



# VPS PRACTICUM STUDENT CLINICAL COMPETENCIES

EXPECTED CLINICAL COMPETENCIES OF UVM PRACTICUM STUDENTS

COMPETENCY #1: TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS.	
Training Objective for Competency #1: A practicum student exhibits the ability to develop rapport and build professional alliances (with colleagues and communities). A practicum student works effectively with colleagues, supervisors, and mentors, and engages with feedback constructively.	
BENCHMARKS	BEHAVIORAL ANCHORS
1. Establishes and maintains relationships with other professionals (e.g., individuals, groups, and/or communities).	1. Respectful and engaging communication with other professionals.
2. Works effectively with colleagues.	2. Respectful and engaging communication with colleagues.
3. Works effectively with supervisors and mentors.	3. Respectful and engaging communication with supervisors and mentors.
4. Engages with feedback constructively.	4. Receives feedback without defensiveness and responds appropriately.

<p><b>COMPETENCY #2: TO INCORPORATE RESEARCH AND THEORY IN CLINICAL PRACTICE.</b></p>	
<p>Training Objective for Competency #2: A practicum student can incorporate theory, scientific knowledge, and research when providing evidence-based techniques in clinical practice.</p>	
<p><b>BENCHMARKS</b></p>	<p><b>BEHAVIORAL ANCHORS</b></p>
<p>1. Knowledge of core psychological science.</p>	<p>1. Demonstrates advanced level of scientific knowledge of human behavior.</p>
<p>2. Independently applies scientific knowledge to practice.</p>	<p>2. Discusses theory and research with clinical supervisors and develops treatment plans and intervention strategies based on theory, research and measurable outcomes.</p>
<p>3. Independently pursues continued knowledge of advances in clinical science.</p>	<p>3. Reads and remains up-to-date on relevant clinical research and applies scientific knowledge and skills appropriately and habitually to the solution of problems.</p>

COMPETENCY #3: TO PROVIDE PROFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS GROUNDED IN EVIDENCE-BASED PRINCIPLES.	
Training Objective for Competency #3: A practicum student can formulate case conceptualizations, select appropriate interventions, and implement evidence-based treatment strategies in a flexible manner. A student can also effectively conduct oral case presentations regarding intervention.	
BENCHMARKS	BEHAVIORAL ANCHORS
1. Applies knowledge of evidence-based practice in treatment and case presentation.	1. Writes clear case notes and summaries grounded in evidence-based practice and provides rationale in notes, supervision, and formal clinical case presentation for intervention strategies utilizing empirical support.
2. Conducts thorough and sensitive initial assessment with attention to functional assessment, treatment goals, and valid measurement.	2. During initial assessment, builds rapport with client, conducts functional assessment, develops treatment goals, and utilizes valid and reliable assessment methods.
3. Engages in independent intervention planning.	3. Independently conceptualizes case and selects appropriate intervention.
4. Applies sound clinical judgment.	4. Uses good judgment in crises, consults with supervisors as needed, and appropriately refers clients to alternative or additional services.
5. Implements effective intervention with fidelity to empirical principles, while being flexible as appropriate.	5. Independently implements a range of appropriate intervention strategies with sensitivity to each individual client's needs and progress.
6. Evaluates treatment progress and modifies treatment plans as indicated.	6. Critically evaluates own clinical work and relevant client outcomes, and adapts treatment when necessary.

COMPETENCY #4: TO COMPLETE COMPREHENSIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS AND ACCESSIBLE ASSESSMENT REPORTS.	
Training Objective for Competency #4: A practicum student can develop and understand a referral question, choose appropriate, well-validated assessment tools, assess clients in a valid and reliable manner, write clear, useful, and accessible assessment reports, and disseminate assessment findings to appropriate parties.	
BENCHMARKS	BEHAVIORAL ANCHORS
1. Independently selects and implements multiple methods and means of evaluation with responsiveness to diversity and context.	1. Demonstrates competent use of appropriate and culturally sensitive instruments, seeks consultation as needed, and acknowledges limitations of assessment data, as reflected in written reports.
2. Independently understands strengths and limitations of diagnostic approaches and interpretation of results from multiple measures.	2. Accurately and consistently selects, administers, scores and interprets assessment tools with appropriate flexibility, such that diagnostic questions are addressed and the report leads to clinical formulation and appropriate treatment plan, while including limitations of measures.
3. Demonstrates knowledge of psychometrics of measures and integrates data effectively from a variety of assessment methods.	3. Accurately reports psychometric properties of assessment instruments, when appropriate.
4. Communicates results in written and verbal form clearly, constructively, and accurately in a conceptually appropriate manner.	4. Writes an effective, comprehensive and conceptually framed report, and effectively communicates results verbally.
5. Demonstrates the ability to base written evaluation on psychological assessment literature.	5. Writes report consistent with guidelines provided in Groth-Marnat (2009), Sattler (2008), and Sattler & Ryan (2009) <sup>[1]</sup>

<p><b>COMPETENCY #5: TO PRACTICE PSYCHOLOGY WITH SENSITIVITY TO DIVERSITY MATTERS AND DIVERSE INDIVIDUAL BACKGROUNDS.</b></p>	
<p>Training Objective for Competency #5: Practicum students attend to a broad range of diversity dimensions (e.g., age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, language, mental illness, socio-economic status), consider diversity matters when choosing assessment and intervention strategies, and adapt case conceptualization and services based on diversity considerations.</p>	
<p><b>BENCHMARKS</b></p>	<p><b>BEHAVIORAL ANCHORS</b></p>
<p>1. Independently monitors and applies knowledge of self as a cultural being in assessment, treatment, and consultation.</p>	<p>1. Independently articulates, understands, and monitors own cultural identity in relation to work with others, and initiates consultation or supervision when uncertain about diversity issues.</p>
<p>2. Independently monitors and applies knowledge of others as cultural beings in assessment, treatment, and consultation.</p>	<p>2. Independently articulates, understands and monitors other cultural identities in relation to work with others, and initiates consultation or supervision when uncertain about diversity issues.</p>
<p>3. Integrates diversity dimensions with case conceptualization, treatment plan, and case presentations.</p>	<p>3. Formulates and presents case conceptualizations and treatment plans with respect for and attention to diverse client background.</p>
<p>4. Independently and creatively adapts intervention to match client’s background and needs, and considers diversity when selecting evidence-based intervention.</p>	<p>4. Demonstrates adaptation of case formulation and intervention with responsiveness to diversity domains. Critically evaluates representation of diversity in clinical research and therefore appropriately modifies intervention.</p>

<b>COMPETENCY #6: TO ADVANCE CLINICAL RESEARCH SKILLS AND SCHOLARLY INQUIRY.</b>	
Training Objective for Competency #6: Practicum students will develop and build upon their analytic and research skills, while contributing to the clinical research community.	
<b>BENCHMARKS</b>	<b>BEHAVIORAL ANCHORS</b>
1. Applies a scientific approach to clinical work.	1. Applies scientific method and knowledge to the monitoring of client progress and outcomes.
2. Participates in clinical research (e.g., clinical data collection).	2. Assists with clinical research efforts within VPS.
3. Integrates clinical knowledge with own research program.	3. Applies clinical experiences and training to own research and dissemination.

<p>COMPETENCY #7: TO GAIN KNOWLEDGE REGARDING THEORIES AND METHODS OF SUPERVISION AND GAIN DIRECT EXPERIENCE PROVIDING SUPERVISION.</p>	
<p>Training Objective for Competency #7: A practicum student understands models of supervision, and is able to supervise more junior doctoral-level graduate students.</p>	
BENCHMARKS	BEHAVIORAL ANCHORS
<p>1. Understands the complexity of the supervisor role, including ethical, legal, and contextual issues.</p>	<p>1. Prepares supervision contract (verbal or written) and demonstrates knowledge of limits of competency, and constructs plans to deal with areas of limited competency.</p>
<p>2. Knowledge of procedures and practices of supervision.</p>	<p>2. Articulates a philosophy or model of supervision and reflects on how this model is applied in practice.</p>
<p>3. Engages in professional reflection about relationship with supervisee, as well as supervisee's clients.</p>	<p>3. Articulates how to use supervisory relationships to enhance development of supervisees and clients.</p>
<p>4. Understands other individuals and groups and intersection of diversity in the context of supervision practice.</p>	<p>4. Demonstrates integration of diversity and multiple identity aspects in conceptualization of supervision with clients, supervisees, and self as supervisor.</p>
<p>5. Gains skills in providing monitored supervision to junior colleagues.</p>	<p>5. Provides supervision to less advanced trainees, with meta-supervision from licensed psychologists, and seeks consultation as needed.</p>



COMPETENCY #8: TO GAIN KNOWLEDGE REGARDING THEORIES AND METHODS OF CONSULTATION AND GAIN DIRECT EXPERIENCE PROVIDING AND OBTAINING CONSULTATION.	
Training Objective for Competency #8: A clinical VPS Practicum Student is able to provide professional assistance and consultation services to others in response to client, family, or community needs. A student also seeks out interdisciplinary consultation as needed.	
BENCHMARKS	BEHAVIORAL ANCHORS
1. Appropriately seeks consultation from interdisciplinary providers as needed.	1. Recognizes situations in which consultation is needed (e.g., from educators, psychiatrists, other medical professionals, lawyers, cultural consultants), contacts consulting professionals, and resolves consultation questions.
2. Selects appropriate assessment/data gathering that answers consultation referral question(s).	2. Demonstrates ability to gather necessary information, and clarifies and refines referral questions based on analysis of question.
3. Provides effective assessment feedback, articulates recommendations, and advocates for client as appropriate.	3. Provides clear consultation reports and verbal feedback to consultee and offers appropriate recommendations.
4. Applies literature to provide consultation in routine and complex cases	4. Implements consultation based on assessment findings and meets consultee needs.

<p><b>COMPETENCY #9: TO DEVELOP A THOROUGH UNDERSTANDING OF ETHICAL PRACTICE IN THE CONTEXT OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY AND TO IMPLEMENT SUCH PRACTICE.</b></p>	
<p>Training Objective for Competency #9: Practicum students develop ethical decision-making skills, conduct themselves in accordance with the APA “Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct,” HIPPA, and uphold their primary ethical obligation to protect the welfare of the client/patient.</p>	
<p><b>BENCHMARKS</b></p>	<p><b>BEHAVIORAL ANCHORS</b></p>
<p>1. Routine command and application of the APA Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct, HIPPA, and other relevant standards and guidelines in the profession.</p>	<p>1. Reliably identifies complex ethical and legal issues, analyzes and addresses them, and is aware of the obligation to confront ethical dilemmas.</p>
<p>2. Commitment to integration of ethics knowledge into professional work.</p>	<p>2. Applies ethical principles and standards in writings, presentations, teaching, training and research when applicable.</p>
<p>3. Determines when it is appropriate to seek information for an ethical issue.</p>	<p>3. Uses supervision to discuss ethical dilemmas.</p>
<p>4. Independently and consistently integrates ethical and legal standards with all other clinical competencies.</p>	<p>4. Uses all domains of clinical competence to inform ethical/legal decision-making, and uses ethical/legal standards to inform all clinical decisions.</p>

<p><b>COMPETENCY #10: TO ADHERE TO PROFESSIONAL DEMEANOR AND INTERACTIONS WITH CLIENTS, PEERS, SUPERVISORS, AND ALLIED PROFESSIONALS.</b></p>	
<p>Training Objective for Competency #10: Practicum students maintain professional appearance, engage in appropriate interactions, and adhere to business practices of psychology (e.g., notes, billing, attendance).</p>	
<p><b>BENCHMARKS</b></p>	<p><b>BEHAVIORAL ANCHORS</b></p>
<p>1. Understands and adheres to professional values such as honesty, personal responsibility, and accountability.</p>	<p>1. Proactively adheres to professional values and demonstrates ability to discuss failures and lapses in adherence to professional values with peers and supervisors as appropriate.</p>
<p>2. Maintains professionally appropriate communication and conduct across settings including attire, language and demeanor.</p>	<p>2. Utilizes appropriate language and demeanor in professional setting and understands impact of these behaviors on clients, public, and profession.</p>
<p>3. Adheres to business practices of psychology in a timely manner.</p>	<p>3. Maintains notes, billing, and other documentation.</p>

<p><b>COMPETENCY #11: TO DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN SELF-CARE PRACTICES.</b></p>	
<p>Training Objective for Competency #11: Practicum students understand the importance of self-care, maintain awareness of self-care practices and stressors, and engage in self-care practice.</p>	
<p><b>BENCHMARKS</b></p>	<p><b>BEHAVIORAL ANCHORS</b></p>
<p>1. Understands the importance of self-care.</p>	<p>1. Demonstrates understanding of self-care across wellness domains.</p>
<p>2. Monitors self-care and sources of stress.</p>	<p>2. Openly communicates with peers, supervisors, and/or appropriate others regarding (1) self-care practices and (2) clinical and other stressors and their impact on clinical work.</p>
<p>3. Engages in self-care practices and intervenes early in response to stressors.</p>	<p>3. Openly communicates with supervisor regarding interruptions to self-care and seeks appropriate feedback.</p>
<p>4. Proactively seeks support for self-care in response to major stressors.</p>	<p>4. Proactively responds to major stressors by seeking support personally and from clinical advisors as appropriate.</p>

COMPETENCY #12: TO DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN APPROPRIATE CLINICAL RESPONSIVENESS.	
<p>Training Objective for Competency #12: A practicum student demonstrates strong relational skills, including empathy, maintenance of therapeutic alliance, goal consensus and collaboration, positive regard, and genuineness. A practicum student also exhibits self-reflection, understands the impact of the clinician on the therapeutic relationship, and responds appropriately to this knowledge.</p>	
BENCHMARKS	BEHAVIORAL ANCHORS
1. Develops strong relational skills, including empathy, maintenance of therapeutic alliance, goal consensus and collaboration, positive regard, and genuineness.	1. Exhibits strong relational skills, including empathy, maintenance of therapeutic alliance, goal consensus and collaboration, positive regard, and genuineness.
2. Self-reflects on own emotions, cognitions, behavior, values, strengths, and challenges in the therapeutic context.	2. Discusses relationship between own emotions, cognitions, behavior, values, strengths, and challenges to treatment with supervisor.
3. Monitors the impact of therapist behavior on client, therapeutic relationship, and treatment progress.	3. Discusses the impact of therapist behavior on client, therapeutic relationship, and treatment progress with supervisor and with client, as appropriate.
4. Responds appropriately to knowledge gained from self-reflection and clinical assessment to further therapeutic relationship and treatment progress.	4. In the service of treatment progress and therapeutic relationship, appropriately maintains and modifies style, intervention, and other therapy-relevant behavior in response to supervision, self-reflection, and clinical assessment.