

Practicums (also known as Internships)

What are they?

Practicums are learning experiences outside the classroom, provided by a “real world” organization and Seattle University’s Psychology Department. There are the following kinds:

Research: Serving as part of a research team

Applied: Serving a social service agency

Business: Working in human resources

Students cannot be involved in therapy directly, but they can learn about therapeutic practices and treatment and deliver services through the above avenues. Often the best practicums (the ones where students get to do the most) are in research labs/institutions.

How are practicums different than classes?

Your professors spend considerable time and effort preparing a good learning experience for you; although your effort is required, you need not take initiative to create a good experience. In practicums, as in real life; your experiences are what you make them. Although supervisors at most sites are interested in helping you develop, your education cannot be their first goal; they have clients, patients, grants, deadlines, etc. to serve. When you show that you earnest, effortful, and willing to help them meet their goals, you will gain more opportunities and a more rewarding experience.

For whom are they?

Practicums are typically for upper-level (junior and senior) students. Many practicums require some knowledge of the research enterprise, and all require discipline and maturity. Thus, having successfully completed PSYC 2050 is preferred and having completed PSYC 3030 is helpful. Practicums are best for those who know what they want to accomplish (e.g., learn more about DBT, get research experience in cognitive psychology, etc.). Because practicums require confidence and autonomy, they are not as effective for students who are uncertain about what they want to achieve.

How do I get a practicum?

Early in the quarter prior, write the Psychology Department (psychology@seattleu.edu) for the practicum information. When you have read the information, have a clear articulation of your practicum goals & interests, and have developed a resume, contact the Practicum Director for an interview. If accepted to the Practicum Program, the Director will connect you to a site that’s right for you.

Available Practicums

Work on research! Study:

- How people's implicit associations about alcohol affect its use and whether these associations can be retrained
- The development of morality in young children
- Minority women's health outcomes
- Contingency management intervention for alcohol in persons with serious mental health issues
- The way patients are treated when admitted to hospitals as a result of an alcohol-related traumatic event
- The Autism Spectrum Disorder by examining regulation, attention, communication, play and social development
- Juvenile Justice and Children's Mental Health reform efforts, with emphasis on implementation and evaluation
- Reducing suicidal behaviors, ideation, and deaths among active duty service members
- Impact of school-based family support workers on academic outcomes for families in poverty
- Substance-use treatment for adolescents
- Family support for parents of adolescents in the juvenile justice system
- Reasons for disproportionate minority contact with the juvenile justice system in Washington
- Coordinated mental health treatment for children in families with complex needs
- Specialized problem solving courts
- Improving supervision for mental health clinicians
- Infants early childhood cognition
- Parent and child interactions around oral health
- Relationships among alcohol consumption, partner's coercion, and women's risk-related decisions
- DBT and borderline patients
- An intervention program for pregnant and parenting women with substance abuse problems
- Smoking cessation programs tailored to people with serious mental illness

Work with businesses!

- The Gottman Institute focuses on sharing Gottman's relationship and development research with therapists.
- Valant provides management services to behavioral health providers throughout the country.
- The Washington Athletic Club has places in human resources.

Work near home!

- Bellevue LifeSpring is a social service agency that provides emergency assistance in food, clothing, and education to families living in the Eastside.
- The Department of Social and Health Services has opportunities with Child Protective Services, Children Family Welfare Services, and Family Voluntary Services in their Snohomish branch.
- LifeCenter Northwest in Bellevue saves lives through organ and tissue donation. They provide bereavement and grief resources and support to families.

Work in advocacy and social services!

- The Salvation Army provides confidential, emergency shelter for women and children escaping domestic violence. They offer education, children's programs, advocacy, support, and counseling.
- Families and Friends of Missing Persons & Violent Crime Victims staffs a 24-hr crisis line, provides one-on-one advocacy and personal support, criminal justice system advocacy and intervention, and courtroom support for victims. They assist clients with appropriate local resources and media intervention
- Family Law CASA advocates for children who are in high-conflict custody disputes or who are in dependency cases where Child Protective Services has an open case on the family.

Work in teaching settings!

- The Seattle University Youth Initiative (SUYI) supports academic achievement by building meaningful relationships with students in diverse K-12 area schools.
- Renacer is a full service facility for chemically dependent male adolescents and supports their attainment of physical, psychological, and spiritual wellbeing through art and other programs.
- Childhaven is a pre-school setting providing therapeutic care for abused, neglected and at-risk infants and children.