DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM

PRE-PRACTICUM
2017-2018
The Pre-practicum

To the Student:

This handbook is intended to address some initial questions you may have regarding field placements. It directs you to a number of forms you will use to document your pre-practicum. Please become familiar with these forms since they will play an important part in your completing the first-year program requirements. If you have any questions that the handbook does not address, please contact Erin Seaton, Coordinator of Field Placements.

To the Supervising Practitioner:

This handbook is intended to familiarize you with our field-based training policies and procedures. It contains a number of forms that you will complete for your student. The student will return these forms to Erin Seaton at the Tufts Department of Education. If you are a first-time supervising practitioner, then you must complete a W-9 form and return it to Carla Walsh.

You may also mail completed forms regular post to:

Tufts University, Department of Education  
Attn: Erin Seaton  
Paige Hall  
Medford, MA 02155

If you have any questions regarding field placements or the material in this handbook, please contact Erin Seaton at (617) 627-3926 or ee.seaton@tufts.edu.
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☐ Pre-practicum Agreement  
(Due October 15)

☐ Mid-year Evaluation  
(Due January 15)

☐ Year-end Evaluation  
(Due June 1)

☐ Field Placement Log  
(Due end of pre-practicum)

☐ Student Evaluation of Pre-practicum  
(Due end of pre-practicum)

Return all forms via e-mail or regular post to:

Tufts University, Department of Education  
Attn: Erin Seaton  
Paige Hall  
Medford, MA  02155

To download the forms in this handbook, visit:
http://ase.tufts.edu/education/resources/student/forms.htm
INTRODUCTION

The Tufts University School Psychology Program is committed to training students to provide high quality psychological services in educational settings. Toward this end, our curriculum provides basic course work in psychological and educational foundations, as well as in the development of skills in assessment, intervention, consultation, and research. Academic instruction is carefully integrated with a minimum of 1950 hours of field-based experience over the three years of the program. These field experiences are a central component of the training students receive and allow students to apply acquired knowledge and professional skills in a field-based setting.

The sequence of field-based experiences is designed as a primary vehicle for the implementation of problem-solving practices throughout the three years of the program. Field sites are seen as a key arena where academic learning, careful observation, and critical thinking interface to produce a developing knowledge base in school psychology. Field experiences are carefully sequenced to maximize their integration with academic course work, and to meet the teaching and learning objectives of the program. These specific objectives, as outlined below, are designed to meet the overall goal of proficiency in problem-solving practices. To achieve this goal, students will demonstrate:

- Address the needs of children, families, and schools with respect to issues of race, class, culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and disabilities.
- Use problem-solving practices leading to data-based decision making and evidence-based interventions at the individual, group, systems, and policy levels.
- Demonstrate skills in the areas of assessment, collaborative problem-solving, prevention, mental health counseling, behavioral intervention, and consultation that are culturally informed.
- Evaluate research evidence (from the professional literature and from their own practice) for intervention planning, program development, and evaluation, with an awareness of the social and political context of all research activity.
- Engage in ethical, legal and responsible practice encompassing a moral and ethical commitment to addressing inequities in schools.
- Integrate coursework, field experiences, research skill, and technology into a developing knowledge base that informs practical solutions to school based problems.
FIELD EXPERIENCES

Pre-practicum

In the first year, students complete a pre-practicum (1 day per week) in a school setting of no fewer than 150 hours supervised by a licensed school psychologist. Concurrently, they enroll in a weekly supervision seminar at the university focused upon culturally responsive practice (ED 221: First Year Seminar in School Psychology Practice).

While the purpose of the seminar is to monitor students’ progress as they begin to develop a knowledge base in school psychology, the pre-practicum aims to expose students to the culture and operation of schools, and to familiarize them with the roles and functions of a school psychologist. Students are also able to develop basic skills in observation, assessment, and intervention in a manner that is closely coordinated with coursework. This is accomplished gradually over the course of the year. Initially, students “shadow” their supervising practitioners as they perform their daily activities. Students may observe classrooms, team meetings, parent conferences, teacher consultations, individual assessments, group and individual counseling, and administrative meetings. In conjunction with these observational activities, students may be asked to complete course related assignments in their introductory assessment courses. Facilitation of these assignments by the supervising practitioner is greatly appreciated.

After a period of observation, students begin to participate more directly as deemed appropriate by the supervising practitioner. As the year proceeds and the student’s abilities develop further, they begin to function somewhat more independently. For example, students might co-lead a group with a supervisor, collaborate in screenings and assessments of children for purposes of problem-solving or progress monitoring, or begin an individual counseling case.

Upon completion of the 150-hour pre-practicum and thirteen courses, students are awarded the masters degree.

Practicum

During the second year of the program, students enroll in ED 231-232: Practicum in School Psychology. The practicum requires a minimum of 600 hours in a school setting under the supervision of a licensed school psychologist. Students are at their field site on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for approximately 20 hours per week from September through the end of the school year. When students begin the practicum, they will have completed 12-13 courses in theory and practice, as well as having accumulated at least 150 hours of supervised pre-practicum experience.

The aim of the practicum is for students increasingly to perform the roles and functions of a school psychologist under close supervision as they further develop skills in assessment, intervention, and consultation. Students work in both regular and special education settings, and are expected to develop an awareness of the special needs of persons with exceptionalities. Every effort is made for students to have experiences with children of different racial, linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
The practicum is completed in conjunction with ongoing coursework in assessment, intervention, consultation, human exceptionalities, behavior management, professional issues, and childhood emotional disorders. All practicum students are supervised concurrently at the university in small groups for one and one half hours per week and in their field sites for 1-2 hours per week. The practicum also familiarizes students with the roles, responsibilities, and functions of other pupil service personnel, and orients students to the organization and operation of multidisciplinary teams and schools.

Internship

In the third year, students enroll in ED 257-258: Internship in School Psychology. This course is a 1200-hour full-time internship, which is typically completed in a school setting under the supervision of a licensed school psychologist. However, 600 hours of the internship may be completed in a clinical setting under the supervision of an appropriately licensed psychologist. The internship is seen as a capstone experience during which the intern begins to function independently as a school psychologist as he or she demonstrates increasing competency in assessment, intervention, and consultation over a wide range of situations.

Internship sites must be approved by the faculty of the school psychology program. Approval is contingent upon a site’s capacity to adequately provide the full range of experiences necessary to meet the program's training objectives for interns. The professional learning plan for interns is a means by which the intern, field supervisor, and university supervisor collaboratively can determine and monitor the intern’s professional development. These training goals are informed by the NASP Practice Model and are clearly established prior to the beginning of the internship year. Progress toward achieving the training goals is assessed at the mid-year and year-end site visits. Each of the three site visits during the internship year includes the intern, the supervising practitioner, and the university supervisor (or designate). The professional learning plan also provides the basis for the intern's evaluation of the training experience. Upon completion of the internship and the third year of the program, students will be awarded the Ed.S. and will be eligible for the initial license as a school psychologist in Massachusetts. Students must meet all other provisions established by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for licensure including, but not limited to, passing a physical examination.

NOTE: The forms in this handbook include the material necessary to adequately document the satisfactory completion of your pre-practicum. If you have any additional questions regarding these forms or the material in this handbook, please contact your university supervisor.
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS (603 CMR)

To: Supervising Practitioners and
Candidates for School Psychology Licensure

Subject: Amended Regulations for Licensure as a School Psychologist
(Effective April 26, 2005)

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST (Levels: All)

1) Initial License

   a) Completion of a master’s degree or higher in school psychology from a program
      approved by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP).
   b) Completion of an advanced practicum of 1200 hours, 600 of which must be in a school
      setting.
   c) Passing score on the Communication and Literacy Skills test (MTEL).

2) Professional License

   a) Possession of an Initial License.
   b) Three years of employment as a School Psychologist.
   c) Completion of one of the following:
      a. Passing score on the National School Psychology examination.
      b. Achievement and maintenance of a certificate or license from one of the
         following:
         a) The Massachusetts Board of Allied Mental Health Professionals, as an
            educational psychologist.
         b) The National Association of School Psychologists, as a school psychologist.

NOTE: The School Psychology License is renewable every five years.
**PROFESSIONAL WORK CHARACTERISTICS**

The National Association of School Psychologists has identified six professional work characteristics that are essential to becoming an effective school psychologist. Evaluations of these professional work characteristics are also part of the requirements for becoming a Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP). These professional work characteristics are:

1) Respect for human diversity
2) Effective communication skills
3) Effective interpersonal relations
4) Ethical responsibility
5) Adaptability
6) Initiative and dependability

At the end of each term, all students’ progress in the program is routinely reviewed by the full faculty. As part of this review, the professional work characteristics are considered as demonstrated both in the classroom and at the field site as evaluated by the field site supervisor. Finally, when applying for the NCSP credential, the program director must attest to your competency in these areas based upon input from the faculty and the field site.
THE PRE-PRACTICUM

GUIDELINES FOR FIELD PLACEMENTS

The Tufts University School Psychology Program emphasizes the importance of field-based training in its mission to train competent and effective school psychologists. Successful field-based experiences are essential in achieving the specific training objectives of the program.

With these objectives in mind, each year of field-based training aims to accomplish certain goals. The first-year pre-practicum involves a minimum of 150 hours in a school setting under the supervision of a school psychologist. The overall aim of the pre-practicum is to introduce students to the roles and functions of the school psychologist within the school setting. Concurrently, the student is gradually acquiring the beginning skills and developing the professional knowledge base necessary to perform these roles and functions. Thus, the pre-practicum is closely coordinated with the following courses that are taken during the first year of the program:

- ED 142 Education of the Exceptional Child
- ED 230 Foundations of Learning, Cognition and Academic Intervention
- ED 237 Common Factors in Counseling: Initial Interviewing and Basic Clinical Skills
- ED 241 Foundations and Contemporary Practices in Psychoeducational Assessment
- ED 243 Assessment of Cognitive Abilities
- ED 236 School-Based Mental Health
- ED 249 Social Justice in Schools
- ED 252 Group Dynamics in Educational Settings
- ED 253 Biological Bases of Behavior
- ED 255 Professional Practice, Ethics and the Law in School Psychology
- ED 274 Methods of School Psychology Research

For some of these courses, students are given assignments that are to be completed at the pre-practicum site. Examples of this might include tutoring a special needs student, observing an individual or group counseling session, conducting structured and semi-structured classroom observations, and administering an assessment instrument. Supervising practitioners are given a timeline at the beginning of each semester that is intended to serve as a guide in helping the student to plan activities and complete the necessary assignments.

Students enroll in ED 221 First Year Seminar in School Psychology Practice. This seminar meets for one hour per week throughout the year and is the laboratory component of the pre-practicum related courses. The purpose of the seminar is to facilitate the integration of the field-based pre-practicum experience with classroom learning, with an additional focus on the development of culturally responsive practice.
# Areas of Study

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<tr>
<th>Area of Study</th>
<th>Course Sequence</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Social, Psychological, and Educational Foundations of School Psychology Practice</strong></td>
<td>ED 230 Foundations of Learning, Cognition, and Academic Intervention</td>
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<td>ED 160+ Social and Cultural Foundations of Education</td>
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<td>ED 236 School-Based Mental Health</td>
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<td>ED 253 (or CD 156) Biological Bases of Behavior</td>
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<td>ED 254 Developmental Psychopathology</td>
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<td>ED 142 Education of the Exceptional Child</td>
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<td><strong>Measurement and Assessment</strong></td>
<td>ED 241 Foundations and Contemporary Practices in Psychoeducational Assessment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ED 243 Assessment of Cognitive Abilities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ED 246 Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Assessment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ED 244 Assessment and Intervention for Learning Problems(^1)</td>
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<td><strong>School-Based Prevention and Intervention</strong></td>
<td>ED 140 Behavior Management in the Classroom</td>
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<td>ED 237 Common Factors in Counseling</td>
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<td>ED 238 Advanced Approaches to Counseling</td>
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<td>ED 252 Group Dynamics in Educational Settings</td>
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<td>ED 256 Consultation in the Schools</td>
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<td>ED 249 Social Justice in Schools(^2)</td>
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<td><strong>Professional School Psychology</strong></td>
<td>ED 255 Professional Practice, Ethics, and the Law in School Psychology</td>
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<td><strong>Research</strong></td>
<td>ED 274 Methods of School Psychology Research</td>
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<td>ED 275 Seminar in Advanced School Psychology Research</td>
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<td><strong>Field-Based Learning in School Psychology</strong></td>
<td>ED 221 Pre-practicum and Seminar</td>
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<td>ED 231/232 Practicum and Seminar</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ED 257/258 Internship and Seminar</td>
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\(^1\) ED 244 is an integrated course focusing on assessment for intervention.

\(^2\) ED 249 is an integrated course focusing on issues of school psychology practice and intervention in contexts of cultural diversity.
Course Sequence by Year in School Psychology

Year I

Fall Semester (5.5 course credits)
- ED 230 Foundations of Learning, Cognition, and Academic Intervention
- ED 237 Common Factors in Counseling: Initial Interviewing and Basic Clinical Skills
- ED 241 Foundations and Contemporary Practices in Psychoeducational Assessment
- ED 142 Education of the Exceptional Child
- ED 255 Professional Practice, Ethics, and the Law in School Psychology
- ED 221 First Year Seminar in School Psychology Practice (half course)

Spring Semester (5.5 course credits)
- ED 243 Assessment of Cognitive Abilities
- ED 236 School-Based Mental Health
- ED 140 Behavior Management in the Classroom
- ED 253 Biological Bases of Behavior in Educational Settings
- One course in Social and Cultural Foundations of Education (ED 160 series)
- ED 221 First Year Seminar in School Psychology Practice (half course)

Summer I (2 course credits)
- ED 252 Group Dynamics in Educational Settings
- ED 274 Methods of School Psychology Research

Summer II (2 course credits as needed)
- ED 249 Social Justice in Schools
- Foundations course as needed (ED 160 series)

Year II

Fall Semester (4 course credits)
- ED 231 Practicum in School Psychology
- ED 238 Advanced Approaches to Counseling: Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions in Schools
- ED 246 Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Assessment
- ED 254 Developmental Psychopathology in Educational Settings
  or
- CD 191 Developmental Psychopathology and Adaptation

Spring Semester (3 course credits)
- ED 232 Practicum in School Psychology
- ED 256 School-Based Consultation
- ED 275 Seminar in Advanced School Psychology Research

Summer I (1 course credit)
- ED 244 Assessment and Intervention for Learning Problems in the Classroom

Summer II (2 course credits as needed)
- ED 252 Group Dynamics in Educational Settings
- Foundations Course as needed (ED 160 series)

Year III

ED 257 and ED 258 Internship in School Psychology

The M.A. is awarded following completion of 13 courses and pre-practicum.
The Ed.S. is awarded following completion of 11 courses post masters, practicum and internship.
Recommended Activities for the Pre-practicum

The program conceptualizes the pre-practicum experience as an opportunity to familiarize the student with the practice of school psychology as the student begins to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for professional competence. The beginning part of the year primarily involves observation of the supervising practitioner in their daily activities as a school psychologist.

Suggested activities for observation might include:

a) regular and special education classrooms providing different levels of intervention
b) the supervising practitioner administering assessment instruments
c) the supervising practitioner in consultations with school personnel, parents, and students
d) an I.E.P. team meeting and student support team meetings
e) a school building level committee meeting

In addition:

f) students should become familiar with the information found in school records
g) students should become familiar with the continuum of interventions available for students with school-based problems
h) students should become familiar with the referral process

These activities allow students to observe some key aspects of the practice of school psychology at the beginning of their program. Before the middle of the year students should begin to apply their developing skills and knowledge while being observed by their supervising practitioner.

During this time, students might:

a) administer an academic achievement test
b) collect and analyze curriculum based assessment data
c) co-lead a group with their supervising practitioner
d) support a teacher in classroom based measurement of student learning
e) monitor progress of one or more children receiving targeted instructional services
f) share systematic observation data with a classroom teacher
g) participate in a student support team meeting and an I.E.P. team meeting
h) become familiar with different types of assessment, i.e., speech, language, reading

By the end of the year, as deemed appropriate by the supervising practitioner, students can begin to function more independently in preparation for the practicum. At this time, students might be prepared to:

a) complete a cognitive assessment (referred or non-referred)
b) counsel an individual child
c) lead a group
d) tutor a special needs child
e) participate in whole class or whole school prevention programs
In sum, the pre-practicum experience is intended to familiarize students with the practice of school psychology, while providing them with the opportunity gradually to apply their developing knowledge and skills with increasing autonomy in preparation for the second-year practicum.

**Supervision**

All pre-practicum students are closely supervised, both in the field and at the university. Supervising practitioners must possess the necessary background, training, and credentials appropriate to supervising pre-practicum activities. Minimally, this involves licensure in Massachusetts as a school psychologist and at least one year of employment at the field site. Program faculty members are responsible for providing appropriate orientation to supervising practitioners unfamiliar with the Tufts program.

There is no formal requirement for weekly hours of supervision of pre-practicum students. However, individual supervision, small group supervision, supervisory seminars, or other training opportunities are strongly encouraged. Responsibility for the supervision of any work with school students lies with the supervising practitioner. No more than two pre-practicum students may be assigned to a single supervising practitioner. In recognition of their professional commitment, supervising practitioners receive a $250 stipend per pre-practicum student per year, and one Tufts University course voucher per student upon completion of the training year.

In addition to the supervising practitioner, each student is assigned a university supervisor. The university supervisor is a member of the core program faculty. For pre-practicum students, university based supervision is the weekly pre-practicum seminar (ED 221: First Year Seminar in School Psychology Practice) focused on culturally responsive practice. Concurrent with the field-based pre-practicum, students meet in small groups for one hour each week. The purpose of the pre-practicum seminar is to foster reflection and discussion of the complex issues of school psychology practice and to monitor student’s progress as they begin to develop a knowledge base in school psychology by applying problem-solving practices to their experiences in the field. The university supervisor, the field supervisor, and the pre-practicum student meet at least once at the field site to review the student’s experience and to set goals.

**Evaluation**

The supervising practitioner completes written evaluations of student progress at the middle and end of the training year. At the end of the pre-practicum year, students meet with their advisor to present their first-year portfolio focused upon their development as culturally responsive practitioners, and to receive approval to proceed to the second-year practicum. At this meeting, the student and advisor also confirm that all first-year coursework has been completed and assess progress in skill development. This review is an opportunity for students to demonstrate their initial progress toward achieving the six training objectives of the program, and to formulate goals for the second-year practicum. If a student is not approved for the practicum, that student will receive a written plan for remediating existing deficiencies.