

CED 677: Practicum in Counseling: School Certification

Fall 2006

3 credits

Instructor:

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Catalog Information: Required of all counselor education students who wish to be certified as public school counselors but lack a North Carolina Class “A” Teacher’s Certificate. Includes seminar classes/supervision and a minimum of fifty (50) clock hours of supervised experiences conducted in public school settings. Co-requisite: CED 648.

Student Learning Outcomes: The purpose of this early field placement is to introduce students to the various functions of a professional school counselor and to the school context. This experience is meant to be reflective rather than hands-on; students will *not* provide counseling or advising services. Through group supervision, students will examine school counseling roles and responsibilities as well as school policies and procedures as they are observed at their Practicum sites in relation to those covered in the readings and discussed in class.

Teaching Strategies: Since this course requires students to be on site, learning outcomes will be achieved through experiential opportunities presented in their practicum sites and organized through the activities delineated in this syllabus. In addition, students will take part in a group supervision exercise which will enable them to reflect upon their on site experiences.

Grading:

Students will receive a grade of (S)atisfactory or (U)nsatisfactory in this course. Grades will be determined based on completion of course requirements (listed below) as well as professional and ethical behavior exhibited at school placements and during supervision. The course instructor will seek input from GAs and site hosts.

Required Materials:

Practicum Log and Journal (see template)

School Counseling Practicum Checklist

Blackboard

Course Requirements:

1. Practicum students will meet in groups with their supervisor (a doctoral Graduate Assistant) for 1 hour per week during the semester to discuss and reflect on their experiences in the schools. These groups will be held in the Nicholas Vacc Counseling and Consulting Clinic and will be scheduled at times convenient for all members. Groups will be videotaped.

2. Practicum students spend a minimum of 50 hours in a pre-approved school setting during the semester. Students are to observe the activities of their site supervisor as well as those of students and other school personnel. They should *not* conduct any individual or group counseling or advising sessions, but they may assist their site supervisors with other activities (e.g., scheduling, testing, duties) within reason, if asked.

3. Students will be required to post a weekly message (during all weeks they meet for group supervision) to Blackboard. In their postings, students should highlight one or two interesting experiences they had that week in the schools. Postings should be related to the suggested practicum activities (see below) or to additional experiences not listed on the syllabus. Students are free to respond to each others' postings, but this is not required.

4. Students must keep a *Practicum Log* and *Journal* (templates attached). Journal entries must be made for required activities 5-12 (see below) and should address the stated goal for that activity as well as include a brief summary of your experience and your reactions, opinions, and commentary about the experience. Logs and journals must be turned in to your group supervisor in order to receive credit. Group supervisors should also be given your *School Counseling Practicum Checklist*, which they will initial upon completion of each required activity. Each of these items will be returned to you and should be kept in your portfolio.

5. Required Practicum Activities

Required activities are those that must be completed and documented (via log or journal entry) to receive a grade of Satisfactory.

1. Log a minimum of 50 hours of on-site time.
2. Attend a minimum of 4 full days on site. (A full day entails arriving at the time your site host arrives, or before, and leaving when your site host leaves.)
3. Attend and actively participate in all practicum group supervision meetings.
4. Present at least one classroom guidance lesson to your supervision group.
5. Become involved with a significant, ongoing project of your site host's choice.
Goal – to understand how or why certain projects are prioritized and how they connect to the school's objectives or mission.

6. Review the counseling and main office filing system and cumulative records, any written policies (e.g., crisis management plan, registering new students), and student and parent resources (e.g., handbooks). *Goal – to examine and compare school policies with best practice recommendations.*
7. Complete at least 3 hours of classroom observation (with different teachers and classes) over a period of 3 separate site visits. When possible, also observe a classroom guidance lesson. *Goal – to assess aspects of effective and ineffective teaching and classroom management as well as different approaches to teaching.*
8. In addition to your site supervisor, interview a minimum of 5 other people in different roles regarding their impression of and thoughts about the role of school counselors. Include at least one administrator, one parent, one student, one teacher, and one other support specialist (e.g., psychologist, nurse, social worker, etc.). *Goal – to compare and contrast perceptions of school counselor roles and responsibilities.*
9. Work on something for parents such as an education session or parent newsletter. *Goal – to promote positive school-parent relationships and encourage parent involvement.*
10. Observe at least 3 individual or group counseling sessions (at least one of each, if possible) and ask the counselor to discuss his/her counseling approach. *Goal – to analyze the potential effectiveness of the counseling approach (theory + techniques) in relation to the presenting concern.*
11. Attend two different team meetings (student support team, IEP meeting, etc.). *Goal – to analyze team effectiveness, collaboration, and leadership.*
12. Do something to support and show appreciation for the school staff/faculty. *Goal – to promote positive teacher-counselor relationships.*

Suggested Practicum Activities:

Suggested activities are additional activities listed as possibilities. They are ideas of what students can do (if there is extra time).

1. Observe classrooms (with prior teacher permission) and interact with students through tutoring and guidance activities if relevant. Try to observe a variety of classes for comparison (special education versus regular education, Advanced/AP versus vocational, electives/specials (e.g., music, art) versus required/core (English, math).

2. Observe and assist with special services such as at-risk programs.
3. Inquire about the school counselor's role in coordination/administrative functions such as testing, school-based committees, scheduling, IEPs, and records and files.
4. Discuss with your site supervisor how he/she plans and evaluates a comprehensive counseling program and individual guidance units.
5. Access the school website and note types of information available. Peruse the counseling/guidance section of the website.
6. Become familiar with available counseling materials (games, kits, career information, audio visual aids. etc.).
7. Learn methods of assessing students (e.g., behavioral observation, standardized tests) for the purposes of counseling, consulting with parents and teachers, and educational placement.
8. Observe or participate in consultations and conferences with parents, teachers, and representatives from community agencies or postsecondary schools.
9. Become involved with public relations activities such as newsletters and PTAs.
10. Become familiar with the structure and policies of the school such as the curriculum, extra-curricular activities, discipline procedures, etc.
11. Attend an after school event (sporting event, performance) and observe student interaction and faculty involvement/attendance.
12. Talk to school counselors about the budget allotted to them each year. How is the money spent? How much say do they have in requesting materials and resources? What (if anything) do they do to secure additional funding?
13. Talk to school counselors about professional development and travel policies (to attend conferences, visit colleges, etc.).
14. Learn the organizational structure of the school system, and how the pupil services and school counseling fits into the administration and governance of the system.
15. Become familiar with procedures for contact and referral to agencies outside the school system.

Academic Honor Code: The UNCG Academic Integrity Policy is in effect for this course. Please review the policy, found in the UNCG Student Handbook.

Accommodations: Students who require any accommodations for any aspect of this course should notify the professor immediately (see [BlueBook](#)). To receive accommodations, students must be registered with the Office of Disability Services (208 Elliott University Center, 334.5440, <http://ods.dept.uncg.edu/>, ods@uncg.edu).

Attendance Policy: Students are expected to be present at their sites for all days for which they have committed. It is the responsibility of the students and site hosts to arrive at a set schedule that will permit students to complete course requirements. By the second week of Practicum, students must inform their group supervisor of the days and times they will attend practicum during the semester. Students are expected to be on time for and attend all practicum group supervision sessions. For ethical and professional reasons, supervision must be taken very seriously. Failure to attend one or more group supervision sessions will require a session to be made up by the student. It is the discretion of the group supervisor to determine if and when that meeting will be made up. Please be advised that failure to attend a minimum of 12 group supervision sessions will result in a grade of Unsatisfactory.

Additional Requirements/Information:

Responsibilities of the Field Practicum Student

1. Be prompt and prepared for all practicum activities. Please be ready to start practicum meetings on time by arriving at least 5 minutes early.
2. Behave in a professional and ethical manner at all times. Students will follow individual school policies concerning confidentiality, record-keeping, referrals, dress, etc. Students must arrive on time at the practicum site and dress in a professional manner.
3. Purchase liability insurance. Please have your insurance before going to your practicum site.
4. Please note that you are not to finish at your practicum field site before December 1. Your minimum of 50 hours should be evenly spaced throughout the semester, and you should spend at least 4 full school days at your site. This provides you with the opportunity of participating in a part of the daily and yearly cycles of a school setting.
5. Complete a brief evaluation form at the end of the semester.

Responsibilities of the Site Supervisor

1. Introduce the student to the variety of services the counselor performs in the school setting.
2. Involve the practicum student in activities that are appropriate for the student's beginning skill level. Students should NOT be conducting counseling or advising sessions this semester. They may help with administrative tasks, but not in excess and only if these are part of your regularly assigned duties.
3. Introduce the student to the administrative structure of the school.
4. Provide opportunities for the student to complete the required activities listed above.
5. Contact the university professor about any questions or concerns about practicum or the student.
6. Complete a brief final evaluation form at the end of the semester.