



**Department of Child and Youth Study**

# Student Practicum Handbook

---

**Mount Saint Vincent University**  
*Department of Child and Youth Study*

NOTE: MSVU faculty will use the MSVU.CA student email for communication with students. **Please check your email often for various practicum updates.**

**Student Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **MSVU Student #** \_\_\_\_\_

Student local phone # \_\_\_\_\_

**PRACTICUM #** \_\_\_\_\_

**Placement Site** \_\_\_\_\_

Placement supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Placement address \_\_\_\_\_

Placement phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Placement Dates \_\_\_\_\_

**MSVU Supervisor** \_\_\_\_\_

**MOUNT SAINT VINCENT UNIVERSITY**  
*Child and Youth Study Department*

**CHYS 2251 - Practicum I: Early Childhood Setting - half unit**

*Prerequisite: CHYS 2208 or 2209 (either may be taken concurrently with CHYS 2251) and admission to the Bachelor of Arts (Child and Youth Study)*

Field experiences in early childhood settings in conjunction with seminars which examine these experiences in relation to theories and methods of working with young children. Placements are completed on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Students may not enrol in any other daytime courses on these days.

**CHYS 3351 - Practicum II - half unit**

*Prerequisite: completion of 10 units of credit including CHYS 2208, 2209, one of 2251/3351/4451, PSYC 2222 and admission to the Bachelor of Arts (Child and Youth Study)*

Field experience in settings for children and youth with diverse needs in conjunction with seminars which relate the experiences to theories and methods of working with children and youth with diverse needs. Placements are completed on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Students may not enrol in any other daytime courses on these days. Note: Students may not enrol in any other daytime courses on these days. Students who have received credit for CHYS 2252 may not take this course for credit.

**CHYS 3352 - Practicum III - half unit**

*Prerequisites: completion of 10 units including PSYC 2222, two of CHYS 2251/3351/4451 and admission to the Bachelor of Arts (Child and Youth Study). Placements in youth/adolescent settings require CHYS 3320; placements in early intervention require CHYS 3301; placements in administration require CHYS 4407. CHYS 3301, 3320 and 4407 may be taken concurrently with practicum.*

Field experience in a wide range of programs for children, youth and families in conjunction with seminars which examine relevant issues and the relationship between theory and practice. Placements are completed on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Students may not enrol in any other daytime courses on these days.

**CHYS 4451 - Practicum IV - half unit**

*Prerequisites: completion of 15 units including CHYS 3352 and all specific prerequisites for placements as noted for CHYS 3352, and admission to the Bachelor of Arts (Child and Youth Study)*

This practicum provides an opportunity for students to gain experience in a wide range of services for children, youth and families related to their interests and future goals. Requirements of each placement are developed individually with the placement and supervisor. Placements are completed on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Students may not enrol in any other daytime courses on these days.

**Evaluation:** Pass/Fail

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR PRACTICUM:**

### **Documentation:**

Child Abuse Registry and Vulnerable Sector Check are required, as is Emergency First aid & CPR "C"/AED Documentation must be cleared prior to start of Practicum. Incomplete documentation will result in withdrawal from the practicum.

Confidentiality forms must be completed prior to start of Practicum.

### **Other requirements:**

Students must hold a CGPA of 2.0 or higher at the end of the academic term prior to the practicum experience.

Students on academic probation will not be permitted to take Practicum.

### **Required Assignments**

1. Daily journals will be submitted and reviewed as requested by your faculty supervisor who will provide feedback and suggestions for subsequent entries.

2. Journal (binder) contents include:

Title page

Background information sheet

Table of contents

Activity plans: required on a regular basis at the program. Forms include planning, reflection and supervisor feedback components that must be completed

Observation assignment (if required)

Placement resource materials: Students are expected to collect and organize informational and educational materials related to their practicum in the journal

Summary Assignments

Signed time sheet

Signed Evaluation Forms

## BACHELOR OR ARTS (CHILD AND YOUTH STUDY)

### PRACTICUM

Practicum (assigned field experience) is one requirement which makes the Child and Youth Study Degree program unique. Practicum gives students the opportunity to put theory into practice in a professional child and/or youth care setting. Students complete practica in a variety of settings, including preschool/day care, early intervention, hospitals, social service agencies, government ministries, residential facilities, vocational training programs, and family resource programs.

Practicum is an important component of the degree. **Students who fail to successfully complete any practicum will not be permitted to continue in the program.**

Listed below are all Practica to be completed in the Bachelor of Arts (Child and Youth Study) degree. Before registering, please read the description of each practicum carefully to ensure you have prerequisites. Also, please check the Timetable carefully and ensure you record the correct practicum number, including section and term (Fall or Winter) on your registration form.

**PRACTICUM INFORMATION MEETINGS** are **MANDATORY** and are held in **SEPTEMBER (for FALL Practicum), DECEMBER (for WINTER Practicum) and MARCH (for SUMMER Practicum)**. Please check the PRACTICUM BULLETIN BOARD outside Evaristus, Room 322 for exact date, time and location or visit:

<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/programsdepartments/professionalstudies/childand youthstudy/practicum.aspx>.

It is mandatory that **all students** registered in practicum **attend the meeting** as placements will be reviewed at this time. We **cannot guarantee** placements for students who do not attend the appropriate meeting. Placements will **not** be arranged unless the student is registered in the course. **Students are not permitted to do a placement in any facility or program where a family member/relative is employed.** You will be asked to review and sign the Terms and Conditions of Practicum at this meeting.

### WINTER PRACTICUM

**Arrangements for winter placements are completed at the December meeting.**

### SUMMER SESSION PRACTICUM

Students may also choose to complete practica during Summer Session. Summer Session practicum begins immediately after exams in April as four-week block placements (i.e., students attend the placement every day over the four weeks). The first session **normally** runs from the third week in April to the third week in May. The second session runs from the fourth week in May to the fourth week of June.

The mandatory meeting for summer session practicum is held early in MARCH.

## PRACTICUM POLICIES

### Supervised Practicum

Students work directly with children/youth in a supervised practice situation in order to promote professional skill acquisition and integration. Emphasis is placed on observation, reading skills, planning and program development, understanding the structure and functioning of the placement facility, and fostering the student's awareness of her/his position in relation to children, youth and professionals.

Placement supervisors are professionals who accept, supervise and evaluate CYS students. Placement supervisors play an important role in structuring the practical experience of the students. CYS students are viewed as developing professionals who are assigned to centres/settings to work under direct guidance of placement supervisors.

CYS faculty supervisors are faculty members in the Department of Child & Youth Study who visit the CYS students to supervise and to liaise with placement supervisors during their practicum. They provide appropriate knowledge of the philosophy, purpose, structure, policies and services of the placement setting.

### Attendance

Practicum placements are every Tuesday and Thursday for the fall and winter terms, and Monday to Friday during the summer block sessions. Daily hours in the placement will be decided upon during the introductory visit with the placement supervisor, the student and the CYS faculty supervisor. It is important that this is discussed and agreed upon the first day in the placement.

Hours in the placement each day should total a minimum seven (7) hours of direct work time; however, most placements would require 8 or more hours. Students are expected to arrive early at the placement each day with sufficient time for meeting with the placement supervisor to discuss the daily schedule (allow 15-20 minutes). At the end of the day and before leaving the placement, students should consult with the placement supervisor regarding expectations/plans for next placement day. During the hours at placement, the student and placement supervisor are to ensure a 30-minute time slot is set aside in order to setup learning environments and to complete other planning tasks, as required.

### Absence

1. All days or hours missed for any reason must be made up at a time to be arranged with the placement supervisor and the **CYS faculty supervisor**. No grade will be assigned until all time has been completed. Outside appointments and meetings should not be scheduled during practicum hours.
2. Absences of more than two consecutive practicum days due to illness require a medical certificate and the time must be made up.
3. In case of illness or emergency when student is unable to attend placement, he/she is to contact the placement and supervisor as soon as possible the day of absence, and also contact the CYS faculty supervisor (phone numbers and/or contact information will be given out at beginning of Practicum).

4. When absenteeism jeopardizes completion of practicum during the term, the department will determine if withdrawal is required.

### **Academic Probation**

Students on academic probation will not be permitted to take Practicum.

### **Confidentiality**

Students must maintain all professional, ethical and legal standards in respect to observing the **strictest** confidentiality at all times regarding any information acquired or observed through their involvement with practicum placements. Confidentiality applies to:

- matters relating to the children and their families.
- affairs and activities of the centre/school/class presently and in the future.
- staff personnel/assisting professionals
- information and/or personal opinion of the placement.

All students must complete the Confidentiality Agreement before beginning **each** placement.

Students must not discuss any information with anyone including other staff, students in placement or fellow students. Student journals must not contain any identifying information. Students must always consult their placement supervisor, faculty supervisor and/or practicum coordinator when in doubt to ensure confidentiality is protected at all times.

### **Placements**

Students will have the opportunity to list their preferred placements from a list provided by the department prior to the mandatory meeting. **However, the final practicum placement decision is made by the practicum coordinator.** Students are **not** permitted to do Practicum in a facility or program where they or family members/relatives are employed, where family members/relatives are enrolled, or where students were previously enrolled and/or employed. Students **must disclose** this information at the beginning of her/his placement.

### **Journal**

Journal writing is a very valuable learning tool for students. For the student, it provides a regular opportunity to reflect on his/her own learning. For the faculty supervisor it provides valuable information on the student's insights, observation and learning. The journal must be submitted by each student for successful completion of practicum. The journal is submitted to the CYS faculty supervisor upon completion of the practicum.

### **Correct Use of Language**

In accordance with the regulation of the Committee for Academic Affairs students are requested to note the following:

"Correct use of language is one of the criteria included in the evaluation of all written assignments."

In practicum this regulation applies not only to all written work but also to oral communication with the children/clients, the placement supervisor and the CYS faculty supervisor.

### **Time Sheet**

A time sheet must be completed in duplicate recording exact daily hours in practicum each day (e.g., 8:30-3:30). This must be signed by the student and placement supervisor. It is to be included in the journal and given to the CYS faculty supervisor.

### **Site Specific Documentation**

A Medical Form must be completed by a physician for students to participate in practicum placements that require a medical form. All IWK/Capital Health placements have specific immunisation requirements that must be met prior to starting the placement. If you are considering an IWK placement please contact the CYS Administrative Assistant to request the additional forms – 6 weeks prior to the start of practicum. Some sites also require resumes/interviews or additional criteria.

### **Transportation**

Transportation and other costs are the responsibility of the student.

### **Seminars (as required by Practicum Supervisor)**

Student seminars with CYS faculty supervisors are scheduled regularly during practicum. Attendance at seminars is compulsory. **Any** seminars missed will have to be made up through special arrangements with the CYS faculty supervisor.

The purpose of the seminar that accompanies the practicum is to allow students an opportunity to meet and share practicum related experiences and information.

Seminars will focus on the needs and interests of practicum students and include the following:

1. Sharing and analysing experiences in practicum settings.
2. Continued enhancement of communication skills. Students will augment and practice skills in interacting positively with adults and children, self-evaluations and working as a member of a professional team.
3. Discussion and collaboration with peers relating to curriculum/program planning including observing and interpreting behaviour, managing transitions and routines, planning child/youth centred experiences and extending learning opportunities.

The above mentioned topics will be discussed on an on-going basis throughout practicum. Additional topics for discussion may include professional and ethical issues, partnerships with families, co-workers and community support services, and advocacy.

## **Liability**

Students are placed with a cooperating staff person in all placements. It is understood that students are to be under the supervision of a staff person at all times. A representative of the placement must always accompany a student when he/she takes children out of the facility.

## **Professional Conduct**

In addition to providing an opportunity to develop the skills necessary to function in the field the CYS practicum serves to introduce students to professional standards of behaviour and practice.

The practicum student should be able to:

- a) maintain confidentiality and act in an ethical manner at all times.
- b) be punctual.
- c) be able to initiate and terminate relationships with children, youth and their families.
- d) take responsibility to complete assignments, projects and reports.
- e) understand the child care provider/educator role.
- f) understand the roles and responsibilities of related agencies.
- g) maintain a professional working relationship with placement personnel, representatives from related agencies, families and community members.
- h) act in a conscientious and mature manner as a representative of the Department of Child & Youth Study and Mount Saint Vincent University.
- i) perform functions in accordance with placement policy and procedures.

## **Problem Resolution**

During the practicum, should difficulties or concerns arise with respect to the student or placement, it is the responsibility of the student, placement supervisor and faculty supervisor to identify concerns or problems at the earliest indication. **Any party** should request a meeting to discuss concerns with the Practicum Coordinator and CYS Department Chair to work toward resolution.



## **REQUIRED DOCUMENTAION**

### **Child Abuse Registry Check**

All students must complete a Child Abuse Registry Check **PRIOR TO** beginning their first placement in the BA(CYS) degree program. Please see the Department Administrative Assistant for FORM A. Once you receive you Child Abuse Registry you must submit the original to the CYS department for placement in your student file. CAR's are valid for 3 years, so you will need to submit a follow-up form prior to finishing your degree.

### **Vulnerable Sector Check**

All facilities/centres require each Practicum student to complete a Vulnerable Sector Check **PRIOR TO** beginning placement. Procedures regarding obtaining your VSC will be provided via email. Please Note: Students will not be permitted to begin the placement until all documentation is complete. Your VSC is valid for 5 years.

### **Emergency First aid & CPR "C"/AED**

Emergency First aid & CPR "C"/AED is required prior to your practicum placement. Emergency First aid & CPR "C"/AED is valid for 3 years. It is likely that you will need to obtain a refresher to keep your certification valid prior to finishing your degree.

## **BACHELOR OF ARTS (CHILD & YOUTH STUDY)**

### **GUIDELINES FOR CYS STUDENT**

CYS students are viewed as developing professionals who are assigned to cooperating centres/schools/programs to work under the guidance of child and youth care professionals.

- The student must attend and participate in introductory/orientation visit with CYS faculty supervisor and placement supervisor to discuss placement.
- The student is expected to become familiar with the philosophy, policies, routines, and methods that are used in the practicum setting at the beginning of the placement.
- The student is expected to demonstrate a professional attitude with regard to attendance, punctuality, dress, confidentiality, feedback and program regulations.
- The student will clarify hours at the beginning of her/his placement, arrive on time, and if going to be late or absent, must contact the placement, placement supervisor and faculty supervisor. All absences must be made up.
- The student should participate and interact with individuals, then gradually move to working with small groups.
- The student is expected to assist when requested, and share plans with the placement supervisor each day of practicum. The student will consult with the placement supervisor for feedback at the end of each day.
- The student is expected to observe strategies and analyze each situation in terms of a learning process/problem-solving, and display an active desire and interest to learn.
- The student will assist with the day-to-day operations of the programme through preparation, clean-up, assistance with routines, etc.
- The student will assess personal progress in working with children, and to act upon this assessment. This process of self-evaluation is an important part of learning and personal growth. This evaluation will occur in discussions with both the faculty supervisor and the placement supervisor.
- The student will consult with the placement supervisor to discuss plans prior to the following practicum week.
- The student will take equal responsibility with the placement supervisor in initiating ongoing communication, and must understand the importance of team work with co-workers, parents and community workers.
- The student is expected to inform the placement supervisor of scheduled visits by the CYS practicum supervisor.

- The student must attend and participate in all seminar sessions.
- The student must complete her/his journal, any assigned observation tasks and required hours.

### EVALUATION OF PRACTICUM

Evaluation of practicum is an ongoing process providing the students with feedback to assess their performance in the placement and their potential for the profession. For each practicum the placement supervisor evaluates the students twice--at mid-term and at the end of practicum. These evaluations should be discussed with the students and the CYS faculty supervisor.

The CYS faculty supervisor also evaluates the CYS students through periodic observations of the student in the practicum setting and discussions with the placement supervisor and student. It is the responsibility of the CYS faculty supervisor to determine the student's final grade (Pass, Fail, Incomplete) for the practicum.

#### **Grading**

The final grade will be derived from the following criteria:

1. **The Evaluation**: The Mount Saint Vincent University evaluation form completed by the placement supervisor and discussed with the student and the CYS faculty supervisor in an evaluation session, providing written and verbal feedback.
2. **Journal**: Submission of the required journal to the CYS faculty supervisor. In accordance with the regulations of the University Committee for Academic Affairs, correct use of language is one of the criteria included in the evaluation of all written assignments.
3. **Observation Tasks**: Completion of any observation tasks assigned by the CYS faculty supervisor.
4. **Seminars**: Attendance at and participation in **all** seminars.
5. **Hours**: Completion of required hours and absences.
6. **Student Observations**: The CYS faculty supervisor will make a minimum of three visits to the program over the term to meet with the student, supervisor and observe the student working in the program.

## **Grades**

The grades are not intended as a measure of complete professional competence but rather indicate a level of knowledge and effectiveness appropriate to the particular expectations and requirements of the practicum and placement.

- Pass (P)**
- Satisfactory performance in the expectations of the practicum and placement.
  - Proven ability to relate appropriately and in a professional manner to children, staff, placement supervisors and CYS faculty supervisor.
  - Successful completion of all criteria outlined on previous page.

- Fail (F)**
- Unsatisfactory performance in meeting the expectations and requirements of the practicum and placement.
  - Unprofessional or inappropriate behaviour toward children/students/clients or supervisors in the placement.
  - Difficulties in the student's interpersonal relationships and interactions with adults in the setting, the placement supervisor, or the CYS faculty supervisor.
  - Inability to demonstrate the warmth and empathy to the children/students/clients required of an effective child and youth care professional.
  - Failure to meet any of the criteria outlined on previous page.

## **No Credit Repeat (NCR)**

This designation would be assigned in situations where a student has not met all criteria necessary to obtain a pass, but who has demonstrated the potential to succeed with additional instruction and experience. This grade is assigned by the Child & Youth Study faculty supervisor in consultation with the practicum coordinator and the Chairperson, Department of Child & Youth Study. Any student who receives the grade will be required to register for practicum in a subsequent term and be responsible for all fees associated with registration.

## **Incomplete (INC)**

Any of the requirements not completed to the satisfaction of the placement supervisor and/or CYS faculty supervisor, are to be completed by a predetermined date. If arrangements are not completed in the specified time, the INC notation shall be changed to F (failure).

**Note: Failure to successfully complete any of the practica will result in dismissal from the program.**

### **Extension of Practicum**

Extension of practicum may be granted in the following circumstances, if both the faculty supervisor and the placement can accommodate the extension.

1. The student through absence due to illness or personal emergency has not been able to make up the time during the term.
2. The student began the placement late.
3. The student has achieved virtually all criteria for passing the practicum and, in the opinion of the placement supervisor and the CYS faculty supervisor, has demonstrated sufficient improvement on remaining criteria that a short extension will enable the student to meet them.
4. The placement supervisor and placement can accommodate the extension.

Extensions will be a joint decision of the placement supervisor and the CYS faculty supervisor, the practicum coordinator and the chairperson of the Department of Child & Youth Study. A decision will be made for a completion date of the extension. In the case of condition (2) above, the specific expectations of the student for the extension will be outlined and discussed. The student will receive a grade of "INC" until the extension is over and then the final grade will be assigned by the CYS faculty supervisor.

### **Suspension from Practicum**

If, at any time, the student's performance during practicum is deemed to be unprofessional, inappropriate and/or detrimental to the children/students/clients/supervisors or the functioning of the placement, the CYS faculty supervisor or the placement supervisor may terminate the placement for the student.

The circumstances of the termination of the practicum placement will be discussed with the chairperson of the Department of Child & Youth Study, the CYS faculty supervisor and the practicum coordinator. A decision will be made whether the student will be given another placement opportunity and the requirements that would be necessary for a further practicum placement opportunity.

## **BACHELOR OR ARTS (CHILD & YOUTH STUDY)**

### **GUIDELINES FOR CHILD & YOUTH STUDY FACULTY SUPERVISOR**

Child & Youth Study faculty supervisors are faculty members in the Department of Child & Youth Study who visit the CYS students to supervise them and to liaise with placement supervisor during their practicum. They provide appropriate knowledge of the philosophy, purpose, structure, policies and services of the placement setting.

- Through initial seminar with students before placement begins, faculty supervisors will discuss practicum policies, expectations and responsibilities.
- During introductory/orientation visit at placement, faculty supervisors will discuss with student and placement supervisor the philosophy of program and practicum goals, expectations, hours and evaluation schedule. They will also provide a Student Practicum Handbook and review relevant policies.
- Through seminars during term, faculty supervisors are to discuss students' progress, concerns and responsibilities with students (see description, page 9).
- Faculty supervisors are expected to visit students in placement at least three times during term.
- Faculty supervisors are to act as liaison between placement and student, and to keep communication open with placement supervisor, facilitating the planning and implementation of an appropriate sequence of experiences for the student.
- Faculty supervisors must be available for consultation during supervision sessions, seminars and on campus, as required, and ensure required placement time is completed and absences made up.
- Faculty supervisors are expected to support student and provide ongoing feedback and suggestions for individual growth, and opportunities to fulfil expectations.
- Faculty supervisors must monitor student's journal, observation assignments if required, and mark completed journal.
- Faculty supervisors must coordinate completion of mid-term and final evaluation. This will involve a comprehensive verbal and written evaluation at mid-term and end of practicum. The evaluation will take place in the placement setting with the faculty supervisor, the student, and the placement supervisor reviewing the student's program. The student will complete the self-evaluation. The placement supervisor will complete the provided evaluation with faculty supervisor as part of the discussion and review, both midterm and final.
- Faculty supervisors must determine final grade.

## **BACHELOR OF ARTS (CHILD & YOUTH STUDY)**

### **GUIDELINES FOR PLACEMENT SUPERVISOR**

Placement supervisors are child and youth care professionals who accept, supervise and evaluate CYS students. Placement supervisors play an important role in structuring the practical experience for the students. CYS students are developing professionals who are assigned to settings to work under the direct guidance of a placement supervisor.

- Hold initial meeting with CYS faculty supervisor and student to discuss philosophy of program, practicum goals, expectations, hours and evaluation schedule.
- Assist the student to be aware of the rules and procedures in the program. The student will need clear direction regarding her/his role in all routine activities.
- Initially, request student to handle simple tasks that do not require planning.
- Gradually give students responsibility for working with and planning activities for individuals, small groups and program. Delegate responsibility according to the level of the student's experience. The experienced student should be ready to take on large groups and/or increased responsibilities.
- Discuss the student's written plans prior to or on the first morning of each practicum. The student is responsible for coordinating practicum and course assignments with the program schedule. Some assignments may require observations of children. The student is also expected to provide a variety of experiences for the children. Written plans should be approved by the placement supervisor upon presentation.
- Provide support, encouragement and on-going feedback. It is important that you interpret incidents to students as they occur whenever possible. It is requested that you and the student set aside 30 minutes each day for discussions of daily events. This will help the student be involved and promote opportunities for learning. In order for the student to prepare written plans for the following practicum week, the placement supervisor should be prepared to share programming ideas and identify goals for each practicum week.
- Provide the student with a comprehensive verbal and written evaluation midway through and at the end of the practicum. The student, faculty supervisor, and placement supervisor should discuss in-depth the evaluation of the student's overall growth and development.
- Discuss progress and problems promptly with student and CYS faculty supervisor.
- Keep a record of student attendance on the provided time sheet. This record will be submitted to the faculty supervisor at the end of the practicum placement.
- Students should not be left alone with a group of children nor should they be used as substitutes for regular staff. This helps to ensure that students are given appropriate supervision and feedback regarding their interactions with children/youth.