

# Best Practice Guidelines for School Psychology Internships

## I. Principles, Conceptualization, and Management of the Internship

- 1.1 The internship is conceptualized as a culminating training experience\* in which the primary focus is on providing high-quality experiences, attainment of comprehensive school psychology competencies, and integration and application of the full range of domains of school psychology.\*
- 1.2 The internship supervisor, school psychology faculty, and intern adhere to NASP *Principles for Professional Ethics* (2010b).
- 1.3 The internship site, university program, and intern have a written agreement\* that includes a clear statement of the expectations and responsibilities of each party (including total hours and duties to be performed by the intern), benefits and support to be provided by the internship site, and the process by which interns are to be supervised and evaluated.
- 1.4 If the site solicits direct applications from prospective interns, it provides information about the site and the internship application and selection process. It notifies applicants whether or not they have been selected in a timely manner.
- 1.5 The site uses a title, such as “school psychology intern,” that designates the training status of the intern. Psychological reports or similar professional reports to consumers, other professionals, or other audiences must be signed by the credentialed intern supervisor.
- 1.6 In states in which provisional certification or an intern certificate is required for internship, the site makes the training program and intern aware of such requirements and assists the preparing program and intern as necessary in applying for or securing such credential.

## II. Depth, Breadth, and Focus of the Internship

- 2.1 The internship for specialist-level interns includes at least 1,200 hours, and the internship for doctoral interns includes at least 1,500 hours completed on a full-time basis over 1 academic year or on a half-time basis over 2 years.\*
- 2.2 At least 600 hours of the internship occur “in a school setting” as defined in NASP standards.\* Nonschool settings that serve children, youth, and families may serve as appropriate internship sites as long as the intern has already completed or has the opportunity to complete at least 600 hours of supervised experience in a school setting. Virtual schools are not considered suitable training environments for a school psychology internship.
- 2.3 The internship site provides opportunities for a range of school psychological services consistent with the NASP *Standards for graduate preparation of school psychologists* (2010c) and NASP *Model for comprehensive and integrated school psychological services* (2010a).
- 2.4 The internship site provides the intern with the opportunities and supervision needed to integrate domains of knowledge and apply professional skills in school psychology in delivering a comprehensive range of services evidenced by direct, measurable, positive impact on children, families, schools, and other consumers.\*
- 2.5 Most of the intern’s time is spent providing direct and indirect psychological services to children, youth, and/or families. In order to ensure breadth of training, activities in no single major function predominates the intern’s time.

- 2.6 The internship site endeavors to provide opportunities to work with children and adolescents of varying ages, ethnicities, socioeconomic backgrounds, and with varying abilities and disabilities, characteristics, and needs.
- 2.7 In assigning duties to the intern, the internship site recognizes and supports the internship as an educational experience. An intern to student ratio that is less than NASP guidelines for credentialed, full-time school psychologists (1 to 500–700) is expected, with the actual assignments based on such factors as the needs of students to be served, the intern’s expertise and prior experience, and the intensity of intern supervision and support.

### III. Supervision, Mentoring, and Collaboration

- 3.1 Professional field supervision of each intern is provided by a credentialed school psychologist or, in a nonschool setting, by a psychologist credentialed for that setting.\* Field supervision may be shared with other appropriately credentialed personnel in the unit, but the credentialed school psychologist or psychologist provides the preponderance of direct supervision and assumes full responsibility for the supervision provided.
- 3.2 The intern field supervisor has at least 3 years of full-time experience as a credentialed school psychologist or psychologist and is employed as a regular employee or consultant by the district or agency.
- 3.3 Unless supervisors have been assigned a significant portion of their time to devote to supervising interns, each supervisor is assigned to no more than two interns at any one time. Intern supervision is taken into account when determining supervisor workload.
- 3.4 The internship includes an average of at least 2 hours of supervision per full-time week. The preponderance of field supervision is provided on at least a weekly, individual, face-to-face basis, with structured mentoring and evaluation that focus on development of the intern’s competencies.\* Supervision time may be adjusted proportionately for less than a full-time week or schedule.
- 3.5 The university program assigns to each intern a faculty supervisor\* with training in school psychology who maintains regular communication with the intern and field supervisor. Such communication may occur through face-to-face meetings and/or faculty supervisor visits to the internship site (if geographically feasible), telephone or video conferencing, e-mails, and other means.
- 3.6 Interns have the opportunity to develop an affiliation with colleagues and the field\* through regularly scheduled training activities with (a) other interns at the site, (b) interns at other sites in the immediate area, and/or (c) school psychologists at the site and/or in the immediate area.
- 3.7 The university school psychology program provides field supervisors with information and support for supervision as well as documentation needed to verify supervision activities for such purposes as continuing professional development.

### IV. Intern Evaluation, Feedback, and Support

- 4.1 The internship field supervisor provides the intern and university program formative and summative evaluations of intern performance that are systematic and comprehensive, and ensures that interns demonstrate professional work characteristics and attain competencies needed for effective practice as school psychologists.\*
- 4.2 The internship site, in collaboration with the university program, has a process for addressing possible serious concerns regarding an intern’s performance that protects the rights of clients to receive quality services, assures adequate feedback and opportunities for improvement to the intern, and provides due process protection in cases of possible termination of the internship.
- 4.3 The internship site provides expense reimbursement, a safe and secure work environment, adequate office

space, and support services for the intern consistent with that afforded agency school psychologists\* and the organizational principles in the NASP Practice Model (2010a). Sites are strongly encouraged to provide interns a stipend that recognizes their graduate level of training and the value of services they provide.

- 4.4 The internship site affords interns opportunities for continuing professional development comparable to those provided to school psychologists in the district/agency.
- 4.5 Upon conclusion of the internship, the field supervisor verifies both the completion of required internship hours and activities and the quality of intern performance. Verification of the satisfactory internship completion is the responsibility of the intern's graduate program.

**Note.** An asterisk (\*) signifies the existence of a corresponding standard in the NASP *Standards for graduate preparation of school psychologists* (NASP, 2010c).

## REFERENCES:

National Association of School Psychologists. (2010a). *Model for comprehensive and integrated school psychological services*. Bethesda, MD: Author.

National Association of School Psychologists. (2010b). *Principles for professional ethics*. Bethesda, MD: Author.

National Association of School Psychologists. (2010c). *Standards for graduate preparation of school psychologists*. Bethesda, MD: Author.

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