

Practicum in Psychology Overview, Application, & Participation

Thinking of a practicum?

1. Practicums are for upper-level (junior and senior) students.
2. Many require some knowledge of the research enterprise, and all require discipline and maturity; thus, having successfully completed 3030 is preferred.
3. The best practicums (the ones where students get to do the most) are in research labs/institutions. (Students cannot get clinical experience per se.)
4. Practicums are best for those who “know” what they want to accomplish (e.g., get research experience, learn more about DBT, etc.). They are not good for the student who is uncertain about what they want to achieve as they require too much confidence/autonomy.

Not sure you’re ready for a Practicum?

Consider job shadowing and/or short-term volunteering. Both are excellent ways to learn about different professions and different agencies efficiently.

Application

The application process may take several weeks, so you are advised to meet with the Practicum Director at least 5 weeks prior to the quarter during which you would like to do a practicum. If you are thinking about doing one ‘some time in the future’ but not sure when, it is still a good idea to make contact with the Director and get the ball rolling!

Begin by requesting materials from the Psychology Department (psychology@seattleu.edu)

Information about practicums in the College of Arts and Sciences is at <https://www.seattleu.edu/artsci/undergraduate-degrees/psychology/practicum/>

Develop a clear articulation of your practicum goals & interests and a resume.

When you have read the materials, prepared your resume, and articulated your goals and interests, schedule an interview with the Practicum Director.

At the interview

The Practicum Director will ask you about such things as any previous work experience and responsibilities, your research experience and current interests, your goals and expectations for your practicum experience, and your long-term goals and plans.

You will provide the Practicum Director with your resume and the names of two Psychology professors to serve as references (you do not need to contact the references, the Practicum Director will) and determine your practicum site choices.

After the interview

The Practicum Director will contact your two references specifically as well as inform the Psychology Department of your application. Will the student represent themselves and Seattle University’s Psychology Department well? Any faculty member may comment on your reliability, responsibility, and respect; they may raise concerns or offer their support.

If the Practicum Director and your references indicate that **you are not ready to participate in a practicum**, you may meet with the Practicum Director to receive feedback about how to improve your qualifications so that you may apply again in the future.

If you are accepted to the Practicum Program

The Practicum Director will confirm your selected site's interest and notify you that you when you should make contact.

You will make direct contact with a note of introduction (i.e., email cover letter expressing qualifications and specific interest in the site's work) and your tailored resume. Some sites request additional information such as transcripts or an application.

Most sites also require an in-person meeting/interview.

Practicum Requirements

Practicums may be done for course credit or for a letter grade. Some students, with their site's permission, simply volunteer; volunteers are still expected to meet their site's expectations and to represent themselves and Seattle University well.

The process of registering for credit or a letter grade is the same.

Students may complete a total of 10 hours of practicum or independent study toward their degree requirements.

All registered students complete hours (a total of 3 hours per week per credit hour for which they are registered), keep a weekly (or more often) journal and complete self and site evaluations. Those taking their practicums for letter grades also write a reflection paper and prepare a site-relevant literature review

If you are accepted to a Practicum Site

Request the correct paperwork (for credit or a letter grade) from the Practicum Director.

Carefully following the provided instructions, complete the Independent Study Form, Risk Release, and Contract. The Contract requires that you indicate your site's requirements and thus necessitates consultation with your Site Supervisor. The contract also requires your Site Supervisor's signature.

All three completed and signed pieces of paperwork should be submitted to the Practicum Director as soon as possible.

After the Practicum Director signs the paperwork, the Dean must also sign and then it will be sent to the Registrars for processing. Although you can begin work before your registration is completed, you will not be in the course. Not being officially in the course could result in financial aid complications if you are not full-time or if you register late; in addition, you cannot access the course website.

During your Practicum

There is a Practicum Canvas website. To be added to the site, you must be registered.

Posted on the Canvas site is a quarterly syllabus listing all requirements and due dates. You are responsible for submitting all work by the due date and time; late work lowers your letter grade and puts you at risk of not earning credit.

At mid-quarter and at the end of the quarter, your supervisor will be asked to complete a checklist rating your performance.

If you have any problems or concerns, you should contact the Practicum Director for help and resolution.

Similarly, any problems or concerns expressed by the Site Supervisor require a meeting with the Practicum Director. The Practicum Director, in consultation with others, may terminate your practicum if your behavior precludes you from adequately meeting the demands of the practicum.