboration. Students take courses in Statistics and Research Design. They also take an additional foundations course, Philosophy and Systems of Psychology. Practice related courses include: Psychoeducational Intervention, Community Psychology, Consultation, Diversity, Learning Disabilities, and Professional Development. An elective provides the opportunity to begin to develop more in-depth knowledge and skill in a specialty area of practice. A year-long practicum provides opportunities to refine assessment skills, practice consultation skills, implement prevention programs and interventions, and participate in school-based decision-making regarding individual educational programs.

The third year of the Program focuses on developing knowledge and skill in systems level and organizational interventions. Students take a year-long sequence in Program Planning and Evaluation, as well as a course in Adult Learning and Training. The practicum experiences at this stage provide opportunities to engage in systems/organizational assessment and interventions and working with school administrators, and to develop in-depth skill in working with a special population, all within a particular program/practice approach.

The Practicum Experience

During the first school-based practicum, taken in the second semester of the program, students are placed in one of the partner school districts. Activities include observation of a range of school structures and processes, such as regular education classes, special education classes, resource rooms, meetings and consultation sessions between school psychologists and teachers, meetings between school psychologists and parents, child study team meetings, meetings of the intervention and referral services team, and school-wide faculty meetings. Students also engage in psychological assessment activities and report writing.

During the second year practicum, students continue their placements in one of the partner school districts. They complete full psychological evaluations, participate in child study team meetings and intervention and referral services team meetings, engage in consultation with teachers and parents, and implement evidence-based interventions for individuals, and evidence-based prevention or intervention programs for groups.

During the third year of practicum, students may continue to work in the partner school districts or may choose a specialized practicum from one of the additional practicum settings. The goal of the third year of practicum is to refine professional practice skills, with an emphasis on systems and preventive interventions, and/or to develop advanced specialty skills. Those continuing their work in partner school districts will develop and implement intervention or prevention programs for small groups, classrooms or schools, and engage in the full range of services provided by practicing school psychologists. Those working in one of the additional practicum settings may develop advanced skills in working with populations such as autistic children, or families of children with developmental disabilities. They may develop advanced skills in providing a specific type of psychotherapeutic intervention such as cognitive-behavior therapy, or they may develop advanced skills in systems-level prevention in schools through a program such as the New Jersey Center for Character Education.

Practicum experiences are integrated with coursework beginning in the second semester of the program. The practicum experiences allow students to obtain an in-depth understanding of roles and functions of school psychologists and of the context of the school, and to increase their level of competence in professional practice through the delivery of school psychological services in a school setting. This is done in a sequential manner as described above. As students take professional practice courses, they are provided with opportunities in the practicum setting to use the skills learned in those courses, to refine skills learned in previously completed courses, and to integrate multiple skills in order to solve problems. Along with each practicum course and the individual supervision by doctoral level psychologists that is provided at the practicum site, students participate in a Group Supervision course for each semester of practicum. This course provides weekly group supervision for students by School Psychology Program faculty members. This supervision aims to provide input regarding student practicum work, to strengthen professional identity as a school psychologist and to understand and enhance the self as a mediating variable in the delivery of services. Students are required to develop a written analysis of their professional growth at various points in the semester.

Over the course of the practicum experience, the School Psychology Program graduate student should engage in the following:

1. Exposure to the roles and functions of Child Study Team members
2. Exposure to the culture of schools
3. Exposure to the organizational structure of schools
4. Exposure to the educational components of regular and special education
5. Exposure to the case management procedures
6. Experiences with referrals to the Child Study Team including:
 - a. PAC procedures
 - b. Parent notice
 - c. Eligibility determination
 - d. Observation and Interview
 - e. Assessment practices
 - f. Report preparation and writing
 - g. Communication with parents
 - h. IEP preparation and follow-through
7. Experiences with individual counseling
8. Experiences with group counseling
9. Experiences with program design and implementation
10. The development of their professional identity
11. The development of receptivity to supervisory feedback
12. The development of personal and professional self-understanding.

Responsibilities of supervising school psychologists:

- Provide one hour of individual supervision on a weekly basis;
- Familiarize the student with the school setting;
- Provide appropriate learning experiences for students, including observation of the school psychologist's work and opportunities for direct client contact, as appropriate to the student's level of training;
- Review of student's test reports and final approval of same;
- Communication with GSAPP School Psychology Faculty Liaison regarding any concerns involving student performance;
- Communication with School District Practicum Coordinator regarding practicum;
- Completion of practicum contract (along with student) and end of semester student evaluation;
- Attendance at joint meetings with student and School Psychology Faculty Liaison to review student's progress.

Responsibilities of GSAPP School Psychology Faculty Liaison:

- Ongoing communication with students and supervisors regarding practicum requirements and student /supervisor performance and activities;
- Faculty Liaison arranges for periodic visits to the school district to meet with supervisors and/or students. Some meetings will include both student and supervisor to review student progress and practicum experiences;
- Faculty Liaison provides additional supervision of student's cases, reports and programs on an as needed basis;
- Faculty Liaison documents student's performance at time of conference and shares any concerns with School Psychology faculty;
- All Faculty Liaisons attend group meeting with all School District Practicum Coordinators;
- Faculty Liaison attempts to resolve any problems between supervisor and student;
- Faculty Liaison provides additional support and training opportunities to the district as requested by supervisors.

School Based Practicum Competency Development Plan

(to be completed by student each year)

Student's Name _____ Date _____

Practicum Site _____

Supervisor's Name _____

Competencies	Plan of Practicum Activities
<p>Competency 1.1 Formulates and conducts psychological assessments of students that are technically adequate, accurate, relevant to student problems and issues, and useful for decision making and student planning purposes</p>	
<p>Competency 1.2 Selects, develops, implements, and evaluates interventions in classrooms and schools that are relevant to the student, problem, and context, and that are empirically supported.</p>	
<p>Competency 1.3 Provides useful guidance, advice, and technical assistance to teachers, administrators, parents, and other stakeholders in defining educational, social and emotional problems and needs of students, and determining viable ways for those problems and needs to be addressed appropriately.</p>	
<p>Competency 1.4 Provides consultation and technical assistance to administrators and other stakeholders so that custom designed programs, products, and services can be linked to the needs and contexts of clearly defined target populations, monitored in terms of implementation, and evaluated with respect to worth and merit of outcomes.</p>	
<p>Competency 2.1 Defines and clarifies problems, with consideration of problem background and context, prior to consideration of problem solution.</p>	
<p>Competency 2.2 Considers, in a systematic manner, a range of alternatives that may be used in problem solution or in the development of new knowledge</p>	
<p>Competency 2.3 Selects and implements methods appropriate to address problems, decision situations, or gaps in knowledge using sound quantitative and qualitative approaches.</p>	
<p>Competency 2.4 Accurately and cogently interprets data and research and draws appropriate conclusions.</p>	
<p>Competency 3.1 Assesses and evaluates problems in a manner which indicates understanding of the impact of multiple systems on the development of students and on the functioning of school personnel.</p>	
<p>Competency 3.2 Develops problem solutions and accompanying implementation strategies that address the impact of systems variables at multiple levels.</p>	
<p>Competency 4.1 Incorporates the relevance of culture, ethnicity and other dimensions of diversity in designing, implementing, and evaluating programs, products, and services that relate to school psychology practice and research.</p>	
<p>Competency 4.2 Interacts respectfully, appropriately, and productively with people of diverse backgrounds and contexts in school and community settings.</p>	
<p>Competency 5.1 Listens attentively and respectfully, allowing others to present their views, during interactions with students, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders in school psychology services.</p>	

Competencies

Plan of Practicum Activities

Competency 5.2 Synthesizes the views of others and offers accurate, cogent, practical ideas about student problems and potential solutions in team and group problem-solving situations.	
Competency 6.1 Makes practice decisions that are based on ethical guidelines, standards, and laws related to school psychology.	
Competency 6.2 Expresses professional respect for students, teachers, and other stakeholders of school psychology services, and makes professional decisions based on the intention of enhancing their functioning and quality of life.	

Practicum Conference Form
(To be used by Faculty Liaison on site visits)

1. Please highlight the student's strengths.

2. What goals from the student's practicum contract have been met?

3. What activities has the student engaged in to support their professional growth?

4. Areas of anticipated development.

5. Projected practicum activities to support further professional development.

6. Please indicate if there were any obstacles/challenges in meeting the student's needs in the program.

Date: _____

Field Supervisor's Name: _____

Signature: _____

Student Name: _____

Signature: _____

GSAPP Faculty Liaison's Name: _____

Signature: _____

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY COMPETENCIES EVALUATION FORM

PRACTICUM PROGRESS REPORT

Following is a list of School Psychology Competencies along with an evaluation format. Please complete this form for the practicum student you are supervising. After you complete your evaluation, please share your ratings with your supervisee and then send the completed form to Lew Gantwerk, Psy.D. Executive Director of the Center for Applied Psychology at 41 Gordon Road, Piscataway, NJ 08854. This information is one component of evaluating the student's clinical competence. It is important that you return this form promptly, so that the student receives the appropriate grade on her/his transcript. Failure to do so will delay the student's progress, and might impede the processing of documents for graduation. Thank you for your help throughout the year. Your input is very important to the student and to the faculty.

Academic Year: _____ Semester: Fall _____ Spring _____ Summer _____

Name of Student _____

Name of Practicum Agency _____

Name of Primary Supervisor _____ (Title: PhD/PsyD)

Name of Other Supervisor(s) _____

Address of Agency _____

City/State/Zip Code _____

Hours per week devoted to the practicum by student _____

Total hours of practicum completed this semester _____ (approx.).

Student & Supervisor Ratings of Student's Professional Behavior
(to be completed at the end of each semester by student and supervisor)

Student's Name _____ Date _____

Practicum Site _____

Supervisor's Name _____

Rating Scale:

5=Excellent 4=Very good 3=Satisfactory 2=Fair 1=Poor

____ Degree of active participation and willingness to take initiative

____ Listens to others with empathy

____ Willingly accepts supervisory feedback

____ Follows up supervisory feedback with appropriate action

____ Maintains appropriate interpersonal boundaries (i.e., self disclosure, boundaries with clients & staff)

____ Effective ability to build relationships with clients and staff

____ Demonstrates respect for individual and group differences

____ Conducts self in professional manner (i.e., punctuality, completion of tasks, attendance)

____ Dresses professionally

____ Appropriate verbal communication skills

____ Appropriate written communication skills

____ Behaves in an ethical manner

____ Willingness to expose areas of uncertainty and seek supervision

____ Openness to sharing personal reactions and examining the manner in which these impact on work with clients and staff

____ Non-defensive

At the completion of the third semester, students are required to complete the following form:

Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology
School Based Practicum Program (SBPP)
Professional Development Survey

Instructions: *Professional development* is an ongoing process for both beginning level and accomplished students and psychologists. The professional development of graduate students in psychology is an interactive process that involves socialization into the culture of psychology coupled with the opportunity to expand and/or refine skills and abilities. As with any culture, there are unique characteristics of psychologists that include formal and informal rules, rituals, expected behaviors, a common purpose, and shared values and beliefs. As we learn and develop competencies within this culture, our confidence as professionals develops and we practice behaving “as if” professional status has already been achieved. For students in the SBPP this is achieved in a supervised setting under the model of guided practice.

This SBPP was intended to facilitate your professional development as a school psychologist. Therefore, please reflect on your *professional development* in the program and answer the following questions. This information will help to evaluate the efficacy of the program. *Please return the complete survey to Lew Gantwerk*

1. Student’s Name: _____ Date: _____
2. School Name: _____
3. Were you able to meet the training goals outlined in your Competency Development Plan (CDP)?
 YES NO
4. Please check your perception of the *degree* of training you received in the following training areas:

Training Area	<i>High</i>	<i>High Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Less than Average</i>	<i>None</i>
Assessment & Decision Making					
Personal communication, collaboration, and consultation with school, parents, etc.					
Experience developing behavioral, affective, and adaptive goals for students					
Experience with a diverse student population					
Understanding of school climate, structure, and organization					
Developing/Implementing prevention and intervention programs					
Knowledge of school resources that exist for school/community collaboration and opportunity for development					
Experience with research and program evaluation					
Understanding of legal, ethical, and professional standards (school specific and global)					

Instructions: Please circle the answer that best reflects your experience in the program

1. I believe that my experience in the program helped me develop/refine skills and abilities critical to the professional development of a school psychologist.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. As a result of my experience in the program I feel *more* confident in my skills and abilities as a future school psychologist.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. I believe that the individual supervision I received facilitated my growth as a professional.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. I felt comfortable addressing practicum based concerns/problems with my supervisor.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. I used group supervision as a forum to address practicum issues and receive peer/faculty support.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. I used group supervision as a forum to engage in problem solving related to my practicum.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

