



Alabama Department of Mental Health

Office of Deaf Services

Practicum Guidelines

1. Practicum participants must comply with all applicable Alabama Interpreter Licensing requirements. (License-eligible for out of state participants.)
2. No practicum participant may begin practicum prior to the completion of the full 40-hour Alabama Mental Health Interpreter Training course or approved substitutes that meet all requirements of chapter 580-3-24 of the Code of Alabama.
3. Practicum supervisors must be approved by the Office of Deaf Services.
 - 3.1. Supervisors who may, but not exclusively, be approved include:
 - 3.1.1. A staff interpreter assigned to the Office of Deaf Services or a DMH facility who holds certification as a Qualified Mental Health Interpreter as defined by chapter 580-3-24 of the Code of Alabama and has been trained by ODS and deemed a Qualified Mental Health Interpreter Supervisor (QMHI-S)
 - 3.1.2. An interpreter or deaf professional who also holds a terminal degree in psychology, clinical social work, psychiatry or counseling and has participated in MHIT and has been trained by ODS and deemed a Qualified Mental Health Interpreter Supervisor (QMHI-S)
 - 3.1.3. An interpreter who holds certification as a Qualified Mental Health Interpreter as defined by chapter 580-3-24 of the Code of Alabama and is known to ODS as being experienced and has been trained by ODS and deemed a Qualified Mental Health Interpreter Supervisor (QMHI-S)
 - 3.2. Practicum supervisors must be current in all ODS mandated supervision training.
4. Practicum sites must be primarily clinical in nature. Settings that are educational in nature will not be approved. This includes sign language instruction.
 - 4.1. Practicum students are encouraged to have 10 – 15 hours of documented observation prior to undertaking the interpreting portion (25 – 30 hours) of their practicum. This observation must be of a clinical nature.
 - 4.2. Practicum sites must be approved by the practicum coordinator.
- 4.3. Acceptable assignments include counseling, psychological/ psychiatric testing/assessment, group therapy, treatment team meetings, emergency room intake and psychosocial education classes.

- 4.4. This work must be direct interpreting work and cannot be “social” or “interactive” time.
- 4.5. Twelve Step groups will be considered with prior approval of the Office of Deaf Services.
5. Unacceptable assignments include platform interpreting for workshops, interpreting professional level meetings that are not directly related to treatment planning, social activities, or interpreting assignments primarily educational in nature, with the exception of psychosocial education within a clinical context. The practicum experiences may be paid or unpaid, subject to provisions below:
 - 5.1. On assignments that are the contractual obligation of ADMH, only one individual (the supervisor) may be paid for an assignment that would normally require one interpreter.
 - 5.2. Participants and supervisors may team interpret, although generally, only the practicum supervisors should expect payment if the assignment would normally require only one interpreter.
6. In general, at least one hour of direct observation by the supervisor and one hour of supervision case conferencing should be planned for each eight hours of work. More may be required by the supervisor as needed.
7. Practicum experience must be documented and filed with the Office of Deaf Services.
 - 7.1. Records must contain:
 - 7.1.1. Case presentations that include the date, time and location of each assignment, general description of the assignment and any significant professional, procedural or ethical issues raised.
 - 7.1.2. Supervisor’s report verifying discussion of the case presentation, the score the practicum interpreter earned on the assignment as well as future goals to be implemented into the practicum student’s future interpreting. Supervisor’s report must bear the reporting supervisor’s signature.
 - 7.1.3. Supervisors shall use a form developed by the MHIT for this purpose. Required documentation may be submitted electronically, by fax, or by mail.
 - 7.1.4. Participants are responsible for assuring that all necessary paperwork is filed with the Office of Deaf Services.
8. Practicum students must have 40 hours of working/supervision completed within one year of the conclusion of MHIT training.
 - 8.1. Practicum must be completed in a “block” of time not to exceed 30 days.

- 8.2. The deadline for returning completed forms is one year after completion of MHIT.
- 8.3. Extensions may be granted by the Office of Deaf Services in the event of extenuating circumstances.