

Counseling Psychology Doctoral Program  
**Direct Observation Evaluation Form**  
Texas Tech University  
Profession-Wide Competencies

Student's Name

Date of Observation

Agency

Supervisor

APA instituted new Standards of Accreditation for Health Service Psychology (as of January 1, 20117) that mandates that part of your evaluation of practicum students must be based on **direct observation**. This can include watching videotapes or live observations of the student's performance.

\* We have found that it is important to recognize that competencies are acquired at different rates. Some competencies, such as administrative or supervisory skills, may come slowly and later in professional development. Other more basic competencies, such as timeliness, ability to utilize supervision, etc., may be expected and/or required to be substantially attained very early in training. These differences in the rate of development are reflected in the level of competence expected at the conclusion of practicum training. We utilize the following categories in describing the level of competence expected at each level of practicum student development.

**0. Pre-novice:** Indicates a level of competence below that of a Novice therapist; used to denote competence below the baseline at which we would expect a beginning practicum student to be.

**\*1. Novice (N):** Novices have limited knowledge and understanding of (a) how to analyze problems and of (b) intervention skills and the processes and techniques of implementing them. They learn general principles or specific techniques to use, but the student's beginning level of experience limits the flexible use of these skills. Novices do not yet recognize patterns, and do not differentiate well between important and unimportant details; they do not have filled-in cognitive maps of how, for example, a given patient may move from where he/she is to a place of better functioning.

**\*2. Intermediate (I):** Psychology students at the intermediate level of competence have coped with enough real situations to recognize some important recurring meaningful situational components, based on prior experience in actual situations. Generalization of diagnostic and intervention skills to new situations and patients is limited, and support is needed to guide performance.

**\*3. Advanced (A).** At this level, the student can see his or her actions in terms of long-range goals or plans of which he or she is consciously aware. For the psychologist at this level of competence, a plan establishes a perspective, and the plan is based on considerable conscious, abstract, analytic contemplation of the problem (including review of scholarly/research literature as needed). The conscious, deliberate planning that is characteristic of this skill level helps achieve efficiency and organization. At this level, the psychologist is less flexible in these areas than the proficient psychologist [the next level of competence but does have a feeling of mastery and the ability to cope with and manage many contingencies of clinical work. Recognition of overall patterns, of a set of possible diagnoses and/or treatment processes and outcomes for a given case, are taking shape.

**\*4. Proficient.** The proficient psychologist perceives situations as wholes rather than in terms of chopped up parts or aspects. Proficient psychologists understand a situation as a whole because they perceive its meaning in terms of longer-term goals. The proficient psychologist learns from experience what typical events to expect in a given situation and how plans need to be modified in response to these events. The proficient psychologist can recognize when the expected normal picture does not materialize and takes steps to address these situations (including seeking supervision, reviewing research literature). This holistic understanding improves the proficient psychologist's decision making; it becomes less labored because the psychologist now has a perspective on which of the many existing attributes and aspects in the present situation are the important ones – the psychologist has developed a nuanced understanding of the clinical situation.

**\*5. Expert.** The expert no longer relies on an analytic principle (rule, guideline, maxim) to connect her or his understanding of the situation to an appropriate action. The expert psychologist, with an enormous background of experience, now has an intuitive grasp of each situation and zeroes in on the accurate region of the problem without wasteful consideration of a large range of unfruitful, alternative diagnoses and solutions. The expert operates from a deep understanding of the total situation. This is not to say that the expert never uses analytic tools. Highly skilled analytic ability is necessary for those situations with which the psychologist has had no previous experience. Analytic tools are also necessary for those times when the expert gets a wrong grasp of the situation and then finds that events and behaviors are not occurring as expected. When alternative perspectives are not available to the clinician, the only way out of a wrong grasp of the problem is by using analytic problem solving.

It is expected that an upward developmental trajectory of competencies will be demonstrated by the practicum student throughout training. **Thus, only in extremely rare instances would a student be expected to demonstrate competence at the Proficient or Expert level prior to completion of their pre-doctoral internship. Rather, students are expected to be at the Intermediate or Advanced level of competency by the time they begin internship.**

Please rate the student on each of the domains listed below using the following scale:

**0=Pre-novice 1=Novice 2=Intermediate 3=Advanced 4=Proficient 5=Expert**

Domain I: Relationship/Interpersonal skills with colleagues

Domain II: Professional behavior with clients

Domain III: Effective Use of supervision

Domain IV: Skills and application of research

Domain V: Intervention skills

Domain VI: Professional ethics

Domain VII: Multicultural awareness

Domain VIII: Assessment skills

Supervisor's Name (please print)

Supervisor's Signature