# TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW .................................................. 3

II. PROGRAMS OF STUDY .................................................. 4

III. COURSE DESCRIPTIONS .............................................. 7

IV. EVALUATION OF GRADUATE STUDENTS ...................... 9

V. THESIS GUIDELINES .................................................. 10

VI. THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAM ...................................... 14

VII. PRACTICUM & INTERNSHIP GUIDELINES .................... 16

VIII. GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS ................................. 22

IX. SCHOLARSHIPS ..................................................... 24

X. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY ........................................... 25

XI. APPENDIX A: EVALUATION FORMS ......................... 26
I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Philosophy & Goals:

Welcome to the Department of Psychology at Auburn University Montgomery. This handbook is provided to all graduate students enrolled in the Master of Science program in Psychology. The Department of Psychology faculty members are committed to providing our students a first-class education. The field of psychology has spent over 138 years conducting scientific research to better understand human behavior and mental processes, and a good deal of what it has learned will be imparted to you as a graduate student. We work hard to provide students a challenging education, and want employers and co-workers to consider our graduates among the most competent and well-qualified people in their organization. Our goal is to attract the best students possible and to help them gain the skills to begin a career of their own, or gain entry into a doctoral program in psychology. Students in our program can graduate either by completing a practicum, or by successfully completing and defending an original research project (thesis).

The policies and procedures specified in this handbook are specific to the department of psychology. All psychology graduate students are also subject to the policies and procedures governing graduate students as outlined in the current version Auburn University Montgomery Graduate Catalogue. The catalogue is available on the AUM website.
II. PROGRAMS OF STUDY

Choosing a Program: Thesis or Practicum?

A thesis is a guided research experience that is supposed to help students learn to produce and publish original research. Most of our graduate students choose to not do a thesis. If they do not plan to do doctoral work we recommend the practicum program. Students may find it more difficult to obtain employment in settings that provide direct clinical services if they have not completed a practicum.

Students can choose to complete both programs. In this scenario, the thesis satisfies the graduation requirement, and a practicum is undertaken to either strengthen the student’s academic vita, or to help her or him pursue post-Master’s employment in a clinical setting.

As an alternative to doing a formal thesis and a full practicum, students have two other options available. A student could complete a formal thesis project and a circumscribed practicum. Typically this would mean a practicum of around 250-300 hours rather than 500 hours. Also, a student can choose to complete a full practicum and work closely with a faculty member on research.

Programs of Study

Below are the specific programs of study. Students need to work closely with their academic advisor to make sure they are registering for courses that will lead towards completion of one of these programs of study. The department has a once-a-year admission policy (fall only). Thus each class is fall start cohort.
The Clinical Practicum Program (16 courses)

First Year
  • Fall
    o PSYC 6243 Principles of Psychotherapy *
    o PSYC 6273 Individual Intelligence Testing *
    o PSYC 6450 Advanced Social Psychology or PSYC 6780 Advanced Developmental Psychology
    o PSYC 6263 Psychometrics for Psychological Assessment (online)
  • Spring
    o PSYC 6530 Advanced Abnormal Psychology
    o PSYC 6283 Objective Psychological Assessment *
    o PSYC 6190 Research Methods
  • Summer
    o PSYC 6100 Issues and Ethics **
    o PSYC 6150 Theories of Psychotherapy *
    o PSYC 6982 Master of Psychology Comprehensive Exam

Second Year
  • Fall
    o PSYC 6250 Group Psychotherapy
    o PSYC 6450 Advanced Social Psychology or PSYC 6780 Advanced Developmental Psychology
    o PSYC 6924 Practicum
  • Spring
    o PSYC 6160 History and Systems of Psychology
    o PSYC 6290 Research Statistics
    o PSYC 6924 Practicum

*Course should be completed with a grade of “B” or higher prior to beginning practicum

**Students must have completed or be currently enrolled in this course during the semester they begin practicum.
The Clinical Thesis Track (17 courses)

First Year
- Fall
  - PSYC 6243 Principles of Psychotherapy
  - PSYC 6273 Individual Intelligence Testing
  - PSYC 6450 Advanced Social Psychology or PSYC 6780 Advanced Developmental Psychology
  - PSYC 6263 Psychometrics for Psychological Assessment (online)
- Spring
  - PSYC 6530 Advanced Abnormal Psychology
  - PSYC 6283 Objective Psychological Assessment
  - PSYC 6190 Research Methods
- Summer*
  - PSYC 6100 Issues and Ethics
  - PSYC 6150 Theories of Psychotherapy
  - PSYC 6982 Master of Psychology Comprehensive Exam

*In order to make timely progression through the program, we strongly recommend that students have a thesis topic and advisor by the end of their first summer.

Second Year
- Fall
  - PSYC 6250 Group Psychotherapy
  - PSYC 6450 Advanced Social Psychology or PSYC 6780 Advanced Developmental Psychology
  - PSYC 6902 Independent Study (For Thesis)
- Spring
  - PSYC 6160 History and Systems of Psychology
  - PSYC 6290 Research Statistics
  - PSYC 6902 Independent Study (For Thesis)
  - PSYC 6992 Thesis
III. COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Course Prerequisites

In some situations the department may require a student to take other undergraduate psychology courses before being admitted to full graduate standing, especially if an applicant does not have an undergraduate degree in psychology.

Courses

- **6100. Professional Issues, Ethics, and Diversity** (3). Pr., graduate standing. Ethical issues and their relevance for the student's professional identity. Practice research applications of the American Psychological Association's code of ethics will be examined, along with cultural and diversity issues. Usually offered summer term.

- **6150. Theories of Psychotherapy** (3). Pr. graduate standing. An academic exploration of the basic theoretical systems of psychotherapy. Usually offered summer term.

- **6160. History and Systems of Psychology** (3). Pr., graduate standing. A study of historical developments leading to various systematic foundations in contemporary psychology. Usually offered spring term.

- **6190. Research Methods** (3). Pr., graduate standing. Addresses investigative techniques of research with special emphasis on principles and practices of research design and methodology. Usually offered spring term.

- **6243. Principles of Psychotherapy** (4). Pr., graduate standing. An introduction to counseling and psychotherapy with an emphasis on both basic skills and common therapeutic principles. Usually offered fall term.

- **6250 Group Psychotherapy** (3). Pr., graduate standing. An overview of group psychotherapy and technique. Usually offered fall term.

- **6263 Psychometrics for Psychological Assessment** (1) online. Pr., graduate standing. Concepts of test reliability, validity and their applications to psychological testing. Usually offered each term.

- **6273. Individual Intelligence Testing** (3). Pr., PSYC 4153 or equivalent. Supervised practice in the administration and interpretation of individual intelligence tests for children and adults. Usually offered fall term.

• **6290. Research Statistics** (3) Pr., graduate standing. An advanced lecture and laboratory course to train students to utilize statistical analysis for complex research designs. Usually offered spring term.

• **6450. Advanced Social Psychology** (3). Pr., graduate standing. An examination of selected theory and research in such areas as the socialization process, interpersonal dynamics, conformity, and attitude formation and change. Usually offered fall term.

• **6530. Advanced Abnormal Psychology** (3). Pr., graduate standing. Provide students with a working understanding of the various disorders treated and managed by professional psychologists. This includes familiarity with operationalized diagnostic criteria and theoretical perspectives on various disorders. Usually offered spring term.

• **6780. Advanced Developmental Psychology** (3). Pr., graduate standing. An advanced investigation of the influences on socioemotional, cognitive, and behavioral age-related changes across the lifespan, including current theoretical perspectives and empirical research. Usually offered fall term.

• **6902. Independent Study and Project** (1-6). Pr., graduate standing. Topics relevant to the individual's program of study, which are not available in the remainder of the curriculum. Needed for the production of a thesis. May be repeated for a total not to exceed 9 hours. Offered every term.

• **6924. Practicum in Psychology** (2-6). Pr., PSYC 6243, 6273, 6263, 6530, 6283, 6100, and 6150. Supervised practice in an applied setting. Content and placement to be arranged by the student and department. May be repeated for a total of 6 hours. Usually offered every term.

• **6982. Master in Psychology Comprehensive Examination** (0). Pr., completion of core. A series of exams covering core areas that parallel many of the topics assessed in the EPPP licensing exam for psychologists.

• **6992. Thesis** (0). Pr., graduate standing, committee chair's approval. Completion of a research project demonstrating proficiency in methodology and integration of disciplinary concepts.
IV. EVALUATION OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

The psychology department formally evaluates the progress and performance of students who have earned full graduate admission after they have attempted 15-18 hours of graduate course work. Students on provisional status are evaluated every semester. The definition of provisional (PV) can be found in the AUM Graduate Catalogue.

The student evaluation is based on the following criteria
(a) academic performance - it is assumed that all students will do at least B work in each course
(b) maturity, professional attitudes, and ethical behavior
(c) rate or speed of progress toward the degree.

Professional and ethical standards are based on the American Psychological Association’s Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct.

The psychology department recognizes two categories of student status: good standing, and warning. Warning status is intended to signify that performance is deficient and that the student must rectify the situation to return to good standing. Having an overall graduate GPA below 3.00 or having more than two incompletes on the transcript will automatically result in the student being placed on warning status. If a student’s performance does not improve in a timely manner, the faculty may drop the student from graduate study. In extraordinary circumstances, a student may be dismissed from the program without first being placed on warning.

The department will inform students of the results of the evaluation meeting within two weeks of the meeting. When a student is placed on warning, a letter of evaluation from the department chair specifies what needs to be done to return to good standing and, if determined by the faculty, the consequences of failure to do so. As with provisional students, those students who are on warning will also be evaluated every semester. Problems that develop after the initial evaluation may also affect a student’s status.

In addition to the departmental first year evaluation process described above, all graduate students are also evaluated each semester based on their overall GPA. This is a university wide policy. If a student’s overall (cumulative) GPA falls below 3.00, they will receive an academic warning letter. If a student receives more than two academic warning letters they may be released from the program.
V. THESIS GUIDELINES

Thesis Overview

A master’s thesis consists of the design, implementation, and reporting of the results of a research project. The project is carried out under the direction of a major professor and the thesis committee. The thesis option will be of special benefit to those who plan to seek a doctoral degree. The thesis is less universally expected of an applicant to a Psy.D. program.

Why do a thesis? A thesis demonstrates interest and competence in scientific and scholarly work, which is what most doctoral programs are interested in instilling in their students. A thesis requires effort and organizational skill. The whole project from start to finish typically takes a year or more to complete.

Graduate students who pursue a thesis option for the Master of Science degree should first spend some time becoming acquainted with the faculty. Faculty interests can be seen by, a) viewing faculty web pages, b) reviewing research articles posted in the front of the psychology department offices, or c) looking up a faculty member on PSYCHINFO. It is a good idea to ask fellow students about faculty members and look at the number and nature of theses that a faculty member has directed in the past.

Being accepted into the program does not guarantee a student access to a thesis director/major professor. Students must find a faculty member who is willing to work with them.

Research Methodologies

Students can develop their own topic and approach a faculty member, or they can ask a faculty member if she or he has a project in mind that could be used as a thesis. Research projects suitable for theses are not restricted to experimental studies. Past theses in the psychology department have utilized historical, experimental and correlational designs. Single-case experimental designs, quasi-experimental designs, multivariate designs, and surveys are all acceptable methodologies. Replication and extension of previous scientific research is also acceptable and original contributions to the scientific literature are strongly encouraged.

Thesis Registration and Coursework

A student who decides to do a thesis must register for PSYC 6902-Independent Study credit. Students typically register for 6-hours of Independent Study. This would usually be 3 hours before the proposal meeting and three hours after the proposal meeting. Students must have successfully completed the proposal phase in order to receive a grade for the first independent study. Until then, an “In Progress” (IP) grade will be assigned which does not affect GPA.
Students cannot sign up for all 6 independent study hours in one semester. A student who begins a thesis and then decides to switch to the practicum track must do enough work to receive credit for the independent study hours for which they registered while in the thesis track.

The Psychology Department will allow students to use testing materials and laboratory equipment in our supplies as long as such use does not conflict with faculty teaching. The cost of any other expendable supplies is the responsibility of the student. Students can apply for a Student Research Fellowship. Information on the fellowship can be accessed at the AUM Research Council’s web site http://www.aum.edu/academics/sponsored-programs/research-council. Laboratory space will also be provided by the department whenever available.

**Preparing for the Thesis**

To prepare for the thesis, in addition to selecting a professor and talking about topics, students should spend a semester working in a research lab to gain experience with data collection and analysis. The work in the lab will continue as the thesis is being conducted.

**The Proposal Meeting**

The proposal meeting requires a brief written thesis prospectus. The *theses prospectus* includes a summary of the problem to be studied, methods, proposed statistical analyses and references. These sections are subject to revision at the proposal meeting. The students should also bring the IRB materials and the proposed informed consent form to this meeting.

In addition to your thesis director, two members of the graduate faculty in psychology may be asked to serve as committee members. Occasionally, it may be appropriate to select a committee member from the graduate faculty of another department, especially if their expertise complements the research area.

The proposal meeting will include the student and the three thesis committee members. The student should prepare an oral presentation, approximately 20 minutes in length that includes a justification for the study. The student should be prepared to respond to questions from the committee members who may also make additional recommendations and suggestions at this time.

**I.R.B. Approval & Research Training**

Students must allow time for the university Internal Review Board on Human Research to review and approve their proposal. The IRB application (also available on the Research Council web page: http://www.aum.edu/sponsored-programs/institutional-review-board) should be submitted after the committee approves the proposal. All researchers engaging in human subjects research must be trained in the ethical treatment of research participants. This training is available through the IRB website.
After The Proposal Has Been Approved (Data Collection and Analysis)

Once the student has secured the approval from the IRB, data collection may commence. Under the guidance of the thesis director, students are encouraged to involve undergraduate student in the collection of data and data analysis. Student should take the lead in analyzing his or her own data - with appropriate guidance from the thesis director. Undergraduate student involved in the project should also be able to participate in the initial review of the results.

The final product will be an article-length document that is nearly ready for submission to a peer review scientific journal. The copy for the library, prepared following the standards described the Auburn University Graduate School Thesis and Dissertation Guide should include the IRB approval and copies of all materials and instruments used in the study, copyright permitting.

Thesis Defense

The thesis defense will follow the same format as the proposal meeting except that any interested person in the university community may attend. Once the meeting time is set, an announcement must be distributed by the student to all faculty in the Department of Psychology, the Dean of the College, and the Provost. One copy must be posted on the departmental bulletin board.

The student should prepare an oral presentation consisting of a brief summary of the hypotheses, methodology, data analysis, results and discussion. This presentation should take 20 minutes. As at the proposal, the committee members will ask the student questions. Those in attendance may also ask questions.

Following a reasonable question and answer period, the committee and the student will meet for further discussion, if needed. The committee will then meet in private to recommend approval or disapproval. Granting approval or disapproval is subject to the three-person committee alone. Immediately upon the completion of this discussion, the student will be informed of the outcome (i.e., whether she or he passed). Any final changes in the thesis will be discussed with the student. Once corrections are made, the cover sheet must be signed by the committee members and also by the Provost. The committee may agree to sign the thesis cover sheet at the time of the defense and leave the changes up to the thesis advisor and the student.
Post-defense Administrative Requirements

REQUIREMENTS FOR THESES AND DISSERTATIONS

The AUM Library accepts deposits of all theses and dissertations completed by the students of Auburn University-Montgomery. The Library is in no way responsible for the content and/or style of these works. Content and style are the responsibilities of the student and the director or committee supervising the thesis or dissertation.

Upon the acceptance of a thesis or dissertation by the appropriate committee, the student will be responsible for submitting a digital copy (i.e., PDF) to the Library. The digital copy must also include a copy of the thesis cover sheet signed by the committee members, the director of the thesis/dissertation, the department head (if applicable), and the Associate Provost of Academic Affairs. The digital copy can be submitted via a flash drive, CD, or email (archives@aum.edu).

The digital copy will be added to the institutional digital repository in the Library and will be made available online. Students will also be required to sign the Digital Thesis Clearance Form, which allows the thesis to be uploaded into the AUM Library’s Digital Repository. This form also covers waiving copyright for the Library to loan the thesis/dissertation through interlibrary loan, and to reproduce copies of the work lost or damaged copies. Copies will also be permitted following fair use standards of the copyright law. The copies must be on deposit in order for the student to have completed graduation requirements.

The student has the option of having additional copies bound for them; however, the cost of binding all copies of the thesis will be the responsibility of the student. The AUM Library has an agreement with a print on demand service for students to use if they so desire. Please see the AUM Library Thesis Webpage for more information.

You can find all paperwork and instructions needed for thesis completion at the library’s thesis web page listed below:

http://libguides.aum.edu/c.php?g=496862
VI. THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

The comprehensive exam includes six 50-item multiple-choice tests. These tests were designed to allow students to demonstrate basic knowledge in the field of psychology, and they help prepare students to study for the licensing exam taken by psychologists and psychological technicians, although passing the licensing exam is the sole responsibility of students after they complete the program. The tests cover:

- Statistics & Design (Required)
- Ethics (Required)
- Assessment & Test Construction
- Psychotherapy Theories & Abnormal Psychology
- Developmental & Social Psychology
- Learning, Cognitive, & Physiological Psychology.

Requirements

* All students must take comps.
* Students must have an overall GPA of 3.0 or greater to be eligible to sit for comps.
* Students also must have taken the relevant course(s) before taking each comp exam.
* All students must take the Ethics and the Statistics/Design comps. Students may then choose three out of the remaining four comps.
* The last comp must be scheduled no later than four weeks before the end of classes in the semester the student intends to graduate.

 Procedures

All exams are self-paced and multiple testing days are announced at the beginning of each semester. A passing score is 60% or higher on each comp. Before taking the first comp, students must register for PSYC 6982, usually in the summer semester between their first and second year of the program. Until all five comps are passed, a grade of “In Progress” (IP) will appear on the student’s transcript. After all five exams are passed, a grade of “Satisfactory” (S) will be awarded.

Brief study guides are available on the AUM Department of Psychology web page. Review books are on reserve in the psychology department and may be checked out for 24 hours at a time.

Comps are administered on at least four different days during the fall and during the spring semesters (TBA) and twice during the summer.

Content Areas Covered

The following is a list of the classes corresponding to each comprehensive exam:
1. **Statistics and Design test**: Research Statistics (6920) and Research Methods (6190).
2. **Ethics test**: Ethics and Professional Issues (6100).
3. **Assessment & Test Construction test**: Principles of Psychological Assessment (4153) and Individual Intelligence Appraisal (6273) and Advanced Objective Assessment (6283).
4. **Therapy and Abnormal test**: Advanced Abnormal Psychology (6530). Parts of Principles of Psychotherapy (6243) and Theories of Psychotherapy (6150) are also helpful.
5. **Developmental and Social test**: Advanced Developmental Psychology (6780) and Advanced Social Psychology (6450)
6. **Learning, Cognitive & Physiological test**: Cognitive Neuroscience (6670), Principles and Theories of Learning (6280), Physiological Psychology (6320), and Cognitive Psychology (6660). (Parts of Theories of Psychotherapy should be helpful but is not required for the test.)

**Failing a comp**

If a student fails an exam, she or he is allowed one retake, no sooner than four weeks after the date of the failed exam. If a student fails the same exam a second time, she or he must meet with the department chair, the advisor, and the departmental graduate coordinator to develop a written remedial plan, which may include additional coursework. Inability to pass the comprehensive exam may result in a student’s not being awarded a master’s degree from AUM.

**Recommended Schedule for Taking Comps**

First summer: Assessment & Test Construction  
Fall of Second Year: Ethics and Therapy & Abnormal  
Spring of Second Year: Statistics & Research Design, Developmental & Social or Learning, Cognitive, & Physiological Exam
VII. PRACTICUM & INTERNSHIP GUIDELINES

Overview of the Practicum

Clinical training in the AUM Psychology Department consists of two primary experiences. The didactic portion of training occurs within courses aimed at building clinical knowledge and skills. The applied portion of clinical training occurs in practicum.

Completing an approved practicum is necessary to sit for licensure as a Psychological Technician in the state of Alabama. The types of licenses that an individual with a Master’s degree in clinical psychology can sit for vary from state to state, but a practicum is always required to sit for any license.

A full practicum sequence at AUM consists in 500 total hours, 250 of which are direct service. Direct service includes intakes, consultations, therapy and testing. Indirect service consists of intake reports, session notes, seminars, supervision, and research. The Alabama licensing law requires that at least 60% of the supervision time must be provided by an on-site licensed psychologist. Only a limited number of our practica sites offers on-site supervision by a licensed psychologist.

Please note that states in which psychology students are licensed under the professional counseling laws, e.g. Florida, the required practica hours are usually 750 total hours, with about 320 of these hours being direct service.

Receiving Practicum Approval

Course Prerequisites: Before beginning their practicum, students must have taken the classes relevant for that site.

Sites involving counseling: Principles of Psychotherapy, Theories of Psychotherapy, and Ethics and Professional Issues.

Sites involving assessment: Intelligence Assessment and Objective Psychological Assessment

Director of Clinical Training Approval: Students must make an appointment with the DCT to request review for a practicum by the mid-point of the semester prior to the semester they would like to begin practicum. The DCT will consult with the other clinical faculty and either approve or not approve the request. If a request is not approved the DCT will meet with the student and describe the concerns of the faculty and discuss a remediation plan.

There may be situations when no DCT has been appointed. When these situations arise, students should contact the department chair who will assign them a faculty practicum supervisor.
**Site Interview:** Practicum Sites: Once a student has met the course perquisites and has received approval from the DCT, he or she must interview with a site and receive the site’s approval. Students may interview with more than one site but must choose a single site in which to complete practicum hours.

**Practicum Contract** – Once a student is approved by the site to complete a practicum, he or she must complete the Practicum Contract with the person who is to serve as the primary site supervisor (see Appendix A). Completing this form involves a dialogue between student and site supervisor as to

- a) the student’s clinical and/or scholarly interests and how the student can gain exposure to such interests within the parameters of the practicum, and
- b) the estimated proportion of time the student will spend in various practica activities, both direct service and indirect time-on-site, e.g. clerical duties vs. clinical contact, or individual therapy vs. intake evaluations etc.

The practicum contract is the contract between the program, the student and the site. The Practicum contract must be turned into the DCT signed by BOTH the student and site supervisor before the beginning of the semester in which the practicum is to begin. Students will not be registered for practicum hours until this form is submitted to the DCT. If the site has its own contract, a student should bring that form to the DCT for review and completion.

**Registering for Practicum & Liability Insurance:** Once the practicum contract is completed, signed and turned into the DCT, the DCT will register the student for Practicum in Psychology. The student can register for 3 hours across 2 semesters, 2 hours across three semesters or 6 hours across one semester. Note that for licensure, most states require that the practicum span six months. To graduate the students must have registered for and received a “pass” on their transcript for 6 hours of practicum course credit.

Students are covered under a university liability policy when they are formally registered for the class. If students are not officially registered for practicum during a semester in which they are serving at a site, they must purchase their own liability insurance. Such policies can be purchased through many different providers and are usually quite affordable. The most commonly used liability insurance provider is American Psychological Association Insurance Trust (APAIT). Their web site is: [http://www.apait.org/apait](http://www.apait.org/apait).
GIVEN THE FLUID NATURE OF CLINICAL PLACEMENT, STUDENTS SHOULD CONSULT THE DIRECTOR OF CLINICAL TRAINING FOR CURRENT INFORMATION ABOUT PRACTICUM SITES.

**Practicum Hours & Time Commitment**

Many students are employed full time while taking their courses. The transition to practicum course work requires a greater time commitment that precludes full time employment. Students should plan on spending at least 18 hours/week during the practicum. Those working full time must carefully plan for this transition, as it is unlikely that field placement sites can provide sufficient hours beyond the normal (8:00 am - 5:00 pm) weekday hours.

All practicum hours are to be recorded weekly by the student in a practicum hours log. These logs will be used to determine when practicum requirements are met (Appendix A, hard copy version of this handbook only).

When a student is on site they are subject to the vacation and “days off” schedule of the site. This means that students may need to work at the site during AUM holidays. This schedule can be negotiated with the site supervisor.

Most students complete their practicum hours on-schedule, but occasionally a student’s hours extend beyond the end of the semester she or he wishes to graduate. In this case, the DCT will sign off on a student’s graduation if the student has less than 40 hours, direct or indirect, remaining. The student will be able to graduate, but they must sign an agreement with the department to complete the required number of hours. The clinical endorsement letter will be withheld until such hours are completed and the site supervisor completes the final evaluation form. In these situations, the student must register for 1 hour of practicum during the semester after they have received their degree so that liability insurance is in-effect during the period they are completing their remaining 40 hours or less.

**Practica & Student Employment**

Generally, students cannot complete a practica at a location in which they currently work. There are some exceptions to this rule, particularly if a student’s place of employment offers substantive opportunities for clinical or other applied psychology training. However, the boundaries between the student’s work duties and practicum-learning opportunities must be exceedingly clear in the judgment of the DCT.

A student CANNOT receive payment for any duties that constitute tasks for which they are receiving practicum credit, e.g., a student cannot get paid to give IQ tests for practicum credit. Any time that is denoted as practicum time, cannot be time for which the student is receiving payment.
Sometimes a practicum site will ask to employ a student. This is appropriate only if the DCT can verify that such employment meets the above standards and criteria.

**Supervision**

Once placed in a practicum, the student will meet weekly with their site-supervisor. Supervision will involve discussion and review of the student’s clinical work. The professional goals that the student stated prior to beginning the practicum should be reflected in supervisory feedback and form the criteria upon which the student’s practicum performance will be evaluated.

It is the student’s responsibility to be prepared for supervision with tapes, session notes and specific questions. This will help the supervision go smoother and be geared towards the growth and learning experience of the student. It is very important that at least one hour of supervision occurs each week and that this weekly supervision is documented in the student’s practicum hours log.

**Professional Ethics**

Students are required to conform to the standards of conduct outlined in *The Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* of the American Psychological Association. The Ethics and Professional Issues class is one of the requirements of practicum. Supervisors are expected to aid the student in applying the principles to the real-life experiences of the practicum.

**Practicum Evaluations**

At the both mid-point and the end of practicum, the DCT will mail an evaluation form to the site supervisor (Appendix A). The site supervisor will complete this form and share the feedback with the student. The form will then be mailed back to the DCT and placed in the student’s graduate file. If the student is receiving clinical supervision from a faculty member, the faculty member will also complete an evaluation form. At the end of the practicum, students may be asked to complete an exit interview. At this time, the student will have the opportunity to evaluate the site and the supervisor(s). The course grade will be assigned by the DCT at AUM.

**Terminating a Student’s Practicum**

A student can be removed from a practicum site for a variety of reasons. Reasons that would constitute removal from a practicum site fall into three broad categories:

a) Unprofessional behavior  
b) Behavior that constitutes a potential harm to a client  
c) Failure to obtain an average of a score of “3” on the mid-practicum evaluation
Unprofessional behavior includes chronic tardiness or absenteeism. Inadequate interpersonal skills and an inability to function as part of a team of professionals also falls under the category of unprofessional behavior.

Lack of openness to supervision also constitutes unprofessional behavior. Students who cannot properly and consistently utilize and implement feedback from a supervisor are at risk of being terminated from their practicum. Students are working under the license of their supervisor(s) during their practicum, and it is of the utmost importance that they communicate with their supervisor in a timely and thorough manner all issues related to their clinical work. With unprofessional behavior, the DCT may attempt to construct a remediation plan with the student and the site before termination occurs. If remediation does not result in behavioral changes, termination is likely.

Termination is likely to occur swiftly if a student engages in behaviors on-site that endanger a client’s welfare, especially if the issues were previously discussed in supervision. Examples of such behaviors includes not properly documenting clinical services, breaching confidentiality, or deliberately engaging in behaviors that are clinically contraindicated.

If the DCT deems a student must be terminated from a practicum site, the student may appeal the decision to the department chair. The chair may choose to have the whole clinical faculty review the student’s performance. The clinical faculty may override the DCT and reinstate the student to their practicum or confirm the need for termination.
VIII. GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

**Description**
The Department of Psychology offers a small number of graduate assistantships (GAs) that are available on a competitive basis. The Department offers three types of Assistantships. First, we offer Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs). Duties for the GTA typically include assisting a professor (e.g., exams, lectures) with one or more undergraduate classes. The purpose of such an assistantship is to prepare graduate students to teach their own section after they have completed 18 hours of graduate course work in psychology. Second, we offer the Graduate Research Assistant (GRAs). Here, the graduate student will assist the professor with research activities. Through working with an experienced researcher, graduate students will have the opportunity to develop much needed research skills. Third, on occasion we have Graduate Administrative Assistantships (GAAs) geared toward departmental administrative activities. Please note that these different types of assistantships may be “blended” from time to time (e.g., a GTA that also engages in research activities), depending on faculty and departmental needs.

**Compensation and Time Requirements**
All assistantships pay a stipend of $1000.00 per semester. Assistantships will typically require students to be available for between 2 and 5 hours per week during the day (i.e., 8am-5pm). Out-of-state students awarded a GA will be eligible to pay in-state tuition rates.

**Eligibility Requirements**
1) Must be fully admitted to the department’s graduate program (i.e., “GR” status).
2) Must be a full-time student (9 hours).
3) Must have overall GPA $\geq 3.00$.

In addition to the above eligibility requirements, decisions regarding the awarding of assistantships will include the student’s previous academic record, standardized test scores, letters of reference and a statement of purpose from the student’s graduate program application file. Faculty evaluation of a student's professionalism and classroom performance will also be considered for GA applicants who have already taken courses in the department.

**Application Process**
To apply, students should fill out the application form on the following page and submit it as an attachment (word document) via email to the department’s administrative associate Ms. Tonya Sexton at tsexton1@aum.edu. Students should normally receive an email confirming receipt of their application within one week.

**Award and Notification Process**
Graduate assistantships will be awarded through a committee consisting of the department’s graduate coordinator and the chair of the department. Assistantships are normally awarded between May and July for the upcoming fall semester. Assistantships can be renewed for the spring semester if the student’s performance is satisfactory. Assistantships are not typically awarded during the summer semester.
APPLICATION FOR PSYCHOLOGY GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP

Name:
Undergraduate GPA:
MAT/GRE Scores:
State of Residence:

Please state the major reason(s) for requesting an assistantship:

Do you have any experiences relevant to classroom teaching? If yes, briefly describe:

Do you have any experiences relevant to conducting research? If yes, briefly describe:

Have you been a graduate assistant before? If yes, list how many and who you worked with.
IX. Scholarships for Graduate Students Available at AUM

*The Continuing Student Merit Scholarship.* This scholarship is open to all currently enrolled graduate students. The deadline to apply is March 1. To be eligible, students must have completed at least 12 GPA credit hours at AUM, must have and maintain a 3.0 or greater GPA on work at AUM, and maintain full-time enrollment each term. The scholarship website is:

http://www.aum.edu/current-students/financial-information/scholarships/graduate-scholarships

*The Alumni Scholarship for Graduate Students.* Contact the Alumni Office for information on how to apply. 334 244-3369

*The Ida Belle Young Scholarship.* Please go to https://mars.aum.edu/secure/finaid/young/ to get information about the IBY graduate scholarship and to apply.
X. ACADEMIC HONESTY (from the AUMANAC Student Handbook)

Students are expected to maintain academic integrity in all work pursued at Auburn University Montgomery. Students should not condone violations of academic integrity and should act in a manner to prevent opportunities for violations of academic integrity:

- Obtaining unauthorized help from another student during examinations or other graded or credit activities;
- Knowingly giving unauthorized help to another student during examinations or other graded or credit activities;
- Using notes, books, or other sources of information or assistance during examinations or other graded or credit activities, unless authorized by the examiner or instructor;
- Obtaining, without authorization, an examination or any part thereof;
- Plagiarism-submitting for credit, without the appropriate acknowledgment, a report, notebook, speech, outline, theme, thesis, dissertation, or other written, visual, or oral material that has been knowingly obtained or copied in whole or in part from another individual's academic composition, compilation, or other product, or commercially prepared paper;
- Taking an examination or doing academic work for another student, or providing one's own work for another student to copy and submit as his/her own.

Sanctions for violations of academic integrity

The instructor of a course in which a violation of academic integrity occurs shall assign the student or students committing the violation a grade of "F" in the course. A notation of the grade and words: "Assigned for Academic Dishonesty" which may be placed in the student's academic file by the faculty member. The possibility of additional sanctions or exceptions to this sanction is outlined in Section VI of the AUMANAC Student Handbook.
AUM Department of Psychology
Practicum Contract

Student Name: ____________________________ Practicum Site: ______________________________
AUM Faculty Advisor: ____________________________ Site Supervisor: ______________________________

Expected Dates of Practicum: _______ to _______  Estimate Hours Per Week: _______

1. Specific Activities

   Estimated proportion of total time on site for each activity
   • Direct Service: 250 Hours
     □ Counseling and Psychotherapy _______
     □ Intake Evaluations _______
     □ Consultation/Psychoeducation/Outreach _______
     □ Psychological Testing & Feedback _______
   • Indirect Service 250 Hours
     □ Case Notes, Intake Reports _______
     □ Test Interpretation, Report Writing _______
     □ Treatment Teams, Staffings, Seminars _______
     □ Research/Program Evaluation _______

2. What specific goals does the student have for professional development?
   • _______________________________________________________
   • _______________________________________________________
   • _______________________________________________________
   • _______________________________________________________

The following are basic assurances that will exist between AUM and the above named practicum site and criteria for successful completion of an AUM psychology practicum.

1. AUM will communicate with the site supervisor at the mid-point of the practicum experience regarding the student’s performance and progress. The site supervisor will complete an intern evaluation form at the mid-point and feedback will be provided to the student by the director of training.

2. The practicum supervisor will provide clinical supervision at a minimum of one regularly scheduled hour per week of face-to-face supervision of clinical services being provided by the student. For students wishing to meet AL licensure requirements at least 60% of supervision must be provided by a licensed psychologist.
3. A log of direct and indirect hours spent in practicum work will be kept by the student and reviewed and signed by the site-supervisor on a regular basis. The student should forward these completed logs to the Director of Clinical Training at regular intervals so they can be placed in their graduate file.

4. A practicum must last a minimum of six months, and must consist of a minimum of 500 hours of time on-site, 50% of which (250) must be direct provision of clinical services.

Signatures

Site Supervisor: ________________________
Faculty Supervisor: NA
Director of Clinical Training: _________________________
Graduate Student: ____________________

Auburn University Montgomery
M.S. Program in Clinical Psychology
Mid-Practicum Evaluation for Psychology Students

Student’s Name: Date:

Agency/Training Site:

Faculty Supervisor: Site Supervisor:

Evaluation completed by: ________________________________

II. Please rate the intern’s performance along the following questions using the rating scale below:

5 – Significantly Exceeds Supervisor Expectations
4 – Moderately Exceeds Supervisor Expectations
3 – Meets Supervisor’s Minimal Expectations
2 – Below Supervisor’s Expectations
1 – Significantly Below Supervisor Expectations and Unsatisfactory for Professional Clinical Practice.
X – Not Applicable or Not Observed

Please rate the intern’s ability and behavior at the mid-point of practicum
## General Practicum Requirements

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**Comments:**
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*Comments:*

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<td>Manages their own feeling and reactions to clients effectively through seeking consultation and engaging in appropriate types of self-care.</td>
<td>X 1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
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*Comments:*
### Assessment, Diagnosis & Treatment Planning

| Knowledge of DSM-IV diagnostic categories. | X 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Able to properly conduct a diagnostic intake interview and generally provide accurate multi-axial diagnoses. | X 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Able to competently conduct an intake and write and comprehensive intake report. | X 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Able to independently formulate a basic treatment plan based on multiple sources of client data. | X 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Able to set goals with client in the course of treatment. | X 1 2 3 4 5 |

**Comments:**

### Testing:

| Able to administer and interpret intellectual tests to a competent degree. | X 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Able to administer and interpret personality tests to a competent degree. | X 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Able to competently write and integrated psychological report that pulls from objective testing data as well as qualitative individual interviews and family interviews. | X 1 2 3 4 5 |

**Comments:**

### Documentation and Administrative Duties:

| Able to write progress notes in a manner consistent with directives of practicum site. | X 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Able to maintain case documentation in a timely manner; keeps client record up to date. | X 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Able to competently perform case management duties, i.e. referral, assisting clients in accessing auxiliary services and supports. | X 1 2 3 4 5 |

**Comments:**
Practicum Student’s Signature

Date

Agency Supervisor’s Signature

Date

AUM Faculty Supervisor’s Signature

Date

AUM Director of Clinical Training

Date
Final Practicum Evaluation

Student’s Name:          Date:

Agency/Training Site:

Faculty Supervisor:         Site Supervisor:

I. Please rate the intern’s performance along the following questions using the rating scale below:

5 – Significantly Exceeds Supervisor Expectations
4 – Moderately Exceeds Supervisor Expectations
3 – Meets Supervisor’s Minimal Expectations
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X – Not Applicable or Not Observed

General Clinical Skills
Please rate the level of an intern’s knowledge of the following areas at the end of their practicum experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
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<th>3</th>
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<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ethics</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>2. Theories of Personality and Development</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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Comments:
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II. Supervisor’s Narrative Evaluation:

A. Please comment briefly on the intern’s progress since the mid-point evaluation.

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

B. Based on your experience with this student (and other students from our program, if applicable):

1. Are there areas where our psychology program could improve its preparation for interns in your particular career field?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

2. Are there areas that you see as a particular strength of our psychology program?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
C. If there were a job opening in your organization for an entry-level professional position, would you consider hiring this intern?

Yes _____   No _____

________________________  _________________________
Practicum Student’s Signature  Agency Supervisor’s Signature

_________  _________
Date       Date

______________________________  ____________________________
AUM Faculty Supervisor’s Signature  AUM Director of Clinical Training

_________  _________
Date       Date