

WESTERN INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

3220 Sacramento Street

Berkeley, CA 94702

(510) 655-2830

www.wisr.edu

www.wisrville.org

mail@wisr.edu

OFFICIAL PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

MASTER OF ARTS IN PSYCHOLOGY,

DESIGNED TO LEAD TOWARD THE MFT LICENSE

AND ALSO THE LPCC LICENSE

Revised, July 2011

A State Approved option for meeting the State of California's *academic* requirements for the Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) License and also for practice as a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC). . .

Legal Considerations and Licensing Matters

This program is approved by the State of California, and is designed primarily to education those who wish to prepare for licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT) in the State of California. In addition, the coursework is also designed to meet the State of California's academic requirements to become a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC). Those students *not* interested in obtaining the LPCC license do not have to pursue studies in the areas of Career Development and Group Counseling, although it is strongly recommended that they do so anyway.

The Western Institute for Social Research offers a combination of individualized study and classroom-based instruction based on information from the State of California's Board of Behavioral Science Examiners about the academic requirements of the Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) License, as well as for the requirements to become a Licensed Professional Counselor. WISR's M.A. in Psychology option leading toward the MFT license is an integrated program primarily designed to train Marriage and Family Therapists in California, and it meets the educational requirements specified in California Business and Professions Code Sections

4980.37 and 4980.40.

All students entering WISR are required to contact the Board of Behavioral Sciences Examiners, or go to their website, in order to obtain their own copy of the “Statutes and Regulations Relation to the Practice of Professional Clinical Counseling, Marriage and Family Therapy, Educational Psychology, Clinical Social Work. Students are also expected to keep abreast of the changing details regarding the various exam and practice requirements for the MFT license, especially the new and emerging regulations regarding the recently created LPCC license. By their third month in the program, students will be expected to discuss and ask questions of faculty about the content of these laws and regulations. Students will not be approved for a practicum until faculty are satisfied that the student understands the essential material contained in this document. Students should contact:

**BOARD OF BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE EXAMINERS
1625 N Market Blvd., Suite S-200
Sacramento, CA 95834
(916) 574-7830**

Website Address: <http://www.bbs.ca.gov>

Keeping up to date with changes in laws: Since the laws and regulations are constantly changing, **students are encouraged to keep up to date by joining the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT).** The student membership rate is inexpensive, and CAMFT is an excellent source of information and will answer questions asked by members by phone and fax. CAMFT also publishes a bimonthly journal, *The California Therapist*, which provides a lot of information about legal and ethical issues, as well as practical matters pertaining to professional practice. Students may review back issues of this journal in WISR's library. You may contact:

CAMFT: 7901 Raytheon Road
San Diego, CA 92111-1606
(856) 29-CAMFT (292-2638)
www.camft.org/
www.counselingcalifornia.com

Prerequisites for Licensing: The State has a number of important prerequisites for licensing, in addition to obtaining a Master's degree that meets the State's academic requirements. It is important for prospective students to understand these requirements before embarking on an MFT program. Each prospective student should review all of the State regulations, but here are highlights of the main requirements. WISR faculty will be happy to answer questions you may have about these, and if you enroll you will be expected to familiarize yourself with the laws during the first couple of months of enrollment. Before you can be approved as ready to begin a practicum (six months or more into the program), faculty will expect you to know the important details in State laws and regulations pertaining to MFT preparation and practice.

Here are highlights of licensing requirements:

1. 3,000 hours of supervised MFT experience are required, but no more than 750 hours may be obtained prior to receiving the Master's degree. No hours may be obtained until a student has completed 12 semester units and passed WISR's practicum readiness assessment by faculty.

2. Students may obtain credit toward the 3,000 hours as soon as they are enrolled in an approved program by engaging in their own personal therapy with a licensed MFT, LCSW, Clinical Psychologist or MD Psychiatrist. Students may get up to 100 hours of credit for personal therapy, and each hour counts triple toward the 3,000 hours. *Furthermore, WISR strongly encourages all MFT students to undergo individual, marital or conjoint family or group counseling, or psychotherapy.*

3. The State does a criminal background check on all applicants for the MFT license. "The Board shall not issue a registration or license to any person who has been convicted of any crime in the United States that involves the sexual abuse of children or who has been ordered to register as a mentally disordered sex offender . . ."

4. To obtain the license, one must pass an initial written exam and a subsequent written clinical vignette exam which has replaced the oral exam.

Prospective students who are considering moving to another state should investigate the licensing requirements of that state to determine whether or not that state has "reciprocity" with California. That is, if you obtain a California MFT license, will you be able to meet the licensing requirements of the state you move to with little difficulty, or will it involve doing a lot of additional work, schooling and/or training? CAMFT has information about the licensing requirements in other states.

Prospective students who are interested in learning about the performance of students who enroll at WISR, with the intention of obtaining the MFT license should read the "School Performance Fact Sheet for Alumni of the MFT Program," which accompanies this informative handout on the WISR MFT Program.

Similarly, those students who wish to also obtain licensing as a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor should investigate and stay informed about the State of California's latest decisions about exam, practice and supervision requirements for the LPCC license. And, as is the case with the MFT licensing, prospective students who are considering moving to another state should investigate whether or not that state has "reciprocity" with California, regarding the LPCC license.

WISR offers faculty and curriculum resources to help each student fulfill academic requirements toward MFT licensure, but each student is expected to take responsibility to monitor her or his own progress toward licensure and to be in compliance with State requirements. WISR faculty are eager to help students identify and clarify questions they may need to ask of the BBS.

Program Overview

Combination of Individualized Study and Classroom Instruction

Each student's degree program is structured around her or his individual interests *and* around the core subject matter areas (see below) necessary to prepare for the MFT licensing examination and for competent, successful professional practice. Faculty members support, guide and supervise each student's work in individual meetings and seminar sessions.

Required Seminar Participation

There are typically 8 hours of classroom instruction each month, usually composed of two Saturdays, from 10 am to 2 pm.

Participation in the equivalent of 24 months of Saturday sessions is required of WISR MFT students. The sessions focus on theories and methods of marriage, family and child counseling, including discussions of articles and books or of ideas from faculty or student presentations; observations and analyses of books or of ideas from and role-playing therapeutic interventions. Among the topics included are human sexuality(10 hours of seminars required), professional faculty or student presentations; observations and analyses of videotapes of expert therapists; law and ethics, cross-cultural and community mental health methods and issues, child abuse assessment and reporting (7 hours of seminars required), alcoholism and substance abuse (15 hours required), HIV/AIDS, aging and long-term care (10 hours required), crisis and trauma counseling (15 hours required), assessment and appraisal, and spousal and partner abuse (15 hours required). As part of the classroom instruction, faculty and students sometimes bring in cases for discussion.

Seminar Participation Option by TeleConference for Students at a Distance

As a new option, beginning September 1, 2011, the required seminars will be available by telephone conference call, supplemented by web-based online sharing of documents and notes in real-time. Students who live too far from our Berkeley site to travel here twice per month may call into a phone conference line that will be connected with a speaker phone in our seminar room. Students and faculty on site at WISR and those students on their phone line, off site, will be able to interact and discuss issues, ideas and questions with one another. At a future date, some sharing by video conference may be also available from time to time. Students living outside the area are expected to attend some seminars on site two or more times per year, in order to further develop their collegial relationships with faculty and fellow students.

Supplemental Seminars and Study Groups

MFT students are also eligible to participate in the optional, regularly held interdisciplinary seminars open to all students. Most of these are held for a couple hours on weekday evenings two times per month, but there are also occasional study groups and additional, optional

Saturday seminars. There is a major All School Gathering two Saturdays per year, and an Annual two-day conference in the late summer. Students are strongly encouraged to attend these events because they provide excellent opportunities to connect and learn with other faculty and with students in all WISR's degree programs.

Individualized Study Options and Personalized Support and Guidance from Faculty

Students typically meet face to face or by phone with a faculty advisor once every two weeks for one hour. Faculty help each student to identify readings and to pursue research papers in topics of personal interest in each of the required subject matter areas (see list below). Faculty encourage students to explore specializations of strong personal interest and help them to select meaningful topics and methods for research projects in specific subjects. They help students to contact sources of data, give detailed verbal and written comments on student papers, discuss insights and problems encountered by students during their practica, and give students qualitative evaluations of their work. This process helps students to become more fully aware of their intellectual strengths, of what they already know and can do, as well as what they still need to learn to meet their own professional and personal goals. To support this dynamically structured approach to learning, faculty make themselves very accessible to students. Students are encouraged to call faculty between face-to-face individual advising sessions, and to meet more than twice per month when necessary.

WISR's approach to helping students meet MFT requirements is more flexible and more supportive than more conventional, pre-packaged programs, and students are expected to be more engaged and motivated to learn. For example: (1) Students must be able and willing to write and re-write drafts of papers, and to discuss those drafts intensively with faculty members and fellow students, so as to become deeply engaged in the material they are studying. (2) WISR's small, specialized library contains books, journals, article reprints, video and audio tapes, and bibliographies in all of the core subject matter areas of MFT study, and faculty give students specific suggestions on how to use these materials. WISR's ongoing library acquisitions have created a special section of specific books on MFT related topics, most of which have been published in the last five years. These books are available for check out for seven days. WISR also has a reimbursement policy for those students who want to participate in the UC Berkeley library system. Indeed, students must also be ready, with faculty help, to make use of the world-class research libraries available at local public universities, in identifying and seeking out relevant books and articles; (3) Students are expected to be in regular, open communication with faculty advisors about their learning experiences; for example, making and discussing critical analyses of their practica experiences, so as to learn from their mistakes and the problems they encounter.

Core Subject Matter Areas

Through faculty assisted individualized study and through participation in classes, students are expected to demonstrate foundational knowledge in each of the areas listed below.

In each area, the student is helped and expected to become familiar with the readings which provide a foundational understanding and overview of the field. Students are to investigate and write one major paper in each of the core areas. The investigations and the production of a paper in each area also afford each student opportunities to explore and develop an area or areas of specialization. Two papers are required as part of the student's practicum. Through the thesis and through the various papers written for the above courses, students are encouraged to develop one or several emphases and specializations that address one or more of the unique, complex and important array of human problems, symptoms and needs of those Californians served by MFTs. In addition, two papers are required in Theories and Methods of Marriage and Family Therapy. In conjunction with participation in the required seminars, students are sometimes required to write short, but substantial, papers. Students will also present these papers periodically in class.

Awarding of Academic Credit in Each of the Core Subject Matter Areas

WISR faculty award academic credit to students based on the quantity of seminar work and independent study performed by the student in each area. The amount of readings, investigation, writing, and seminar participation in each area reflects the scope and depth of the student's studies in that area as interpreted by WISR faculty in enabling students both to meet Board of Behavioral Sciences requirements and to prepare for competent and skilled professional practice. Credit is assigned by the core faculty person who has supervised the student's work in the particular area. For each of the required areas of study, a minimum number of semester units is indicated, as well as the amount more typically achieved by WISR students in each area. **A total of 48 semester units are required for graduation, no more than six may be transfer units.**

Human Development: 3 semester units minimum, 4 or 5 units typically.

Human Sexuality: 2 semester units minimum (including required 10 hours of seminar participation), 3 or 4 units typically

Theories and Methods of Marriage and Family Therapy and Professional Counseling: 12 semester units minimum, 14 units typically, sometimes more (including required 15 hours of spousal and partner abuse seminar participation, and for those enrolling after August 1, 2011, including required 15 hours of Crisis and Trauma Counseling seminar participation)

Psychopathology: 3 semester units minimum, 4 units typically

Cross-Cultural Counseling: 3 semester units minimum, 4 units typically

Professional Ethics and Law: 3 semester units minimum, 3 or 4 units typically

Research Methodology: 3 semester units minimum, 4 units typically

Supervised Practicum: 6 semester units minimum, sometimes more, when there is substantially more than 306 hours of supervised practicum.

Alcoholism and Substance Abuse: 1 semester unit minimum (including required 15 hours of seminar participation), typically 1-2 units

Child Abuse Assessment and Reporting: no units required and none counted toward the 48 unit Minimum requirement for the degree, 7 hours of seminar participation required, sometimes 1-2 semester units awarded for extra studies.

Aging and Long-Term Care: 1 semester unit minimum (including required 10 hours of seminar participation), typically 1-3 units

Psychopharmacology: 2 units minimum, 2-3 units typically

Psychological Testing and Therapeutic Appraisal and Assessment: 4 semester units minimum, required of students enrolling on or after August 1, 2011. Students previously enrolled only required to do 2 semester units of Psychological Testing, but will not meet all the requirements for the LPCC license.

Career Development: 3 semester units minimum. Recommended but not required of students not pursuing the LPCC license.

Group Counseling: 3 semester units minimum. Recommended but not required of students not pursuing the LPCC license.

Theories of Social Analysis and Change: 2 semester units minimum, typically 4 units (this is a WISR requirement not a BBS requirement).

Thesis: 6 units minimum, sometimes more.

Content in Core Subject Matter Areas

Human Biological, Psychological and Social Development

Study of developmental theories, events, and issues covering the entire life-span from infancy to old age, including parent-child relations, child development and adolescence, and various phases, crises, and transitions to adulthood. This includes a study of developmental influences on and consequences of individual circumstances, interpersonal relationships, and family dynamics, as well as the larger social context. Emphasis is on critical examination of a range of theories, such as those of Freud, Erikson, Piaget, Mahler, Kohlberg and others.

Human Sexuality

A study of personal and interpersonal dimensions of sexual experiences and behavior, including such topics as anatomy and physiology of human sexuality, normal and abnormal sexual behavior, sexual dysfunction and its causes and treatment, psychosexual development, sociocultural and family influences on sexuality, sexual orientation and identity, and sexual counseling. Includes a minimum of 10 hours of seminar participation in the study of human sexuality.

Theories and Methods of Marriage and Family Therapy and Professional Counseling

Study of major theories of marriage and family therapy, including methods of marriage, family and child counseling and a consideration of such varied schools of thought as psychodynamics, humanistic, behavioral, and system theories. Study of applications and limitations of different theoretical approaches for assessing and treating problems with couples, families, adults, children and groups. Also included is the study of contemporary family dynamics: the sociocultural context of the family; problems, issues, and circumstances affecting the family as a unit; relations among its members; and strategies for effectively intervening in family dynamics to build on strengths, solve problems, or minimize the problems' impact. Students will become familiar with the broad range of issues and matters that may arise within marriage, family and couples relationships. Included in the study of counseling and psychotherapeutic techniques is an orientation to wellness and prevention, selection of appropriate counseling interventions, models of counseling suggested by current professional practices and research, the development of a personal model of counseling, and the many considerations involved in conducting professional counseling practice in a multicultural society. Students also study treatment methods and issues pertaining to HIV and AIDS.

Students also study **spousal and partner abuse**, including a minimum of 15 hours of seminar participation, in methods of detection and treatment of spousal and partner abuse.

For students beginning August 1, 2011 or after, this area of study includes 15 hours of seminar participation in Crisis and Trauma Counseling, which is also required for the LPCC license. Those enrolled prior to August 1, 2011 will have the option of pursuing this added emphasis and will be encouraged to do so: Examination of types of trauma and crisis—resulting from such varied causes as natural disasters, social upheaval and unrest, car accidents, interpersonal violence, secondary trauma (e.g., observation of trauma), loss of home or loved ones, among others. Theories and methods of immediate, mid-term and long-term interventions. Includes multidisciplinary responses to crises and therapeutic responses to trauma. Specifically, the study of somatic, physiological, and neurological dynamics, as well as cognitive, emotional and behavioral considerations—and the interrelations of all these. The role of multidisciplinary assessment and treatment, and strategies for helping trauma survivors to identify and access their own sources of strength and resilience. Consideration of the impact of trauma and crises on entire families, communities and societies, and the role of larger scale interventions. Examination of complications from multiple traumas and/or traumas experienced by people with pre-existing emotional challenges and conditions.

Aging and Long-Term Care

Study of aging in contemporary society, elder abuse, long-term care, intergenerational relations, and the biological, social and psychological aspects of aging. Included is the required 10 hours of seminar participation in this area of aging and long-term care.

Psychopathology

Study of the diagnosis, assessment, prognosis and treatment of mental disorders. This includes a study of the characteristics and dynamics associated with various pathologies, ranging from neurotic styles found among "normal," functioning adults to severe disorders--an examination of different systems of diagnosis, including the current edition of the DSM, and the strategies of treatment associated with these various diagnoses. Includes differential diagnosis, the impact of co-occurring substance abuse disorders or medical psychological disorders, established diagnostic criteria for mental or emotional disorders, and the treatment modalities and placement criteria within the continuum of care.

Cross-Cultural Counseling

Study of the importance of cultural, racial, ethnic, and subgroup values and beliefs, and how they affect individuals, interpersonal relations, family life, and the therapeutic process. An examination of the wide range of ethnic backgrounds and the cultural mores and values common in California, including the general values and diversity within each of the following groups: African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, Native Americans, whites of European ancestry, and people who identify themselves as bi-racial or bicultural. Multicultural counseling theories and techniques, including counselors' roles in developing cultural self-awareness, identity development, promoting cultural social justice, individual and community strategies for working with and advocating for diverse populations, and counselors' roles in eliminating biases and prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination.

Psychological Testing and Therapeutic Appraisal and Assessment

Study of theories and applications of commonly used psychological tests for family and individual assessments. Covers cognitive and personality testing as well as looking at specific tests related to assessing for depression, anxiety and other DSM IV axis 1 and 2 disorders. Also, the study of statistical significance in psychological testing, and the uses and limitations of such tests. Includes basic concepts of standardized and non-standardized testing and other assessment techniques, norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment, social and cultural factors related to assessment and evaluation of individuals and groups, and ethical strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment instruments and techniques in counseling. In addition, the study of assessment and appraisal of client needs, including but not limited to the client's strengths and available resources, and also their family, social/contextual and personal challenges. Furthermore, students receive guidance in studying assessment and appraisal "across the curriculum"—that is, for example, by studying how "assessment and appraisal" is practiced and used in such areas as alcoholism and substance abuse, cross-cultural counseling, and human development. For students enrolling on or after August 1, 2011, this area of study replaces the old, more limited area of study, Psychological Testing.

Career Development

Career development theories and techniques, including career development decision-making models and interrelationships between work, family and other life roles and factors. Includes the role of multicultural issues in career development, what is a career, points where people seek career counseling, and issues involved in successfully providing career counseling. This area is not required of students enrolling prior to August 1, 2011, and it is recommended but not required for students not pursuing the LPCC license.

Group Counseling

Group counseling theories and techniques, including principles of group dynamics, group process components, developmental stage theories, therapeutic factors of group work, group leadership styles and approaches, pertinent research and literature, group counseling methods and evaluation of effectiveness. Includes history of group psychotherapy, creating successful therapy groups, therapeutic factors and mechanisms, selection of clients, preparation and pre-group training, group development and process, therapist interventions, reducing adverse outcomes and the ethical practice of group psychotherapy, concurrent therapies, and termination of group psychotherapy. This area is not required of students enrolling prior to August 1, 2011, and it is recommended but not required for students not pursuing the LPCC license.

Professional Ethics and Law

Study of legal and ethical issues and standards involved in the professional practice of marriage and family therapy in California, in particular, and in the field of mental health and professional counseling in general. This includes an examination of ethics and laws that delineate the profession's scope of practice; therapeutic and practical considerations involved in legal and ethical practice as a licensed MFT; study of the broader legal trends and ethical debates in the health, mental health, and human service professions; ethical and legal issues bearing on counselor-client relationships (e.g., scope of practice, counselor-client privilege, confidentiality, treatment of minors with or without parental consent, and when a client may be dangerous to self or others); and issues arising out of the counselor's sense of self and personal values, in relation to professional ethics and law. Includes the study of regulatory laws and functions and relationships with other human service providers, strategies for collaboration and advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impede access, equity and success for clients.

Alcoholism and other Chemical Substance Abuse and Dependency

Study of theories and research on addiction and abuse of a variety of substances, including alcohol, prescriptions and illegal drugs. Review of theories, problems, issues and strategies used in the treatment of alcoholism and other forms of chemical abuse and dependency. Includes the required 15 hours of seminar participation.

Supervised Practicum in Applied Psychotherapeutic Techniques

This involves supervised work by the student in the assessment, diagnosis, prognosis and treatment of premarital, couple, family, and child relationships, within the scope of practice of a marriage and family therapy trainee. Students also discuss and critically reflect on issues, challenges and insights arising out of their practica in seminars (some of which are specifically designated as clinical case seminars), in individual advising sessions with WISR faculty, and in the papers they write on their practicum experience. Students are encouraged to seek out a practicum that will give them experience in working with low-income and multicultural populations (see also the section on “Practicum or Traineeship” below). Through the practicum experience, students are expected to give great attention to developing those personal qualities that are intimately related to the counseling situation, including integrity, sensitivity, flexibility, insight, compassion and personal presence.

Child Abuse Assessment and Reporting

Study of the following topics designed to meet requirements of AB 141, and to obtain and overview of clinical skills developed by practitioners who have treated abused children, offenders, and adult survivors who were abused as children; statutes, issues for professionals, indicators and assessment of child abuse, resources/agencies, prevention, statistics on incidence of abuse, publication about abuse, issues pertaining to reporting, developmental theories and issues, evaluation and treatment of offenders, and self-help efforts by adult survivors. Includes study of the *Child Abuse Prevention Handbook* of the Office of the California Attorney General. Includes the minimum 7 hours of seminar participation.

Psychopharmacology

Study of the use of psychotropic medications in the treatment of various psychological disorders. Examines the role of the psychotherapist and psychotherapy in the use of such medications. Study of specific medications that are used in the treatment of psychiatric disorders, including antidepressants, mood stabilizers, antiobsessional, antipsychotic and antianxiety drugs, and how they are used in conjunction with psychotherapy, as well as the abuses of drugs in each category.

Research Methodology

A study of research design and methods, including such topics as logic of design, scientific paradigms and epistemology, ethical issues in research, strategies for reviewing, using and critiquing literature in psychology and related fields, and methods of data collection and analysis. Study of the use of research to inform practice, and the use of practice to build knowledge and contribute to research, including uses and limitations of statistical analyses. Special emphasis is put on qualitative and action-oriented research methods, including participant observation, interviewing, needs assessments and program evaluation.

Other Academic Requirements

Theories of Social Analysis and Change

Study of several theories/perspectives on social change, and analysis of the strengths and limitations of these ideas as they pertain to some of the issues and problems of special concern to the student in his or her planned areas of professional practice.

Thesis

An in-depth study of a topic of special interest to the student, and one which may have significance for others, involving a review of the literature and some original data collected by the student. Through the thesis and through the various papers written for the above courses, students are encouraged to develop one or several emphases and specializations that address one or more of the unique, complex and important array of human problems, symptoms and needs of those Californians served by MFTs.

MFT students should also consult the general WISR catalog for information about: WISR's core requirement that all students study Theories of Social Analysis and Change, the requirement that all Master's students do a Master's thesis, and the evaluation process conducted by the Graduation Review Board.

Assessment of Student Performance

All students are involved in a comprehensive evaluation process. These evaluation sessions will be given at three stages of the student's program.

1. After six months or the completion of 12 semester units (usually, 3 areas of study and 3 major papers), in order to assess the student's readiness for participation in the practicum.
2. Approximately at the mid-point of the student's Master's program.
3. When the student has completed all the requirements except for the thesis.

The evaluation sessions will be conducted by two core faculty, at least one of whom will be a licensed MFT, and in the latter two instances, by a peer as well. The evaluation will be constructive in nature and will serve to direct the student to strengthen weak areas and support growth in positive areas.

Ongoing evaluation will be provided by faculty assessment of student performance through regular meetings and dialogue with students about their work in progress, participation in seminars and learning in their practicum. Students are expected to demonstrate their familiarity with and understanding of each of the core MFT subject matter areas by: (1) pursuing and discussing with a faculty advisor readings which cover both the student's major interests in that area and a balanced selection of topics important to learning about the area; and (2) writing a paper that demonstrates the student's ability to critically discuss some important theoretical and/or practical issues arising in that area, in relation to one of the student's special interests.

The student will also be evaluated in his or her practicum as well (see practicum contract). Student learning in each practicum is also assessed by oral and written evaluations, including a final written evaluation submitted by a professional in the **field** who has supervised the student's work.

Practicum or Traineeship

Minimum Requirements for the Practicum

The practicum shall include a minimum of 306 hours of face-to-face experience counseling individuals, couples, families or groups. WISR requires this to obtain the necessary 6 semester units of practicum credit. Currently, State law provides that students cannot get credit for more than 750 hours of counseling and supervision as pre-Master's trainees. One could, however, get credit for as much as 1300 hours by combining 750 hours of counseling experience and supervision, with 300 hours for personal psychotherapy received, and up to 250 hours for professional workshops, seminars and conferences. Under the State guidelines, WISR has developed a supervised fieldwork agreement that must be signed by student, the field work agency and a WISR faculty person, before the practicum begins. This contract spells out in detail the responsibilities of all parties, in accordance with the California Business and Professions Code.

Practica

WISR faculty work with the training sites and the student in placement and evaluation. The law states that a "trainee" is a person who is unlicensed and is currently enrolled in a master's or doctor's degree program, as specified in Section 4980.40 of the California Business and Professions Code. This is also a person who has completed the equivalent of one semester of graduate level (12 semester units) coursework in the field. (At WISR, this is defined as six months of seminar participation and the completion of 12 semester units of work in the core areas.) Students are also encouraged to seriously consider pursuing practica in two distinctly different settings, in order to enhance and broaden their experience. In addition, students are strongly encouraged to pursue their own personal therapy, to further develop those personal qualities and depth of self-awareness that will enable them to become effective therapists.

