

CLINICAL INTERNSHIPS

The two eight-month clinical internship periods (September through April) take place after the first and second summers of on-campus study.

The clinical internship affords the opportunity to study and apply advanced practice methods to a range of clients, and to study clinical theories and processes in depth. Ideally, fellows also gain experience in clinical teaching and contribute to theory development.

The Schedule

During the internship period, fellows are expected to spend three days in agency-based clinical practice. For those with private practices, two days of agency-based practice are required; one day of private practice may augment the two-day placement.

Internship Placement

Most fellows elect to develop work-study internships within their places of employment. These work-study internships serve as the two-year training site. Others develop fellowship opportunities at training centers or affiliate with agencies around the country or internationally.

Whatever type of internship is utilized, considerable responsibility for proposing and developing the clinical internship rests with each applicant, although the program directors are available to consult with applicants about potential internship plans during the application process. Because fellows propose and develop their own internship plans, applications can be considered from any part of the United States or Canada (and occasionally by special arrangement from other nations as well) where a viable plan of off-campus study can be developed. The final decision about the educational viability of any fellow's proposed clinical internship plan rests with the school.

Guidelines for developing a clinical internship proposal are part of the application package for admission to the program.

Expectations

Fellows are expected to see eight to twelve study cases weekly in individual practice and engage in a minimum of two hours of clinical supervision. Additionally, they participate in seminars and training opportunities within and beyond their agencies.

Throughout their internships fellows intensively study clinical processes and apply advanced psychological and social theories to the individuals, groups and families with whom students work. Fellows have the opportunity to do guided research on clinical practice and to analyze and critique multiple theoretical perspectives as they relate to clinical assessments and interventions.

Advising

There is a well-developed system of individualized practicum learning and research advising to assist fellows in meeting the goals of clinical internships, examinations (<https://catalog.smith.edu/ssw/phd-program/exams/>) and research requirements (<https://catalog.smith.edu/ssw/phd-program/dissertation/>) of the program. Doctoral fellows are mentored by faculty field advisers (<http://ssw.smith.edu/phd-internship-advisers/>) who visit the internship site twice annually to work with fellows in

meeting the clinical requirements of the program. In addition, fellows are supervised on research and scholarly requirements by an assigned faculty research adviser.

Reporting

In both internships, regular reporting to the school is required. Written assignments in the first year focus on research, on clinical practice and on preparing fellows for the oral and written clinical examinations at the end of the first year. Written assignments in the second year are geared toward reflecting on practice, theory and teaching.

Assessments

A fellow's clinical progress in the program is assessed through two examinations (<https://catalog.smith.edu/ssw/phd-program/exams/>). At the end of the first internship, fellows must pass a clinical qualifying examination. This exam is both oral and written, and passing indicates readiness for the second field internship. During the second field internship, students complete a comprehensive examination that integrates content from the curriculum leading to a manuscript of publication quality. The comprehensive examination topic may also serve as a foundation for the fellow's dissertation research.