

Department of Child and Family Studies Guidelines for Practicum (CFS 564 & 565)

The CFS Practicum experience, which is comprised of CFS 564 and 565 is required of all Child and Family Studies Master's students who are pursuing Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) status through our program and optional for any other CFS masters' students.

In the ideal case, a student will take the courses required and any other relevant courses before beginning their internship. However, given realities such as course scheduling and work demands, this might not always be feasible. Thus, we require the completion of at least 15 credit hours before beginning the internship.

The Practicum can occur either in a sequence of two continuous semesters or concurrently in one semester at one designated placement site. This placement site should be in a community agency approved by the student's faculty advisor who will act as the University supervisor and a representative of the agency who will be the site supervisor. **In the semester prior to enrollment in CFS 564**, the student should arrange to meet with the major professor to discuss site options that offer experience consistent with the student's professional goals. Guidelines for the practicum experience for both the graduate student and faculty supervisor are provided below.

Arrangements for a placement site should be made the semester preceding when the student plans to register for practicum hours (See Practicum, Part I, for guidance in developing a practicum placement). The following materials should be used by students to establish the ground rules for the planned practicum experience. The faculty member supervising the practicum experience should make letter and/or telephone contact with the site supervisor at the beginning of the semester the student will be placed there to establish the procedures for supervision and the types of responsibilities students will have in their placement experience (an example of a letter is on in Practicum, Part II). The information in Practicum-Part III should be communicated to the on-site supervisor during this early contact process, which also provides an opportunity to answer any questions the site supervisor may have.

Students should keep a log of reflective writing during the time that they are working in the placement site. This log will include their reactions to the work they are doing each day that they are working at the placement site. In addition, on average of once per week, they should read one article, book chapter, etc. that relates to the population they are working with and the responsibilities they are assigned in their practicum site. Annotations of their readings should be included in their log, which should be submitted to their faculty supervisor 3 days before the student meets for supervision, so the faculty member can read entries prior to the meeting.

Faculty supervisors should meet with the student regularly on a bi-weekly basis during any semester they are registered for practicum credit. They can discuss log entries and any other pertinent issues, questions, or concerns when they meet with the student. They should also make suggestions for readings the student might do. Faculty supervisors also should let students know that they are available on an "as needed" basis between regularly scheduled supervision times.

Faculty supervisors should make a visit to the placement site to meet with the student's site supervisor around midterm and at the end of the term. The student should meet with them also, for at least for part of the time. They should discuss the strengths of the student's performance as well as areas for potential skill and knowledge development for the student. The site supervisor also should be asked to complete a written evaluation of the student at the end of the term. A form to be used for this purpose is in Practicum-Part IV. A copy of this form should be placed in the student's file in the CFS office. If the student is taking CFS 564 and 565 concurrently, rather than sequentially, the site supervisor should complete an evaluation form at midterm as well as at the end of the term. Students also should be asked to evaluate their placement site. A form for this process is in Practicum-Part V.

The Faculty supervisor should give the student their grade (S/NC) at the end of the semester. The site supervisor's written evaluation of the student's performance in memo form should be placed in their student file in the CFS office. This evaluation should include the types of responsibilities they were assigned at the placement site and a specific evaluation of their ability to effectively discharge these responsibilities.

During the completion of CFS 565, students are to implement an action project at the field placement site. It is the responsibility of the faculty supervisor to assist the student in the planning and implementation of this project. The site supervisor also should be asked to provide a brief evaluation in memo form of the project in terms of both the content of the written material as well as the usefulness of the project to the program or agency. The faculty advisor also should provide the student with a brief written evaluation of the complete project in memo form. Copies of these evaluations should be placed in the student's file in the CFS office.

Although it is unlikely that a student at the graduate level should have to be dismissed from a placement, it is prudent to establish policy that would be followed if this need were to arise. Procedures for this process are outlined on in Practicum, Part VI.

Files should be established for practicum students by their faculty advisor. Materials can be kept in this file until the end of the semester. A check-list of the required materials to be accumulated in the file over the semester is on Practicum, Part VII.