

PSYCHOLOGY 491 - PROFESSIONAL FIELD EXPERIENCE
West Virginia University - Department of Psychology
**INSTRUCTIONS FOR FINDING A PLACEMENT, INTERVIEWING AND
COMPLETING THE AGREEMENT FORM**

This document contains the information you will need to **obtain or develop your own placement** for Psychology 491, Professional Field Experience, **conduct interviews**, and **complete the Student/Supervisor Internship Agreement**.

Interviewing Procedures and Tips

1. Call the contact person and tell them you are interested in obtaining a Psychology 491 Field Placement and that your application for the course has been approved by the WVU Department of Psychology.
2. Set up a time to interview with the contact person or other appropriate person. In some cases you may be asked to submit a resume before an interview can be arranged. If the contact person is different from the name given to you by Dr. McWilliams, please let Dr. McWilliams know so that she can change her records.
3. Prepare for the interview by learning as much as you can about the placement site, by preparing yourself to answer questions about your background, training, and skills, and by preparing a list of questions you would like to have answered at the interview.
4. Treat the interview like a formal job interview:
 - ◆ Dress casually but neatly.
 - ◆ Tell the interviewer about yourself: your interests within psychology; why you are looking at that particular placement; what your future plans are; other relevant paid or volunteer clinical, research, or teaching experiences you have had. Your goal is to convince the interviewer that you are responsible, active, and competent.
 - ◆ Ask a lot of questions: who will you work with; what the clients are like; what sorts of problems the clients have; what activities you will be doing; how you will be supervised; where you will work (ask for a brief tour); what work schedule can be arranged.
 - ◆ Thank the person for their time--even if you have already decided that you are not interested in the placement. Tell them when you will call them to follow up on the interview or ask when they will call you.
5. After the interview, keep in touch with the contact person until you know if you have been accepted at that site. If you do not hear from them right away, let them know if you are still interested (and, as a courtesy, tell them if you are no longer interested or have accepted another placement).
6. When you are accepted to a placement at which you would like to work, arrange another meeting with your site supervisor to complete the Student/Supervisor Internship Agreement.
7. Follow the instructions below to complete the Student/Supervisor Internship Agreement.
8. Submit the signed Student/Supervisor Internship Agreement by putting it in Dr. McWilliams' mailbox in the Psychology main office or by faxing it to her at 304-293-6606 by the end of the semester before you plan to complete your internship (or make other arrangements with Dr. McWilliams).
9. Dr. McWilliams will review and sign your Student/Supervisor Internship Agreement. Either Dr. McWilliams or Mrs. Vee Lewis will let you know by e-mail

when your form has been signed and an electronic permit entered in STAR for this course.

10. Go into your STAR account and register for the course. Be sure to enter the appropriate number of credits (the default is 1 credit, so you will need to change this number).

Guidelines for Developing Placements

In many cases, students admitted to the Psychology 491, Professional Field Experience, program will find placements at sites listed in the General Description of the Program. In other cases, however, students may need or want to arrange placements at other sites. Particularly when students are home for the summer, they may prefer placements at sites near their homes. These guidelines are designed to help students arrange appropriate placements.

In general, students should follow the sequence of steps described in the General Description of the Program (available in in the Psychology Undergraduate Records Office or at <http://psychology.wvu.edu/undergraduate/field-experience>). Students may contact potential sites to obtain information about the site and to explore the possibility of a placement before being approved by Dr. McWilliams for the program, but should not agree to an internship before receiving this approval. Students also must obtain approval from Dr. McWilliams for a particular site (by submitting the Request for Placement Approval form included with the General Description of the Program, also available from Dr. McWilliams) before making final arrangements for a placement.

The types of sites that are appropriate for this program include any kind of program or organization that assists people in dealing with psychological or behavioral problems or challenges. Examples include, but are not limited to, mental health centers, programs for children or adults with a variety of emotional and/or behavioral disorders (such as autism, conduct disorder, developmental disabilities, depression, substance abuse problems, etc.), parent training programs, early intervention programs, programs dealing with sexual assault and/or domestic violence, testing centers, organizational consulting programs, and school- or home-based treatment centers.

More important considerations than the description of the program, however, are the actual activities that the practicum student will be engaging in and the nature of the supervision that will be provided to the student. Students should be involved in activities that are clearly related to psychology and that someone with a bachelor's degree might be hired to perform for the organization. Possible activities include, but are not limited to, assessing clients, applying treatment programs, providing training, participating in workshops, visiting clients' homes, developing educational materials, conducting literature searches on relevant topics, observing or assisting with therapy, writing case notes, and providing limited clerical assistance. Menial tasks, such as clean-up, clerical work, and custodial caregiving must be kept to a minimum. The student must be supervised on a regular basis (at least weekly) by someone with at least a master's degree or license in psychology or a related human services field.

Students may, in some cases, receive financial compensation from the placement site as well as course credit for their practicum work. Such arrangements must be approved by Dr. McWilliams. Credit will be given only for the portion of work that meets the

guidelines described in the previous paragraph.

Instructions for Completing the Student/Supervisor Internship Agreement

The **Student/Supervisor Internship Agreement** (along with the **Practicum Agreement Transmittal Form**) should be completed during a meeting with your site supervisor after you have completed the following steps: apply for the PSYC 491 program, receive approval from Dr. Stephanie McWilliams, interview at potential practicum sites, and obtain acceptance at the site you prefer. Here is some information to help you complete the Student/Supervisor Internship Agreement.

The Student/Supervisor Internship Agreement has been pre-filled to reflect the requirements of PSYC 491. You will only need to complete the fields described below.

Introductory Section:

1. In paragraph 1, enter the **current date**, the **placement site**, and **your name**, as the student who will be completing the internship.
2. In paragraph 3, verify the starting and ending dates for the internship. In general, the dates the practicum will begin and end should be the first and last days of the semester or summer session. Other beginning and ending dates may be arranged, but you should be sure that you will be working an appropriate number of hours for the number of credits you expect to receive (see chart below).
3. In paragraph 3, enter the **total hours** of internship activity for the semester (for 3 credit hours, this would be 135 total hours worked). A typical fall or spring semester consists of 15 weeks of classes; a typical summer consists of 12 weeks of classes. Use the chart below to determine the relation between hours worked and number of credits for any other length of time.
4. In paragraph 4, enter the number of **credits** to be earned.

<u>Credits</u>	<u>Total hours</u>	<u>Hours per week</u> <u>fall or spring (15 weeks)</u>	<u>summer (12 weeks)</u>
3	135	9	11.25
4	180	12	15
5	225	15	18.75
6	270	18	22.5
7	315	21	26.25
8	360	24	30
9	405	27	33.75
10	450	30	37.5
11	495	33	
12	540	36	
13	585	39	

You do not automatically receive university holidays off. At the time you are completing the Student/Supervisor Internship Agreement, you should discuss with your site supervisor whether or not you will be expected to work during Thanksgiving week, spring break, and/or other holiday periods. Include any days off agreed to under "Vacation days allowed." Note that you are still expected to work the total number of hours you have contracted for in your Student/Supervisor Internship Agreement even if

you are allowed certain vacation days. **You may miss up to 10% of your total hours or 24 hours (whichever is less) to accommodate vacations, illnesses, etc.**

Additional missed time requires either making up the time or receiving a reduced grade for the class. Note that the local school systems often have a different schedule from the University, so consider what days they will be in session when determining your hours and credits.

Section B: Make sure your site supervisor agrees with these responsibilities. Add any additional supervisor responsibilities.

Section C:

In the box provided, **list the Internship Activities you will be doing** at your placement site. Examples are:

- Student will work two days a week doing case management, one afternoon/evening at the house, one afternoon/evening at the crisis unit, and one day at the adult treatment program.
- Student responsibilities in case management include aiding the coordinator of community support programs in appraising referrals and obtaining information about clients' strong and weak points from the clients' support groups.
- Administer the Strong Interest Inventory to students, and summarize the results.
- Co-lead group therapy sessions.
- Write case reports.
- Attend weekly staff meetings.

Signatures: Make sure you and your site supervisor read and agree to all items listed in this agreement. Sign and date the Agreement and return it, with the completed Practicum Agreement Transmittal Form, to Dr. McWilliams' mailbox (or fax it to her at 304-293-6606). Dr. McWilliams will review and sign the Agreement. Either Dr. McWilliams or Mrs. Vee Lewis will let you know when your form has been signed and an electronic permit entered in STAR for this course so that you can register online. Copies of your signed Student/Supervisor Internship Agreement will be e-mailed to you and your site supervisor prior to the start of your placement or given to you at the first class meeting.

Additional information

Approximately 1 week prior to the start of the semester or summer session during which you will be participating in this course, you will receive an e-mail message giving you further instructions concerning the requirements for the course. During the fall and spring semesters, students are required to attend several meetings. Times for these meetings are listed in the course schedule. The first meeting will be during the first week of classes. No meetings are required during the summer. Weekly assignments must be completed through eCampus; thus, Internet access is necessary for this course.

Questions: Any questions about the Psychology 491 program should be directed to Stephanie McWilliams: (304) 293-0834; srmcwilliams@mail.wvu.edu; Department of Psychology, West Virginia University, P.O. Box 6040, Morgantown, WV, 26506-6040.