

May Institute

Core Competency Model 2024

Research and experience shows that training is more likely to result in skill acquisition and use when it is focused on specific competencies and proficiencies. The more specific the training program is, the more likely that its goals will be attained.

This internship has several overarching aims:

- Interns will acquire requisite clinical skills for entry level practice as professional psychologists in a manner consistent with the scientist-practitioner model.
- Interns will utilize empirically-supported and evidence-based treatments and be well versed in clinical research and practical application.
- Interns will develop a culturally sensitive approach to issues related to diversity and individual differences.
- Interns will exhibit high levels of professionalism and ethical conduct.

In order to achieve these aims, we have organized a very specific set of training objectives that lead to proficiency and competence in nine Profession-wide competency domains: Clinical Assessment, Clinical Intervention, Clinical Research and its Practical Application, Individual and Cultural Diversity, Professional Values and Attitudes, Supervision, Consultation, Communication and Interpersonal Skills, and Ethical and Legal Standards (at the introductory-advanced level). Each competency has behavioral outcomes associated with it and interns and their supervisors will both have the task of helping attain these outcomes. Interns have plenty of opportunity to do so, since the training program is designed around helping interns gain experience, receive supervision and instruction, and then demonstrate each competency.

Proficiency in Clinical Assessment

A psychologist is proficient in the most appropriate and valuable assessment strategies for the individual being served and the clinical situation being addressed. Essentially, interns will be asked to conduct clinical interviews, derive an accurate diagnosis, write reports and develop a comprehensive formulation. This work will be continuously evaluated by their supervisor, who will provide feedback and training around each case.

Proficiency in clinical assessment is trained and evaluated during clinical supervision. As interns present new cases, or present a new focus of interventions, supervisors will inquire about case formulation – understanding of diagnosis and the influence of variables such as behavioral environment, medical factors and culture/ethnicity. This formulation is the basis for evaluation of assessment skills.

Proficiency in Clinical Intervention

A psychologist is proficient in planning and implementing empirically supported interventions appropriate for the individual being served and the setting where services are provided.

There are five outcomes expected for this competency. Essentially, interns will be asked to develop appropriate intervention strategies which can be referenced to the empirical literature. Interns should be able to cite that research base when asked by a supervisor (or a client). Interns should be able to recommend appropriate additional consultations such as psychopharmacology evaluation, medical evaluation, psychological testing, and other services. Your supervisor will review your work and provide feedback and guidance during the implementation.

At the intern level, proficiency in clinical intervention is typically evaluated during clinical supervision when interns present their recommended intervention. Recommendations should be based on two empirical sources: 1) the research literature relative to the presentation and formulation, and 2) direct observation of unique and specific features of the case.

Proficiency in Clinical Research and Practical Application

A psychologist is proficient in the application of research knowledge and analytic skills to clinical services and clinical service delivery systems.

In order to gain experience and training in this competency domain, interns will be asked to complete one research project during the program year: either a well-conceived and executed clinical case study suitable for presentation at a conference or publication or a program evaluation project in which interns objectively assess some aspect of a service delivery program where interns work and present your findings in a report with recommendations and solutions. In the past, interns have designed patient satisfaction surveys, evaluated intervention programs, and drafted recommendations for improving clinical standards and systems. This project allows interns to apply analytic skills toward specific outcomes that practicing psychologists must achieve every day.

Proficiency in Clinical Issues of Individual and Cultural Diversity

A psychologist is sensitive to the influence of culture, ethnicity, and other individual differences (such as gender, age, education, economics) in clinical service delivery and is proficient at incorporating knowledge of diversity into her/his practice.

You will be asked to identify aspects of diversity in your caseload and adjust your clinical approach and style on the basis of your findings. Interns will be asked to increase your awareness of your own diversity and use this information as interns develop formulations and clinical strategies.

Proficiency in Professional Values, Attitudes, and Behavior

A psychologist is proficient in the knowledge and application of the principles in ethical practice of psychology. A psychologist is professional in conduct and demeanor while functioning as a psychologist. A psychologist is aware of standard paths to professional licensure and board certification. You will be expected to conduct yourself professionally in all your interactions with peers, supervisors, and colleagues.

Proficiency in Supervision

A psychologist understands the standards for clinical supervision, ethical issues inherent in supervision, and basic principles of effective supervision and management.

Because future roles of psychologists in clinical service delivery will likely include managerial or supervisory positions, we begin the process of orientation to these roles with an overview of standards and strategies for effective clinical supervision and clinical management.

Proficiency in Consultation and Interprofessional Skills

A psychologist is proficient in the knowledge and application of consultation models and methods within diverse clinical settings and with diverse clinical populations.

Proficiency in Communication and Interpersonal Skills

We have identified three competency objectives that relate to consultation practices. First, interns should be aware of contemporary models of consultation, in particular a problem-solving approach that is the basis of behavioral consultation. Competent consultants also assess the needs and objectives of consultees through collaborative, non-judgmental, and empirically focused decision making. Finally, consultation practices must be adapted to diverse educational, mental health, rehabilitation, and related service settings. Evaluation of your consultative skills will occur through supervisor observations, review of written reports, and discussion within seminars.

A psychologist is proficient in his/her ability to communicate effectively with clients and their families/caregivers, colleagues and collaborators, trainees, and others across settings. We have identified competency objectives that related to Communication and Interpersonal Skills. Competent psychologists demonstrate an ability to communicate clearly and effectively in oral and written modalities to integrate and explain therapeutic concepts, evaluation results, research findings, etc. in a manner that is best suited for the recipient of the communication (e.g., family, colleague, providers in other disciplines, etc.).

Proficiency in Ethical and Legal Standards

A psychologist is proficient in the ethical standards related to the field of psychology as well as the laws in the jurisdiction for which they practice. We have identified competency objectives that train interns on ethical concepts and consideration of legal concepts into his/her professional activities including clinical, research, educational, administrative, and other activities. During the Ethics Seminars, interns will learn about how to apply the ethics code to clinical practice.