

Guidelines for NUS undergraduate Psychology major students undertaking external clinical work

Note: Clinical work is defined as any work that is undertaken directly with clients, such as assessments, behavioural observations, or interviewing of clients or/and their family members and offering any form of intervention or support.

1. Code of Ethics

Since you will be undertaking a psychology-related internship/practicum, you are strongly encouraged to be familiar with and abide by the Singapore Psychology's Code of Ethics¹ which articulates the professional conduct of Psychologists practicing in Singapore.

2. Work Plan

You are strongly encouraged to develop a work plan about what you would like to achieve and learn during your internship/practicum and this should be discussed with your on-site supervisor (preferably, before you formally commence your work).

A) Recommended hours for direct client-facing and clinical work, and supervision:

1. Minimum direct client-facing work to be at least 1 quarter of the internship (i.e., for every 8-hour day on the job, interns should minimally be seeing clients for 2 hours either for formal face-to face sessions or online sessions or observing the sessions of a psychologist). The remaining time can be given to other agreed upon responsibilities like admin and research, etc.
2. Minimum of 1 hour of supervision for every 4 hours of direct clinical work. This supervision can be either individual or group supervision.

B) Competence Guidelines for Psychology Internships That Are Client-Facing:

Internships should give interns the opportunity to develop and achieve a minimum level of competency (see table below)

	APAC Accreditation Standard (Foundational and pre-professional competencies)*	SkillFuture Competency Framework (Generic competencies for Associate Psychologists)*
Demonstrate an understanding of appropriate values and ethics in psychology	x	x

Note:

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Demonstrate interpersonal skills and teamwork. This includes contributing to a positive and cooperative working environment by fulfilling own responsibilities and providing support to coworkers to achieve team goals	x	x
Demonstrate appropriate interpersonal communication and interview skills in situations appropriate to psychological practice and research. This includes active listening, clarifying and reflecting, effective questioning, summarising and paraphrasing, developing rapport, appropriate cultural responsiveness and empathic responding. Additionally, recognising own internal feelings and emotional states to manage interpersonal relationships in social situations	x	x
Demonstrate service orientation. This includes exceeding customer needs and expectations and handling service challenges with a positive mindset. Demonstrating an understanding of the organisation's service vision, mission and, values		X

*Note: The above guidelines are taken from the Australian APAC Accreditation Standards for undergraduate psychology training https://apac.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/APAC-ccreditation-Standards_v1.2_rebranded.pdf; and Singapore's Skills Future Competency framework for Associate Psychologists <https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider4/default-document-library/skills-framework-for-social-service.pdf>

3. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

As soon as you commence your internship/practicum, be familiar with the SOPs for emergencies at the site, for example, what to do in the event of a fire or when a client becomes aggressive or absconds, etc.

4. Supervision

The general understanding in the community is that one must have a minimum of a Masters in a sub-discipline of psychology (e.g., clinical, educational, counselling, organizational, forensic, health, etc.) to practice as a psychologist in Singapore. There is a Singapore Register of Psychologists (SRP)² registry which bears the names of psychologists who are registered practitioners in Singapore. Note that this list is not exhaustive and may not include the names of all practicing psychologists as it is not compulsory to be a

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Registered Psychologist with SRP in order to practice in Singapore.

You are encouraged to seek a supervisor (internal or external) who is a Registered Psychologist with SRP or is eligible for SRP registration, if your on-site clinical supervisor does not fall in one of these two categories.

¹ <https://singaporepsychologicalsociety.org/resources/sps-code-of-ethics/>

² <https://singaporepsychologicalsociety.org/members-directory/>

5. Self-Introduction

- Introduce yourself in all correspondence with clients, their families and other stake holders as “NUS student on internship/practicum” and NOT as “Psychologist or Therapist or Counsellor”
- Indicate the duration of your internship/practicum
- Provide your supervisor’s name

For example: *“Hi, my name is Jane. I am a NUS Psychology student in my second year and am on internship here at Pandora Clinic. I will be attached here for two months. My supervisor is Mr Gerard Paul”.*

6. Direct Clinical Work

- Ensure that you practice within your areas of competence. For example, if you have not been trained or are not being supervised to do Applied Behaviour Analysis, you should NOT engage in such work
- Avoid being in a 1-1 situation with clients and their family members if this work is not supervised
- Ensure that you have preliminary understanding of the clients that you work with, such as, their presenting problems, medical problems, and formulation

7. Documentation

Obtain relevant templates from supervisor for the following:

- Documenting client sessions
- If handing over clients
- If corresponding with clients, their families and other stakeholders via email

8. Confidentiality

- No identifying information should be taken out of the site or conveyed to individuals

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who are not part of the practice.

- When discussing your client with work colleagues, this should be done with a clear purpose rather than for the purpose of simply sharing information. Such sharing should also be done in a private setting.

9. Contract of Service

- Obtain a Contract of Service from your employment. Read it carefully before signing. For more information, refer to the CFG document³

³ <http://nus.edu.sg/cfg/docs/default-source/default-document-library/internship-guidelines-for-employers.pdf>

- Once you have committed to the internship/practicum, display professionalism by seeing it through where possible.
- It is your responsibility to take note of the notification period of termination. If no time period is indicated, the good practice is to provide at least 1 month advance notice.

10. Contact

If you have any questions or feedback about your internship/practicum, please contact Ms Regina Siew from the Dean's Office at reginasiew@nus.edu.sg.

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