



## THE ROYAL

# Psychology Practicum Student Training Handbook: Policy, Procedures, and Due Process Guidelines



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## I. INTRODUCTION

**Welcome, and thank you for your interest in our practicum training opportunities.**

### **Eligibility Criteria**

Due to the number of requests for placements and the complexity of the clinical presentations of the populations we serve, we only offer practicum placements to Ph.D. level students from Clinical Psychology Programs.

### **Practicum Training**

The Royal Ottawa Health Care Group (ROHCG; hereafter The Royal) provides a full range of mental health services to residents of Eastern Ontario and Western Quebec. Psychology Practicum training is offered at the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre (ROMHC), which includes an off-site Community Mental Health Program (CMHP), and the Brockville Mental Health Centre (BMHC). The Royal offers practicum training experiences and opportunities for in-depth assessment and treatment of a wide range of mental health issues. Due to the high demand for clinical psychology placements, University of Ottawa clinical psychology students have priority, followed by requests from practicum students completing a clinical Ph.D. or Psy.D. Program from other academic institutions, provided that there is a Teaching Affiliation Agreement between The Royal and the given academic institution.

As part of our commitment to education and care and our mandate as an academic health sciences centre, The Royal is committed to practicum training and facilitating learning and professional growth for practicum students. We also appreciate the benefit practicum students bring in terms of their perspectives, experiences, and skills. The philosophy of the program is a strengths-based, empowering approach to supervision that involves a bi-directional process involving discussion of clinical cases, reading, ethical and legal issues and any concerns.

Broadly, the practicum training experience is designed to provide the student with the opportunity to gradually assume the professional roles of a psychologist, consistent with the scientist-practitioner model. These roles entail the integration of previous training and a further development of the scientific, professional, and ethical bases of professional practice.

### **Practicum Training Handbook**

This handbook has been developed by The Royal's Psychology Training Committee. The handbook is designed to provide an overview of pertinent organization policies and procedures and information regarding expectations concerning clinical training, clinical supervision, and professional development. Practicum supervisors also comply with the requirements and procedures, which are outlined in this handbook. Students are expected to know and follow the guidelines contained in this handbook. Should an issue arise that is not covered in this handbook the student should first contact the Practicum Coordinator (PC; see contact information below). The Director of Clinical Training (DCT) at The Royal should be contacted only if the issue is unable to be addressed with the PC.

## Contact Information for Director of Clinical Training and Practicum Coordinator

<b>Dr. Judy Makinen, C.Psych.</b>	<b>Director of Clinical Training</b> Email: <a href="mailto:Judy.Makinen@theroyal.ca">Judy.Makinen@theroyal.ca</a>
<b>Dr. Nina Fusco, C.Psych.</b>	<b>Practicum Coordinator</b> Email: <a href="mailto:Nina.Fusco@theroyal.ca">Nina.Fusco@theroyal.ca</a>

## II. REQUIREMENTS

In order to make your transition to The Royal as smooth as possible, there are a few guidelines that you should review and forms you will need to complete before your placement commences. You will receive a general student information package from Human Resources and other forms to complete, explaining which documents to complete and where to bring your documents. Please review carefully.

### Police Records Check

A Police Records Check for Service with the Vulnerable Sector valid within six months of start of placement (no matter the length of your placement) is required. To prevent any delays in starting student placements, students may want to get their Police Records Check from their local police service well in advance, keeping in mind that the records check must be within six months of their start date. If the student has not been a resident of Ontario for the past five years, then they must obtain the Police Records Check from their former place of residence. Wait times vary across police services, and can be as long as six to eight weeks. The original document must be presented to the PC and an appointment will need to be made with Human Resources, prior to the first day of placement. Please refer to the general information booklet provided by Human Resources for details on this process. Practicum students interested in doing a placement at the Secure Treatment Unit in Brockville should be aware that the Ontario Ministry of Correctional Services and Community Safety requires an additional security clearance in order to enter the facility. This clearance begins with a copy of the Vulnerable Sector Police Records Check.

### Professional Liability Insurance

Practicum students are required to have professional liability insurance before seeing any clients during their practicum training placement. Insurance is available privately (e.g., [www.bmsgroup.com](http://www.bmsgroup.com) offers a discount for members of the Canadian Psychological Association) or through your university department.

### Immunizations

Students must certify that their immunization requirements are up to date **prior** to placement. Please refer to the general student information package from Human Resources for details.

### Corporate Welcome

All staff, volunteers and students are required to attend a full day Corporate Welcome organized by Learning and Development. The PC or the supervisor will register practicum students.

## **Workload Measurement**

Record your direct clinical care activities daily on the computerized workload measurement system used by the program where you will be doing a placement (Emerald WMS, CRMS or Meditech). Orientation for Emerald Workload Measurement System is provided through an e-learning module on OREO and should be completed in the first few weeks of placement. Students can access this module through the Psychology Discipline page. The system is used as a means of providing data to the Royal and tracking the contributions of trainees. Thus, accuracy of reporting is critical.

**Please refer to the OREO site for information on the Workload Measurement System.**

## **III. PROFESSIONAL, ETHICAL AND LEGAL CONDUCT**

Students must avoid multiple relationships including those stated below. Students may not be supervised by the following:

- Anyone for whom they have served as a paid psychological assistant
- Student's current or past psychotherapist
- Anyone with whom they have or have had in the past a business relationship with outside The Royal
- Anyone with whom they have, or have had in the past, a sexual relationship or an emotionally intimate relationship
- A relative

It is imperative that each student consults with the PC/DCT in any and all relationships where there is a lack of clarity.

Practicum students are responsible for behaving in a professional manner. Therefore, practicum students are expected to be familiar with the *CPA Code of Ethics* and the *College of Psychologists of Ontario Standards of Professional Conduct*. The Royal also has its own policies and procedures, which should be discussed with the student's supervisor. In cases where staff is suspected of unprofessional, unethical, or illegal practices, the student must notify their supervisor immediately and/or the PC/DCT.

## **IV. PRACTICUM PLACEMENT PROCESS**

The length of the placement (e.g., 6 months, 12 months) and minimum requirements for the placement is determined by each program. Please refer to program descriptions provided to your academic institution for specific information. It is important to note that although students are recommended for a placement at The Royal based on their training needs and specific program requirements (e.g., level of experience), this does not guarantee the placement. All students must undergo an interview to assess suitability.

### **Practicum Student Responsibilities**

Practicum students who are not assigned to The Royal or to a particular program of interest at The Royal should discuss this with the Director of Clinical Training at their University. There is no appeal process in place at this stage of the process.

When the student has been informed of the potential placement, they must contact the PC. However, before the PC will proceed with the process, the practicum student must confirm that they have the following documents:

- an electronic copy of their CV;
- current (within 6 months) Police Reference/Records Check (for the Vulnerable Sector);
- proof of professional liability insurance (e.g., BMS Group);
- ensure their immunizations are up-to-date.

Once placement has been deemed suitable (see below), it is also the student's responsibility to:

- attend the mandatory Corporate Welcome;
- complete all mandatory training;
- obtain office keys and ID Badge if applicable and return them at the end of placement.

### **Practicum Coordinator's Responsibilities**

The PC will forward the CV to the prospective supervisor, who will review it and contact the student for an interview. The student must confirm that they possess the aforementioned documents before an interview is arranged. Note: it is at the supervisor's discretion to decide on placement suitability and to inform the student and PC of the decision and rationale.

Once the PC has been notified by the supervisor to proceed with the placement, the PC must meet with the student to:

- complete HR forms (Student Placement Record Form, sign confidentiality pledge, etc.) then bring the documentation to Human Resources;
- make an appointment with Occupational Health if applicable;
- email Facility Services Help Desk (copy Security, Psychology Administrative Assistant to initiate computer accounts, HR Help Desk, and the supervisor) with the student's name, start date, length of placement, and the program in which they will be working, so a work order can be sent to Security to initiate ID Badge.

For placements at the Forensic Treatment Unit and Secure Treatment Unit in Brockville, the student will make an appointment with Human Resources at BMHC one to two weeks prior to start of placement to complete all HR forms (Student Placement Record Form, sign confidentiality pledge, CPIC, etc.) and with Occupational Health and Safety to review vaccinations as needed.

### **Supervisor's Role and Responsibilities**

After the supervisor interviews the student and the placement is deemed suitable, the supervisor will inform the student and Practicum Coordinator of the placement decision. If the placement proceeds, the Psychology Administrative Assistant will send a form to the supervisor requesting information needed (i.e. open computer accounts, office space, keys, etc.) and discuss/arrange the following during the first few meetings with the practicum student. It is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure the following:

#### **1. Orientation to the program/service and institution, including:**

- inform the program manager of the practicum student placement start and end dates
- request office space, access to a phone and keys for the student to access major areas

- orientation to the physical space and resources, including where the student can obtain supplies, administrative support, therapy rooms, etc.
- training on the OREO mandatory modules (a form will be provided by the Psychology Administrative Assistant to the supervisor and student to check and sign)
- provide training to complete workload measurement
- clinical team meeting times and other important meetings/program activities

## 2. Complete the supervisory agreement

This process will involve helping the practicum student identify his/her short-term goals for the rotation they are completing with you. This form is available on OREO. It is critical that expectations are clear and mutually discussed and agreed upon.

### The following areas are covered:

- Alternate supervision plan
  - Rotation goals
  - Specific duties (number of clients and compulsory and optional activities)
  - Limitation of activities
  - Supervision (frequency, method and preparation)
  - Criteria, modes and frequency of evaluation
  - Evaluation process and time frame including provision of all evaluation form
3. The supervisor should discuss with the practicum student his/her expectations regarding the manner in which the practicum student should prepare for supervision sessions. This includes the expectation to: review notes; listen to tapes; select specific passages; do additional reading and seek out second opinions, and so forth. The supervisor and practicum student should discuss whether the practicum student is expected to arrive with a summary and a case formulation, whether supervision will take the form of an open discussion and brainstorming, and whether parts of a recording will be reviewed.
  4. The supervisor should discuss the focus of supervision including assessment or therapy techniques; development of case formulation; development of treatment plan; diagnostic issues; maintaining a consistent approach; exploration of ethical issues; report writing; etc.
  5. The priority given to different cases and aspects of training (e.g., discussion of case history at the beginning of supervision; maintaining a treatment focus during therapy; termination issues at the end of therapy) should be discussed.
  6. The supervision process should be collaborative, bi-directional, strengths-based and dynamic. The philosophy is to provide a safe and empowering learning environment to enhance learning and the engendering of professional competence in a developmental manner.
  7. The timing and method of feedback (i.e., systematic and objective; given soon after a therapeutic experience; explicit and specific performance criteria are outlined; feedback is reciprocal) should be discussed. Please note that a mid-term evaluation is optional but recommended if the placement is longer than six months. The final evaluation should not contain a significant amount of new information, as feedback should be ongoing during



supervision. These evaluations serve as an opportunity to integrate and synthesize previously discussed information and to highlight strengths and areas for growth. Evaluations can be filled out collaboratively with the practicum student or by the supervisor beforehand and reviewed collaboratively with the practicum student. The supervisor is responsible for providing the PC with a signed PDF copy of the evaluation, which will be forwarded to the academic institution's DCT.

### **Supervision Notes**

The College of Psychologists of Ontario recommends that supervision notes be completed after each supervision session of a non-registered provider (see supervisor form on OREO). Supervisors and practicum students should keep their supervision notes. If issues of concern arise, it is in the supervisor's and the practicum student's best interests to document these in detail.

### **Evaluation:**

1. The practicum student and supervisor will meet to discuss the progress to date and to evaluate the quality and focus of supervision. The basis for this discussion will be the mid-term (optional for six-month placements) and final evaluation form. If a concern arises that is of an ethical nature that requires more immediate attention, this will be done in consultation with the practicum student.
2. With regard to the evaluation of the practicum student, the supervisor needs to discuss with the student the perspective of the evaluation. For example, the evaluation can reflect the student's progress to date (i.e., a comparison of the student's current performance level to the level at which they began the placement, and/or completion of stated goals outlined in the supervision agreement). Alternatively, the evaluation may reflect a comparison of the practicum student's performance to that of other practicum students at the same stage of training. Ideally, the evaluation will reflect a combination of these two approaches.
3. As stated earlier, feedback during the evaluation should not be new. This should be a time to consolidate feedback given previously during the weekly supervision sessions.
4. The practicum student's input is solicited to ensure that the feedback is consistent with his/her experience and to determine ways in which the student may fulfill goals of the practicum placement (e.g., skill sets, type and number of assessments). The supervisor and practicum student will sign the practicum evaluation form indicating that the content has been discussed. Signing does not imply agreement. The supervisor will retain the signed copy, provide a copy to the student and send a PDF to the Practicum Coordinator, who will forward the evaluation to the university.



## V. Due Process Guidelines

### If Problems Arise

The following guidelines are designed to facilitate open communication about practicum trainee difficulties and effective problem-solving in response to them.

## IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT OF PRACTICUM STUDENT PROBLEMS & CONCERNS

### DUE PROCESS GUIDELINES

This document provides practicum students and staff with due process general guidelines, the definition of problematic behaviour, the complaints process, remediation and sanction alternatives, and the review process.

#### I. Due Process: General Guidelines

Due process ensures that decisions about Practicum Students are not arbitrary or personally based. It requires that the Training Committee identify specific evaluative procedures that are applied to all Practicum Students, and provide appropriate appeal procedures available to the Practicum Student. All steps need to be appropriately documented and implemented. General due process guidelines include:

1. During the orientation period, Practicum Students will be informed of the expectations related to professional functioning.
2. Stipulating the procedures for evaluation, including when and how evaluations will be conducted. Such evaluations should occur at meaningful intervals.
3. Articulating the various procedures and actions involved in making decisions regarding impairment.
4. Instituting, when appropriate, a learning and development plan for identified problem(s), including a time frame for expected remediation and consequences of not rectifying the problem(s).
5. Providing the Practicum Student with a copy of the learning and development plan and/or sanction and how the Practicum Student may review the supervisor's action.
6. Ensuring that the Practicum Student has sufficient time to respond to any action taken by the supervisor.
7. Communicating with graduate programs about any problematic behaviour with Practicum Students requiring formal remediation or sanctions taken by the practicum supervisor.
8. Using input from multiple professional sources when making decisions or recommendations regarding the Practicum Student's performance and or behaviour.
9. Documenting, in writing and to all relevant parties, the actions taken by the practicum site and its rationale.

#### II. Definition of Problematic Behaviour

It is a professional judgment as to when a Practicum Student's behaviour becomes problematic rather than of concern. Practicum Students may exhibit behaviours, attitudes or characteristics that, while of concern and requiring additional training, are not unexpected or excessive for professionals in training. Problems typically become identified as impairments when they include one or more of the following characteristics:

1. the Practicum Student does not acknowledge, understand, or address the problem when it is identified;
2. the problem is not merely a reflection of a skill deficit that the Practicum Student can rectify or develop in the course of their practicum placement;
3. the quality of services delivered by the Practicum Student is sufficiently negatively affected;
4. the problem is not restricted to one area of professional functioning;
5. a disproportionate amount of attention by training personnel is required;
6. the Practicum Student's behaviour does not change as a function of feedback, remediation efforts, and/or time; and/or
7. breach or violation of ethical standards, law or organizational policy.

### **III. Complaints Process.**

If a supervisor or other staff member has concerns about a Practicum Student's behaviour as described in Section II, the following procedures will be initiated:

1. The concerned individual will be directed to consult with the Practicum Coordinator to determine if there is reason to proceed and if the behaviour in question is being rectified.
2. If the individual who brings the concern to the Practicum Coordinator is not the Practicum Student's supervisor, the Practicum Coordinator will discuss the concern with the Practicum Student's supervisors.
3. The Practicum Coordinator will meet with the Practicum Student to get their perspective.
4. The Practicum Coordinator and supervisor(s) determine that the alleged behaviour in the complaint, if proven, would constitute a problematic behavior as per Section II, the Practicum Coordinator will inform the individual who initially brought the complaint.
5. The Practicum Coordinator will meet with the Psychology Professional Practice Lead and Training Executive to discuss the concerns and possible Remediation and/or Sanctions to be taken to address the issues.
6. Whenever a decision has been made by the Practicum Coordinator in consultation with the Psychology Professional Practice Lead about a Practicum Student's training, the Practicum Coordinator will inform the Practicum Student in writing and will meet with the Practicum Student to review the decision. Any formal action taken by the Training Program will be communicated in writing to the Practicum Student's Academic Training Director. This notification indicates the nature of the concern and the specific Remediation and/or Sanction implemented to address the problematic behaviour.
7. The Practicum Student may choose to accept the conditions or may choose to have the decision reviewed as per Section V.

### **IV. Remediation and Sanction Alternatives**

It is important to have meaningful ways to address problematic behaviour once it has been identified. When implementing remediation or sanction interventions, the supervisors must be mindful and balance the needs of the Practicum Student with the problematic behaviour, the clients involved, and hospital staff. Under most circumstances, the following sanctions are sequential; however, in some instances (i.e., gross violations of professional conduct), they may be escalated at the discretion of the supervisor, Practicum Coordinator, Training Executive, and Professional Practice Lead (PPL).

1. Verbal Warning to the Practicum Student by the supervisor emphasizes the need to discontinue the problematic behaviour under discussion. The supervisor and the Practicum Student will work together to establish a means of addressing the problematic behaviour. This intervention must be documented in the supervisor's notes. Should the problematic behaviour(s) fail to be resolved, to the satisfaction of the supervisor based on the agreed upon timeline, the supervisor is to notify the Practicum Coordinator.

2. The Practicum Coordinator's Involvement ensures that the behaviour is monitored beyond the supervisory level. The Practicum Coordinator will be made aware of the problematic behaviour by the supervisor at the first indication that the problematic behaviour persists and should not wait until the quarterly review sessions. The Practicum Coordinator will meet with the Practicum Student to ensure he/she acknowledges:
  - a) that the ongoing concern has been brought to the attention of the Practicum Student
  - b) that the Practicum Coordinator is aware of, and concerned with, the ongoing behaviour and/or performance rating
  - c) that the behaviours associated with the rating are not significant enough to warrant a written direction at this time.

The Practicum Coordinator's involvement must be documented and placed in the Practicum Student's file.

3. Written Direction through Learning and Development Plan is a time-limited, remediation-oriented, closely supervised training period that may be implemented at any point during the residency year. The Practicum Coordinator along with the supervisor(s) will draft a Learning and Development Plan (LDP) document and it will be reviewed with the Practicum Student, who has a right to request a review of this action under Section V. The purpose of the LDP is to assist the Practicum Student by identifying areas for improvement with the full expectation that the Practicum Student will complete the practicum placement.

The Learning and Development Plan must include:

- a) Competency
- b) Required skill improvement
- c) Practicum Student's responsibilities
- d) Required monitoring
- e) Timeline for correcting the problem

The length and termination of the Learning and Development Plan will be determined by the Practicum Coordinator in consultation with the supervisor(s). Depending on the severity of the concern, the Training Executive and Psychology Professional Practice Lead also may be involved. The Practicum Student's Academic Director of Training will be informed in writing of this sanction.

If the Practicum Coordinator determines that there has not been sufficient improvement in the Practicum Student's behaviour or performance to remove the Learning and Development Plan, then the Practicum Coordinator in consultation with the supervisor(s) will discuss possible courses of action. These may include continuation of the remediation efforts for specified time period or implementation of another alternative. The Practicum Coordinator will meet with the Practicum Student to communicate that the conditions for revoking the Learning and Development Plan have not been met and what new courses of action will be implemented. The decision will be documented in writing and retained in the Practicum Student's file.

Additionally, the Practicum Coordinator will communicate to the Practicum Student and the Psychology Professional Practice Lead that if the Practicum Student's behaviour does not change, the Practicum Student will not successfully complete the practicum placement.

4. Suspension of Direct Service Activities requires a determination that the welfare of the Practicum Student's client population has been jeopardized and/or a determination that the Practicum Student has failed to meet the standards established by the College. Therefore, direct service activities will be suspended for a specified period as determined by the Practicum Coordinator, in consultation with the Psychology Professional Practice Lead. The Practicum Student's academic institution will be notified of such suspension. At the end of the suspension period, the Practicum Coordinator, in consultation with the Practicum Student's supervisors, will assess the Practicum Student's capacity for effective functioning and determine when direct service can be resumed and which may depend on certain conditions.
5. Dismissal from the Practicum Placement involves the permanent withdrawal of all hospital responsibilities and privileges. When specific interventions do not, after a reasonable time period, rectify the impairment and the Practicum Student seems unable or unwilling to alter her/his behaviour, the Practicum Coordinator will discuss with the Psychology Professional Practice Lead the possibility of termination of the placement at The Royal. Dismissal would be invoked in cases of severe violations of the CPA Code of Ethics, or when imminent physical or psychological harm to a client is a major factor, or the Practicum Student is unable to complete the placement. When the Practicum Student has been dismissed, the Practicum Coordinator will communicate to the Practicum Student's Academic Training Director the circumstances, remediation plans and the outcome that led to the Practicum Student being dismissed from the placement.

**V. Review Process:**

The basic meaning of review process is to inform and to provide a framework to respond, act or dispute an action taken under Section IV. A review process may be initiated at the request of a Practicum Student or by the Practicum Coordinator. Circumstances that may warrant an immediate review process include, but are not limited to, insufficient time in the practicum placement for implementation of a Learning and Development Plan and/or serious violations of ethical conduct and professional standards. The steps to be taken are listed below.

1. When required under this section, a Review Panel will be convened by the Practicum Coordinator and Training Executive within five (5) working days of receipt of a request for a review or formal complaint.
  - The panel will consist of three staff members (conflicts must be declared) selected by the Psychology Professional Practice Lead with recommendations from the Practicum Coordinator, Training Executive, and the Practicum Student involved in the dispute. The Practicum Coordinator, Training Executive, and the Psychology Professional Practice Lead cannot be panel members.
  - Once a panel is convened, a hearing will be conducted within ten (10) working days.
  - In attendance will be the Practicum Coordinator, Training Executive, the three staff panel members and the Practicum Student/staff member (and his/her legal counsel).
2. Within five (5) working days of the completion of the hearing, the Review Panel will submit a written report with recommendations (made by majority vote) for further action to the Psychology Professional Practice Lead.
3. Within three (3) working days of receipt of the report with recommendations, the Psychology Professional Practice Lead will either accept or reject the Review Panel's recommendations.
  - If the Psychology Professional Practice Lead rejects the panel's recommendations, due to an incomplete or inadequate evaluation of the dispute, the Psychology Professional Practice Lead may refer the matter back to the Review Panel for further deliberation and revision of the recommendations, or may make a final decision.

- If referred back to the panel, member of the panel will report back to the Psychology Professional Practice Lead within five (5) working days of the receipt of the Psychology Professional Practice Lead's request for further deliberation and revision.
  - The Psychology Professional Practice Lead then makes the final decision regarding what action is to be taken.
4. The Practicum Coordinator informs the Practicum Student, staff members involved and if necessary, in consultation with the Psychology Professional Practice Lead, of the decision and any action taken or to be taken.
  5. If the Practicum Student or staff member disputes the Psychology Professional Practice Lead's final decision, the Practicum Student has the right to contact the Department of Human Resources to discuss this situation.

**VI. Ombudsperson**

The availability of an Ombudsperson will be assured by the Training Committee on an annual basis. The working definition of an Ombudsperson is an individual whom the Practicum Student can contact to discuss concerns related to training that she/he is not comfortable addressing with the Practicum Coordinator at the current time. Practicum Students will be made aware that discussions with the Ombudsperson will not be reported to any member of the Training Committee or current supervisors unless the situation requires invoking the limits of confidentiality specified by the College of Psychologists of Ontario.

A psychology faculty member, who is familiar with practicum student training, will fill the Ombudsperson's role. The name and contact information of the ombudsperson will be published in the September practicum orientation material. The appointment of volunteers as Ombudsperson is subject to final approval by the Director of Training.