

Letter of Introduction

To: Potential Practicum Site

From: Willow Young, M.A., M.F.T. Martha Feng, M.A., M.F.T.
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Counseling Psychology Program Counseling Psychology Program

Thank you for considering a student from Pacifica Graduate Institute for a practicum experience at your site. Pacifica is accredited through the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and provides graduate degree programs in Counseling Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Depth Psychology, Depth Psychotherapy, Mythological Studies, and Humanities. The student who has approached you is enrolled in the Master's Degree Program in Counseling Psychology. This program meets the curriculum requirements leading to licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapist in the state of California.

Pacifica requires its students to engage in a practicum experience in their home communities during their second year of study (a minimum of 10 months). The practicum is intended to complement the student's graduate coursework and to provide the opportunity to learn foundational clinical skills, including assessment, diagnosis, knowledge of legal and ethical, referrals and adjunctive services treatment of mental disorders, therapeutic interventions, case management, prognosis, and termination.

This is the first clinical experience for most students. While engaged in the practicum, students are also enrolled in a Clinical Practice class at Pacifica, which teaches skills in assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, oral and written case presentations, maintenance of progress notes, legal and ethical considerations, as well as effective case management. Students will have completed courses in Law and Ethics, Child Abuse, Theoretical Foundations of Psychotherapy, Human Development, Psychopathology, and Group Process by the beginning of their second year of study.

Students must meet the following practicum requirements:

1. Completion of a total of 300 hours of experience at a traineeship site;
2. Provision of a minimum of 150 hours of direct client contact, consisting of face to face counseling with individuals, couples, families, or groups;
3. Completion of a minimum of 150 other hours which may be any combination of supervision, training, additional direct client contact, telephone counseling, and writing progress notes and/or clinical reports;
4. Provision of individual counseling with a minimum of six individual clients for a minimum of six sessions each over the course of the entire practicum (a total of 36 hours)

5. Provision of a minimum of 50 client contact hours per quarter (between September and July of the second year of study). This amounts to approximately 5 client contact hours per week. It is generally recommended that students carry a caseload of approximately 6 to 7 clients per week in order to allow for cancellations.
6. Submission of a Quarterly Traineeship Log, signed by the clinical supervisor, documenting the hours spent at the practicum site.
7. All students are required to procure their own professional liability insurance even if the practicum site has insurance which covers the student.

In order to meet Pacifica's educational requirements, the practicum site is asked to provide the following:

1. Clinical supervision with a licensed clinician who must have authority over the student's clinical work;
2. Clinical supervision must include at least one hour of individual supervision or two hours of group supervision per calendar week (with no more than 8 group members);
3. The clinical supervisor must be a licensed mental health clinician practicing as a Marriage and Family Therapist, Clinical Social Worker, Psychologist, or Board-certified Psychiatrist. In some states, a Licensed Professional Counselor and/or a Licensed Mental Health Counselor is also acceptable.
4. The supervisor must have been licensed for at least two years and must be licensed in the state where the supervision is occurring.
5. The clinical supervisor must agree to evaluate the student's clinical skills on a quarterly basis on a Quarterly Clinical Supervisor's Evaluation provided by Pacifica.
6. The clinical supervisor must agree to ensure that all state laws, regulations, and professional ethics are followed. Please be aware that since students practice away from the Pacifica campus the clinical responsibilities between the trainee and the client rest exclusively with the practicum site.

Prior to a student beginning a practicum, the site must be approved by Pacifica Graduate Institute. California law requires that an affiliation agreement outlining the responsibilities of each party be signed between the agency, the student, and the graduate school. The student can provide you with a copy of this agreement.

The practicum can be an exciting and challenging experience and has the potential to provide valuable feedback to students as well as a rich introduction to the practice of psychotherapy. It is the intent of Pacifica to establish cooperative and collaborative relationships with the practicum sites in order that our students may become sensitive, compassionate, and skilled clinicians.

If you would like additional information about requirements for the MA-L Track, please contact Willow Young at 805-879-7321 or at wyoung@pacific.edu. If you would like additional information about the requirements for the MA-C and MA-D Tracks please contact Martha Feng at 805-879-7333 or mfeng@pacific.edu. The Pacifica website may be accessed at www.pacific.edu.