

SJSU MS in Clinical Psychology Notes on Securing an Internship

General Issues

You want to apply to and interview at 3 places minimally

- This give you practice with the process you will need when you are on your own after graduation

If you apply to places you know SJSU clinical students have gone before, it should be a straightforward process, but you are required to have two documents in place:

- MS Program Intern-Fieldwork Contract 2019 [on website]
- Fieldwork Contract - University Agreement (this may already be on file with that agency but is on the website)

Both must be filed with the Director of the Program

If you apply to agencies that we have not been (or have not been in a while), you **MUST** discuss this with the Clinical Program Director (e.g., outside of Santa Clara County; agencies we have not had students at before)

- You will need to file specific contract paper work (see above; the University Agreement must be completed)
- We **MUST** determine whether they meet the requirements for supervisor for MFT/LPC interns

You cannot accept a position until the above have been completed.

Timeline considerations

- *Over Winter Break* - prepare resume and cover letters, research agencies
- *Mid/end of January* - attend career fair and submit resumes (some places are early: Alum Rock and county); The Program Director will likely give you information on when the fair is held
- Determine which agencies require letters of recommendation and ask professors/supervisors to be your letter writer
 - be sure to allow time for the letter writers to produce the letter – usually 2-3 week
 - remember professors are on break until late January, so plan ahead!
- *End of January to February* - Follow up with people you met at the fair, continue to apply to internships and submit applications
- *February- March* - go on interviews
- *March - April* - accept offer
 - ****Important**** always follow up politely if you withdraw an application or decline an offer because you've accepted an offer elsewhere. It's important to keep a good reputation because this community is surprisingly small and good relations are important as a beginning therapist.

Some key thoughts to consider

- Be polite, be thoughtful, be respectful to everyone involved in the process. Follow through and follow up with inquiries, interviews, offers, and discussions. The mental health community is really small and people move around among agencies a lot, so you run into the same people over and over again even in just the first few years of your career
- You can and should ask what the caseload is for a trainee. Some placements have trainees carry a caseload of 4-6, while others have more. More clients generally suggests you will accrue more hours (such as in a school setting where the trainee is expected to be there all day), but the trade-off is much more intense work, particularly when you are new to this.

Timeline of offers and having to choose between placements

- The places that pay (if any still do) can take their time in making offers, while the agencies with unpaid positions tend to make offers quite quickly because they want to snap up the good people.

This can create awkward situations if a person feels pressured to accept an unpaid position quickly while they are still hoping for a paid one.

There is no easy fix for this. It's just worth pointing out that this might happen and that it has the potential to affect your ability to get future positions if you have accepted and backed out of a trainee position.

- Get advice from faculty if you are in a pressure position to decide. Ask for a few more days, and reach out to the place that has not yet told you to determine if they are close to making an offer.

Interview Suggestions

General interview ideas for interviews in person, on the phone, or even at fairs or info meetings:

Do your research before you come, and try to already have an idea of the population the various agencies serve.

Prepare your mini "about me" speech

- Consider your strengths and skills (languages, experiences, etc.) that you want to emphasize
- depending on the context (e.g., social work fair) some may not realize you are an MFT student

Questions to consider asking

- Will you get experience with many different types of cases (range of ages, different diagnoses, etc.)
- Where will you see your clients? At the clinic, at school, in their home, etc?
 - Is travel expected? If so, is mileage reimbursed?
 - Remember that you CAN NOT transport clients in your car EVER
- What is the length of commitment?
 - Some require a 12-month commitment
- What training opportunities do they provide?
- What is supervision like?
- Do they hire after the internship is over?
- Can you speak to a current intern to ask questions about their experience?
- Do they offer a stipend?/Do they have paid opportunities?
- How many openings do they have for MFT trainees?
- Ask about average hours gained on completion
 - Do people usually get the 150 (+75 CCA) hours in the time they are there?
 - If interested whether getting the 280 face to face hours for the LPCC is/would be a problem

Ask how to apply or who the best person is to contact

Get a business card or contact phone/email so you can send do a follow up thank you call/email.

At the very least, **do follow-up** by email the next day.