



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

**School Psychology Program  
College of Education**

**Internship Guidelines**

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Your internship is a capstone experience for the doctoral or masters program in School Psychology. Because the internship is such an integral part of your professional development, the time and effort you spend prior to the internship year in planning and preparing for your internship may pay a critical dividend in your training. A positive internship experience at an excellent training site can help you immensely on your career trajectory, whereas a frustrating experience at a marginal training site will prove to be disappointing. This guide has been prepared to help students in the UO School Psychology Program plan and prepare for their internship year. It covers all the basics regarding finding an appropriate internship. If you have questions that are not addressed in this document, please let me know.

**Scope and Breadth of Internship Experience**

Your internship should provide you with a broad and in-depth training experience to sharpen and refine the professional skills you have acquired through your coursework and practicum experiences, and to assist you acquiring the skills needed to be an independent professional. The type and level of professional practice in which you engage as an intern should be consistent with the aims of the University of Oregon School Psychology Program. We publicly refer to our program as being behaviorally-oriented, and prevention and intervention-focused. *We consider ourselves to be a progressive program, and we do not consider regressive or archaic models of school psychology practice, such as working exclusively in a “test and place” mode, to be appropriate internship experiences for our students.* It is also important to remember that *the internship should be a training experience, not just a work experience.* Thus, we expect that you will have sufficient opportunities for professional learning (such as mentoring, workshops, seminars, colloquia, research, observation of senior staff), and that you will not be given the regular workload of a full-time psychologist.

The internship must be distinct and clearly unique from a student’s prior practica and fieldwork experiences. Students are encouraged to pursue internship experiences in systems other than where they completed their practicum training requirements. If a student desires to conduct part or all of their internship within a local school district where they have completed prior practicum training, then the internship plan must make clear how the internship provides the student with a unique advanced professional training experience. Because of difficulties providing appropriate supervision and because of other inherent conflicts, University-based GTF positions are typically not appropriate for satisfying the non-school portion of an internship.

## **Clock Hour Requirement**

Doctoral students must complete a minimum of 1500 clock hours of supervised internship experience. These clock hour requirements are based on the APA, APPIC, and NASP training and accreditation standards. The completion of 1500 hours usually requires 10 or more months. Some internships may require more than 1500 clock hours; APPIC sites that require 2000 clock hours over 11 months are not unusual.

Masters students must complete a minimum of 1200 clock hours of supervised internship training, which is the equivalent of about 33 to 34 clock hours per week over the course of a typical 36 week public school year. This clock hour requirement is based on the NASP internship training standards for specialist-level programs.

Although the internship experience is typically completed on a full-time basis corresponding to a traditional academic year calendar or slightly longer, both NASP and APA internship standards allow for the internship to be completed on a half-time basis over the course of two academic years.

As a general rule, at least 600 of the internship hours must be conducted in a school setting, meaning that if a student does not do their internship exclusively in a school setting, they may accept an internship in a consortium, clinic, hospital, research center, administrative/leadership setting, and so forth, so long as they have made arrangements to conduct at least 600 hours of the internship in a school setting. There is an exception to this rule: doctoral students who have previously earned a masters/specialist degree in school psychology including a 1,200 school-based internship (or who have subsequent full-time experience working as a school psychologist) may do their predoctoral internship in any appropriate setting, without having to comply with the 600 hour rule.

## **Supervision Requirements**

Because our doctoral program is APA-accredited and NASP-approved, and because we have built our masters program to be consistent with NASP guidelines, we adhere to the training guidelines of these organizations. Nowhere are these guidelines more specific and critical than in the area of supervision. Please note the following supervision requirements that will govern your internship:

- The internship must be conducted under the direct supervision of a field or site supervisor who is primarily responsible for your work, and who 1. is a licensed or certified school psychologist, 2. for doctoral internships, the supervisor has earned a doctoral degree in school psychology or a closely related field (i.e., clinical or counseling psychology), and for masters-level internships, at least a masters or specialist degree, and 3. has at least two years of prior professional experience at the internship site.
- For doctoral students only: our program does not yet mandate that your field supervisor be a board-licensed psychologist for independent practice, so long as they have the appropriate education agency license or certificate to practice as a school psychologist, a doctoral degree

in psychology, and their credentials are appropriate for practice and supervision in the particular setting in which they are to supervise you. However, it is very important to note that *you will not be able to count the internship experience as supervised experience for psychology board licensure in the future if your supervisor is not board-licensed*. If you intend to pursue board licensure as a psychologist in the future, you are strongly advised to only consider internship sites where your field supervisor is board-licensed (all APPIC and APA accredited sites meet this criterion). Alternately, you may wish to arrange supervision by a board-licensed psychologist as part of your internship experience.

- For both masters and doctoral students, you must receive a minimum of *two hours per week of direct, individual, face-to-face supervision* with your field supervisor that is focused on the professional services you provide as an intern, as well as your progress and performance in the internship training and supervision arrangement. It is acceptable to split the individual supervision arrangements between two different supervisors, so long as this arrangement is part of your written internship plan.
- In addition to the individual supervision requirement, APA and APPIC standards for doctoral internships require an additional two hours per week of structured, supervised didactic training. These additional two hours of training may occur in several forms, including: group supervision and case staffing meetings, seminars, workshops, observation of supervisory staff providing services, or other appropriate and approved activities that are conducted under supervision and are part of the student's written internship plan.
- It is generally not appropriate for our program faculty to provide field or site supervision for your internship training. Such supervision is the responsibility of the organization that sponsors the internship.

## **Remuneration**

Internship experiences are typically paid with a stipend or salary. *We do not encourage or advise our students to accept unpaid internships*. Both masters and doctoral interns in school psychology are generally marketable to receive a stipend of a minimum of .50 to .75 of what an entry level psychologist at that site would earn. In some cases, internship stipends may be the same as full-time staff members, and include fringe benefits. The specific terms of financial and other remuneration for the internship experience are between the intern and the employing agency. The more flexibility you have geographically, the more likely it will be that you find an internship that not only provides good training, but also a reasonable stipend.

## **How Do I Find An Internship?**

The primary means of locating an internship in school psychology are noted in this section. Be aware that the procedures for masters and doctoral internships differ significantly in some respects.

- **Doctoral Internships: The APPIC System.** *The Association of Psychological Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC)* serves as the largest clearinghouse for

psychology internships. The APPIC website at <http://www.appic.org> contains extensive information on the application process, accredited internship sites, timelines, etc. Most students in clinical and counseling psychology doctoral programs use the APPIC application process exclusively in their search for an internship. Although many APPIC and APA accredited internship sites are not appropriate for school psychology students (because they focus exclusively on adult populations or do not include a school or educational component), there are many APPIC sites that are appropriate, including children's hospitals, child guidance centers, community mental health organizations, some public school districts, and some consortiums that include a public school rotation within their training experience. APPIC internship sites have undergone a rigorous accreditation procedure, and follow established guidelines for selection and training of interns. APPIC internship sites require completion of a uniform application, which is available on their website and requires a detailed accounting of prior practicum experiences. APPIC sites usually accept applications during the Fall months (with an early November deadline), interview applicants in early Winter, and make selection decisions in February using a computer-matching process. As a general rule, all APA-accredited internship sites are also accredited by APPIC and are part of the APPIC system, but not all APPIC internships are APA-accredited.

- **Masters and Doctoral Internships: Established School Psychology Internship Sites.** Although most school psychology internship sites are not formally accredited through the APPIC/APA system, there are many sites around the country that have established internship programs. Sites such as these may have a long history of training school psychology interns, and are more likely to have created training experiences that provide excellent supervision and opportunities for professional development. There is no central clearinghouse for identifying these sites, who may recruit at the NASP convention, advertise in the NASP *Communique*, send announcements to university training programs, or simply rely on referrals from school psychology faculty. Application deadlines for these types of internship sites tend to be late Winter or early Spring, with selection decisions in April or May.
- **Masters and Doctoral Internships: Other School-Related Internships.** Although our strong preference is for our students to accept internships only at established internship training sites, many public school districts do not have established internship training programs, but are willing to consider hiring interns for their school psychology staff positions. Some sites will consider interns for any open school psychology position, whereas others will create specific internship positions. There is substantial variation among these types of sites. Some provide outstanding internship training, supervision, and professional development, whereas others simply view the intern as another (lower paid) employee, and do not provide adequate supervision and support. Like school districts in general, there is a wide variety of types of experiences to be had. Some places have a progressive model of school psychology, and others are test-and-place mills. Some school districts will pay interns on the regular professional salary scale, while others will expect the intern to work for free. The message here is: *caveat emptor* (buyer beware)! If you select an internship through this route, make sure that it will meet not only the program's requirements for supervision and training, but your expectations as well. The

- **Research, Leadership, or Other Specialized Experiences.** Students who have arranged at least a half-time (600 hour minimum) internship in a school setting may fulfill the remainder of their internship hours by concurrently working in a research role at a research center (such as ORI, OSLC) in a leadership/administrative role in an educational agency such as a school district, regional educational laboratory, or state department of education. Other types of non-traditional roles are also possible. These types of appointments are usually individually-developed by the intern. Supervision requirements apply to these sites as well as traditional school psychology sites. It is not appropriate for students to work on their own for this part of an individualized internship experience (i.e., as a private consultant or in a private practice); they must be connected to an established agency, group, or practice. Note that this practice of “split” internships (half-time at two different sites) is possible, but that it has unique challenges, and in most cases is not recommended as the best option.

### **Prior Approval Required**

With the exception of doctoral internships that are part of the APPIC system and include a school training component, all internships in our program are subject to the prior approval of the internship coordinator. As program co-director, I have agreed to take on the role of internship training coordinator, so such approvals need to go to me. Once you receive an offer, contact me immediately so I can discuss the conditions of the internship and make sure it is appropriate.

### **Developing the Written Internship Plan**

The intern, in conjunction with their field supervisor, develops an internship plan that specifies objectives, goals, and activities to complete during the internship year and during specific academic quarters. The UO Director of Training or their designee gives final approval to internship plan or "contract," which must be submitted to the Director of Training, signed by the field supervisor and intern, *no later than the beginning of Fall quarter classes*. This written plan is different from an employment contract, which is usually issued by the employing agency, and specifies conditions of the appointment rather than the types of activities in which the intern will be engaged. The written internship plan is an essential part of evaluating the student's internship experience, and must be submitted to the director of training. The employment and remuneration agreement is between the intern and the administration of the site where the internship is conducted, and does not need to be submitted to the program director.

Each internship plan or contract should be unique and individualized according to the training interests of the intern, the opportunities, rotations, and demands of the internship site, and the specific assignment of the field supervisor. There is no language template that all internship plans must follow. However, some of the items which should be addressed in the internship plan include:

- General goals for the internship year
- Specific goals for each academic quarter, such as rotations, site placement, etc.
- Goals and objectives for providing specific types of services, working with specific types of problems or conditions, and engaging in specific types of activities
- A statement regarding the specific arrangements for supervision, and who will be responsible for providing supervision, their credentials, etc.
- Specification of educational or training components of the internship, such as supervision, groups, inservice training opportunities, research opportunities, etc.
- If applicable, specification of how much time per week will be released from service activities to allow the intern to work on their thesis or dissertation research
- A statement regarding procedures and timelines for evaluation of the intern's performance

### **Credit Registration, Evaluation, and Grading**

Our program requires interns to earn a minimum of nine credit hours of SPSY 704, Internship. In most cases, students satisfy this requirement by registering for three credits per quarter over the course of a three-quarter academic year. The nine credit requirement is considered to be a minimum. If the internship is conducted over the course of an academic year and a complete summer prior to or following summer the academic year, the student must also register for 3 internship credits during that summer session. It is absolutely essential that students be appropriately registered for internship during any term in which the internship is being conducted.

An exception to the minimum nine credit registration rule for internship applies to doctoral students who have successfully defended their dissertation *prior to* term they are to graduate (which is also the final term of their internship experience). Doctoral students in this situation need only register for 1 credit of SPSY during their final term of registration, in which they are also required by the UO Graduate School to simultaneously register for 3 credits of SPSY 603 (dissertation). In this case, the student's total internship registration for the year would be 7 rather than 9 credits. Consult the Graduate Student Handbook for more details.

Students who choose to complete the internship requirement over a two-year period on a half-time basis must still register for 3 credits each term they are on the internship. This requirement means that students who do the internship in this manner may be required to complete 18 credits of SPSY 704 Internship. Students must follow the program requirements for direct face-to-face supervision (2 hours per week minimum), even if they are only at the internship sites 20 hours per week over a two-year period of time. The amount of effort required by the program to monitor and evaluate the internship is the same each quarter regardless of whether the internship is completed on a half-time or full-time basis.

SPSY 704 Internship registration is currently offered on a letter grade basis only, without a P/NP option. The program director determines the appropriate letter grade based on the following criteria:

- Quality of feedback from the internship supervisor, using the program's *Quarterly Intern Professional Behavior Evaluation Form*
- Quality of feedback from the supervisor that is received in any other written or verbal communication with the program director
- Progress toward completion of the internship goals, objectives, and activities, as stated in the written internship plan
- Timeliness in receiving quarterly evaluations and activity logs

The Professional Behavior Evaluation Form is available as a downloadable PDF file from the "Current Students" section of the UO School Psychology Program website, at <http://spsy.uoregon.edu>.

Students are expected to have their evaluation forms and activity logs submitted in time so that they are received by the internship coordinator *no later than the first day of finals week each quarter*. Although the internship coordinator may choose to send reminders, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that their site supervisors are aware of the deadlines and that the materials are submitted on time. The specific dates for submission are posted on the program website each year. *Because timeliness of reporting and evaluation is considered to be an important aspect of the internship expectations, late submissions of evaluation materials and activity logs may result in a delay in posting grades, as well as a reasonable deduction from the student's final grade for that quarter.*

### **Contact Information**

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