

NMSU COUNSELING CENTER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

This section is intended to inform interns of their rights and responsibilities and the Counseling Center's expectations of them regarding professional functioning. The section also outlines the grievance procedures to be followed should an intern have a concern pertaining to Counseling Center operations and/or wish to file a grievance against another Counseling Center staff member as well as the procedures to follow should a Counseling Center staff member wish to file a grievance against an intern.

Interns will be provided hard copies of their rights and responsibilities as interns and the grievance and due process procedures. Time will be allotted during orientation for the Training Director to discuss interns' rights and responsibilities, as well as due process and grievance procedures.

INTERN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES/GRIEVANCES

The internship year is designed to be a capstone experience where all your prior training is applied as a full time professional at a university counseling center. Because it can be challenging to move from student to professional, we want you to be aware of your rights and responsibilities as you navigate your way through the internship year.

A. INTERN RIGHTS

1. The right to be in a safe working environment that is free from discrimination, hostility, and harassment.
2. The right to be heard and treated with respect.
3. The right to be in a learning environment that is both challenging and supportive.
4. The right to be given feedback in a timely manner.
5. The right to know about the evaluation process & evaluative criteria.
6. The right to have supervisors and trainers that follow the APA *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct*.
7. The right to have supervisors and trainers that maintain current knowledge about supervision and training (on theory, research, and standards).
8. The right to due process, grievance, and appeal.

B. EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF INTERNS

1. Follow university policies and procedures (<http://www.nmsu.edu/manual/current-nmsu-policies.html>)
2. Follow APA *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* as well as APA standards (<http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx>; <http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2010/02/ethics-code.aspx>).

3. Be aware of and follow *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA, APA, NCME); copies of this book are available for interns.
4. Follow applicable state and federal law
(http://www.rld.state.nm.us/boards/Psychologist_Examiners_Rules_and_Laws.aspx; <http://www.cms.gov/HIPAAGenInfo/>;
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>).
5. Follow Counseling Center Procedures and Guidelines Manual (currently being updated).
6. Attend to professional behavior and communicate in a respectful manner.
7. Demonstrate integrity in all aspects of center and training program obligations.
8. Consult.
9. Actively participate in center meetings and activities.
10. Be an active participant in your own training (i.e., in supervision, expressing training needs directly, open to learning).

If at any time these expectations are not clear to you, please come to the Training Director, your individual supervisors, and other staff for additional information. We are always here to help you and are receptive to feedback from you!

IF YOU ENCOUNTER A PROBLEM-INTERN GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

A. Resolution at Lowest Level/Duty to Report

The Counseling Center staff, including the psychologists, counselors, and administrative support staff are available to assist with any problems or issues that may arise during the course of the one year internship. Resolution as soon as an issue is encountered will help prevent the problem from growing, or becoming an undue distraction in the workplace. It will not only help the intern raising the issue, but may improve the performance of others, and the overall operation of the facility, which helps everyone. All interns shall promptly report any observed or reasonably suspected policy violations, illegal activity or other serious misconduct to a supervisor not involved in the alleged misconduct.

If the problem or issue encountered involves discrimination on the basis of age, ancestry, color, mental or physical disability, gender, genetics, serious medical condition, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, spousal affiliation, or veteran status, the intern should seek direction from the Office of Institutional Equity. (Policy 4.05.10) If the problem or issue encountered involves compensation, HR policies, or other working conditions, the intern should file a complaint with the Office of Human Resource Services-Employee Management Services (Policy 4.05.11).

All other problems, issues or complaints relating to the Counseling Center's operations shall be resolved using the following Intern Grievance Procedure. Examples of difficulties or problems encountered while on internship could include concerns such as the intern feeling they are receiving poor supervision; unavailability of the supervisor; workload concerns; personality clashes; or other staff conflict.

B. Intern Grievance Procedure

- 1. Resolution Through Informal Discussion:** If the intern has an operational concern or issue, including the need for clarification of professional guidelines or expectations, all interns are encouraged to raise it promptly and directly with the staff member or supervisor involved in the issue. It is hoped that through such informal discussion, differences can be worked out and resolved in a manner that all parties are in agreement.

If the intern is not comfortable raising the issue directly with the involved staff member or supervisor, the intern may ask that a staff member or Training Director present the issue at a Counseling Center Training Staff meeting, without divulging the intern's identity. Complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed because it may become clear from the facts who the involved parties are, or if the issue involves an allegation of serious misconduct, there will be a need for a formal internal investigation. Interns should not let this stop them from asking questions, suggesting improvements, and especially, from reporting observed or suspected policy violations, illegal activity or other serious misconduct.

- 2. Resolution Through Formal Grievance:**

In response to a grievance, the intern has a right to express concerns about the training program or Counseling Center staff member and the Counseling Center internship training program and staff has the right and responsibility to respond. This section provides a grievance procedure that shall be utilized if an intern wishes to file a formal grievance.

Step 1. If the informal discussions have not resulted in a satisfactory resolution, the intern may submit a written memo to the Training Director, referenced "Formal Grievance", with all supporting documentation attached.

Step 2. Upon receipt of the written complaint, the Training Director will convene an *ad hoc* grievance committee within five business days ("business day" defined as Monday through Friday, excluding days the university is officially closed). The grievance committee will be composed of three members of Counseling Center staff or adjunct faculty in a related field, who have not been involved in the facts relating to the grievance. The Training Director will select two of the members; the intern will be permitted the opportunity to select one member to serve on the grievance committee.

Step 3. The grievance committee will notify the intern, in writing, of the hearing date, time and location, at least two business days in advance. The notice shall also indicate who the members of the grievance hearing committee will be.

Step 4. The grievance committee will conduct an informal administrative review of the intern's grievance at the hearing and review all relevant material presented, including the presentation of witness testimony, if necessary. The grievance committee will decide whether or not to permit witness testimony and other procedural issues.

Step 5. Within five business days of the grievance committee hearing, the committee's chair will submit a written report of the committee's collective findings and recommendations,

along with the documentation from the hearing, to the Counseling Center Director. The committee's collective findings and recommendations will be made by majority vote.

Step 6. Within three business days from receipt of the grievance committee's recommendation, the Counseling Center Director may accept, reject or modify the grievance committee's recommendations, based upon the evidence presented. The Counseling Center Director may also determine that the committee needs to meet again to address additional issues or to deliberate further and submit revised recommendations. The Counseling Center Director will issue the final Determination to the grievant, with a copy to the grievance committee and to the Training Director.

Step 7. The Training Director will assist with the implementation of the Determination issued by the Counseling Center Director, including staff training and any other administrative action.

- 3. Additional Review:** If the intern is not satisfied with the results of a formal grievance procedure, or has other concerns with regard to Counseling Center operations, the intern may consult with the APPIC Standards and Review Committee (ASARC) to determine if the complaint falls under ASARC's jurisdiction. Information can be obtained at <http://appic.org/>

***PROCESS TO REPORT CONCERNS PERTAINING TO COUNSELING CENTER
OPERATIONS AND/OR TO FILE A GRIEVANCE AGAINST AN INTERN OR OTHER
MEMBER OF THE COUNSELING CENTER STAFF***

The Counseling Center staff hopes that each person who conducts any business or transaction with it will have a satisfying experience. If there is any concern about services rendered, including the manner in which services were provided, the treatment plan, or any other aspect, it is our hope that the client or other individual involved with the Center will feel comfortable bringing such concerns to our attention so that we may resolve them promptly, confidentially, and at the lowest administrative level possible.

The Counseling Center staff consists of paid University employees, and therefore, depending upon the nature of the concern or grievance, one of several different university policies/procedures may apply. The Director of the Center or designee is available to meet with anyone to discuss a concern or grievance, in order to reach a mutually satisfactory resolution without necessity of a more formal process. However, if that is not possible, then the grievant will be directed to the appropriate resolution process for the type of complaint. See for example, NMSU Policies 4.05.11 (non-discrimination grievances); 4.05.10 or 4.05.40 (discrimination complaints against staff or faculty); or see the [Office of HRS-EMS](#) for available mediation and alternate dispute resolution services.

Interns are university employees; therefore, concerns or grievances against an intern should first be vetted with the Director of the Counseling Center in order to determine the applicable process. If the concerns relate to or would violate professional standards, they will be taken most

seriously and investigated confidentially, objectively, thoroughly and promptly. The outcome in this type of complaint will be guided by the relief sought by the grievant, the severity of any infraction found to be substantiated by the investigation, in light of the intern's knowledge and abilities of the intern, and the parameters of the applicable employee policy or procedure.