



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

**MASTER OF SCIENCE
MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING**

STUDENT HANDBOOK

(Revised 06/05/2024)

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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Mental Health Counseling Program

The College of Education, University of Texas at El Paso, and the M.S. Mental Health Counseling Program extend a warm welcome to you. You are an integral part of an educational program that prepares individuals to enter the field of professional counseling. The Mental Health Counseling Program prepares graduates to work with clients across a spectrum of mental and emotional disorders, as well as to promote mental health and wellness. Clients may be seen individually, in couples, in families, or in diagnosis, treatment, referral, and prevention and often work in interdisciplinary teams with other health professionals (e.g., psychiatrists, social workers, MDs). Employment opportunities may include private practice, community-based mental health centers, hospitals, and other treatment centers. Mental health counselors address problems of a remedial nature, issues related to current stressors and trauma, in addition to helping and supporting people over the lifespan as they experience the various developmental stages and life transitions inherent in being human. By becoming a professional counselor, you have chosen to become a part of that journey with your clients. Our goal is to help you achieve success in your journey to become a professional in this most rewarding field.

History of the Counseling Program

The Counseling Program began in the 1960s to train school guidance counselors who would qualify for certification as a School Counselor. In the 1970s the program expanded to include community counseling and by the 1980s to prepare students for licensure as a Professional Counselor (LPC) in the state of Texas. In 2013, the Community Counseling Program was replaced with the 60-hour Mental Health Counseling Program (MHC). In the academic year of 2017/2018, the Master of Science (M.S.) degree replaces the Master of Education (M.Ed.) as the designated degree for the MHC Program. The MHC Program achieved accreditation by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) in January 2019 as a specialty program in clinical mental health counseling. The accreditation is active until 2027.

University of Texas at El Paso's Vision, Mission, and Goals

UTEP is a comprehensive public research university that is increasing access to excellent higher education. We advance the discovery of public value and positively impact the health, culture, education, and economy of the community we serve.

The University of Texas at El Paso is dedicated to the advancement of the El Paso region through education, creative and artistic production, and the generation, interpretation, application, and commercialization of key discoveries, and the dissemination of knowledge. UTEP embraces its role as an intellectual, cultural, and socioeconomic asset to the region,

offering programs to meet human resource needs and contribute to the quality of life.

As a public university, UTEP is committed to providing access and opportunity to the people of the El Paso region and the State of Texas. UTEP's mission of ensuring access is coupled with a commitment to excellence reflected in rigorous programs, which prepare students to make significant contributions to their professions, their communities, and the world.

As a research/doctoral institution, UTEP fosters a climate of scholarly inquiry, with a special focus on applying innovative interdisciplinary approaches to explore and address major issues that confront the multicultural, U.S.-Mexico border region.

College of Education Mission and Vision Statement

Mission

The mission of the College of Education is to prepare effective teachers, counselors, diagnosticians, and school administrators who successfully address the problems of schools and other youth-serving agencies, especially in communities with a significant Hispanic population.

Vision

The long-term vision of UTEP's College of Education is to expand interdisciplinary research to meet the compelling need for research linking teaching and learning to meet the critical challenges of education in the 21st century.

This vision includes strengthening the role of the College of Education in building collaborative relationships between the U.S. and Mexico to enhance current educational theory and practice.

Department of Counseling and Special Education Mission/Vision Statement

The mission of the department is to prepare excellent mental health, school, and rehabilitation counselors, special education teachers, and educational diagnosticians, who promote educational, social, emotional, vocational, and health needs to successfully promote independence and well-being in the Paso del Norte Region. Our undergraduate and graduate programs are founded on innovative evidence-based and community-centered practices that meet the needs of a 21st-century demographic. The CSEP department is committed to community-engaged collaborative and interdisciplinary research that informs professional practice, high-quality instruction, and increased opportunities for student engagement, scholarship, and practice.

In conjunction with the College of Education's goals, our department works in collaboration with local school districts and community agencies to provide quality professional training. Our faculty strives to support lifelong learning and professional development among our students and graduates. We believe it is highly important to review, revise, and update our programs to ensure we continue to meet the highest quality of developmental standards for licensure and certification requirements of our educational professionals.

UTEP Mental Health Counseling Program Goals, Objectives, and Competencies

The University of Texas at El Paso Mental Health Counseling program (MHC) seeks to prepare students to be effective counselors in a diverse world and profession. Counseling is a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals. Consistent with the values of the counseling profession, the MHC program seeks to infuse multicultural awareness, advocacy, knowledge, and skills throughout the curriculum. The program is structured to ensure that students will develop a professional identity as mental health counselors and will master the knowledge and counseling skills needed to practice effectively. Students will be trained for careers in community mental health and human service agencies, private practices, and hospitals, as well as government, business, and industrial settings. Based on the philosophy articulated in our Mission Statement and based on the CACREP standards, the Mental Health Counseling program goals, objectives, and competencies are as follows:

Goals, Objectives, and Competencies

The University of Texas at El Paso Mental Health Counseling program (MHC) seeks to prepare students to be effective counselors in a diverse world and profession. Counseling is a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals. Consistent with the values of the counseling profession, the MHC program seeks to infuse multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills throughout the curriculum. The program is structured to ensure that students will develop a professional identity as a mental health counselor and will master the knowledge and counseling skills needed to practice effectively. Students will be trained for careers in community mental health and human service agencies, private practices, as well as government, business and industrial settings. Based on the philosophy articulated in our Mission Statement and based on the CACREP standards, the Mental Health Counseling program Goals, Objectives, and Competencies are as follows:

Goal 1: Knowledge in Core Counseling Subject Areas

Objectives:

- a. Become knowledgeable about the counseling profession and ethical practice in counseling.
- b. Become knowledgeable about social and cultural diversity.
- c. Become knowledgeable about human growth and development.
- d. Become knowledgeable about career development.
- e. Become knowledgeable about helping relationships, counseling theories, and the counseling process from individual and family system perspectives.
- f. Become knowledgeable about group work.
- g. Become knowledgeable about assessment.

- h. Become knowledgeable about research and program evaluation.

Competencies Expected for these Objectives:

- a. Proficient knowledge base in each subject area.
- b. Proficiency in the application of subject area knowledge.
- c. Proficiency in oral and written communication related to subject area knowledge.

Goal 2: Knowledge, Development, and Demonstration of Clinical Mental Health Counseling Skills and Practices

Objectives:

- a. Develop and demonstrate foundational knowledge regarding the provision of mental health treatment services including treatment models, agency operations, and the principles of clinical mental health counseling.
- b. Develop and demonstrate skills in addressing issues of diversity and providing advocacy.
- c. Develop and demonstrate skills in clinical assessment, evaluation, diagnosis, treatment planning, and intervention.

Competencies Expected for these Objectives:

- a. Proficiency in developing counseling relationships, performing culturally competent counseling interventions, advocating for clients, and consulting with other professionals and systems.
- b. Proficiency in performing intake interviews and mental status examinations, gathering biopsychosocial histories, assessing clinical information, diagnosis, and documenting, and reporting clinical information.
- c. Proficiency in case conceptualization, developing treatment plans, applying evidence-based practices, strategies, and techniques, and evaluating treatment outcomes for a variety of mental health issues.

Goal 3: Knowledge, Development, and Demonstration of Clinical Mental Health Counseling Professional Dispositions

Objectives:

- a. Develop and demonstrate intrapersonal awareness and an accurate understanding of the basic motivations of self, including the relationship between personal beliefs, thoughts, feelings, actions, and professional functioning.
- b. Develop and demonstrate emotional sensitivity, interpersonal respect, and professional decorum in all professional interactions.

- c. Develop and demonstrate openness to personal and professional growth in the professional learning process.
- d. Develop and demonstrate ethical responsibility, and the attitudes, demeanor, and maturity necessary to perform the duties of a professional counselor.

Competencies Expected for these Objectives:

- a. Proficiency in understanding and relating to clients in an emotionally sensitive and respectful manner.
- b. Proficiency in behaving in a highly professional, ethical, and mature manner in interactions with clients, colleagues, professionals, and agency staff.
- c. Proficiency in the ability to seek, reflect upon, and respond to supervisory feedback in a manner that enhances personal and professional growth and learning.

Licensure Requirements:

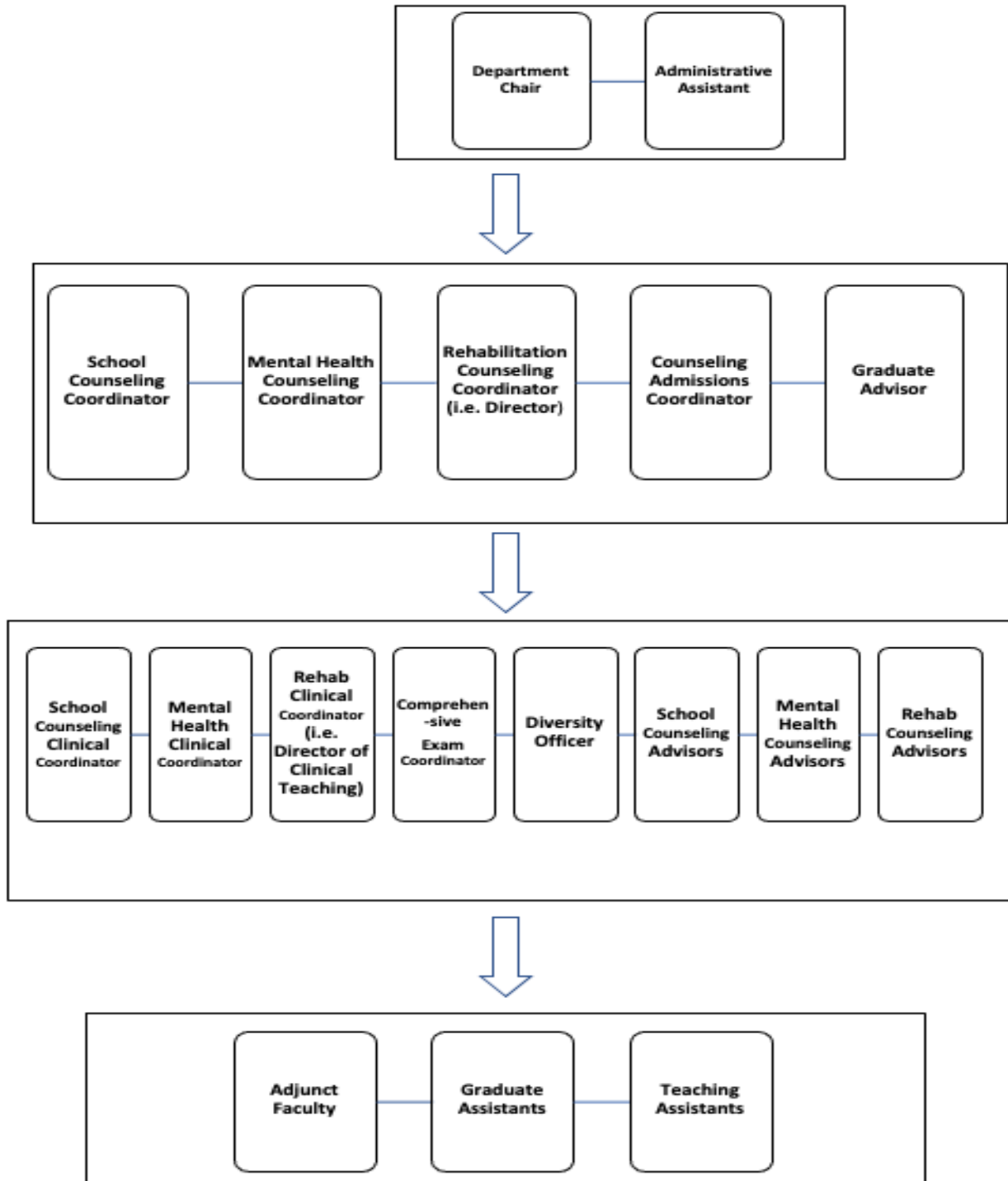
The CACREP Accredited Mental Health Counseling Program at the University of Texas at El Paso fulfills the academic requirements for Licensed Professional Counselor (initially LPC Associate) licensure in Texas. To be fully licensed as an LPC in Texas, in addition to the 60-hour master's program, a student must have three thousand (3,000) clock hours of supervised experience after graduation.

Counseling Program Organizational Chart

The counseling programs are administratively housed on the seventh floor of the College of Education building in the Department of Counseling and Special Education. Within the department, students can pursue various graduate degrees, including:

1. Master of Science (M.S.) in Mental Health Counseling
2. Master of Education (M.Ed.) in School Counseling
3. Master of Rehabilitation Counseling (MRC)

Counseling Program Organizational Chart



Definitions

Adjunct Faculty:

Qualified instructors who teach within the counseling program to the standards and competencies that are specific to each course.

Administrative Assistant:

Supports the Department of Counseling and Special Education with administrative duties.

CACREP Liaison:

The CACREP Liaison serves as the primary point of contact between CACREP and the institution's accredited program(s). The CACREP Liaison is the person to whom CACREP will send important notifications and news updates.

Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE) Coordinator:

Supports the counseling program through the coordination, scheduling, and dissemination of results of the comprehensive exam each semester.

Counseling Admissions Coordinator:

The counseling admissions coordinator supports the program during the entirety of the admission cycle.

Department Chair:

The purpose of this position is to manage the operations of an academic department, consisting of the programs within the department.

Graduate Assistant:

A graduate student who works under the supervision of an assigned faculty member to support the program in areas that can include teaching and research needs.

Graduate Program Advisor:

The graduate advisor addresses academic matters affecting graduate students and their academic programs. In general, a graduate advisor acts as a liaison for students and the graduate school (e.g. contact for potential students, signs off on graduation applications, etc.). The graduate advisor is the first source of academic information and assists with general information regarding the graduate programs housed within the department.

Mental Health Counseling Advisors:

Students are assigned an advisor (currently by last name) after the initial advising session during the Mandatory New Student Orientation. Students are encouraged to reach out to their assigned advisor (email/in-person/virtual) each semester before registration to review their plan of study.

Mental Health Clinical Coordinator:

- Respond to inquiries about and inform students regarding the Mental Health Counseling Program's practicum/internship expectations and application procedures.
- Accept and review applications from students for placement at practicum/internship sites.
- Review criminal background check reports before assigning students to sites.
- Seek out and negotiate placements with agencies.
- Inform agency supervisors of the Mental Health Counseling Program policies and procedures regarding practicum/internship placements and supervision expectations.
- Establish liaisons with sites and site supervisors.
- Intervene with supervisors on behalf of students when needed.
- Suggest and implement relevant clinical training policies and procedures to meet CACREP standards and program goals/objectives.
- Develop, disseminate, and retrieve forms to evaluate practicum/internship students, supervisors, and sites.
- Inform group supervisors (e.g. full-time and adjunct faculty) of the Counseling Program policies and procedures regarding practicum/internship placements and supervision expectations.
- Maintain and update the practicum/internship handbooks for students and supervisors.
- Develop and offer supervisor training workshops.

Mental Health Program Coordinator:

In collaboration, as reasonable, with the School and Rehab Counseling Program Coordinator:

- Schedule and lead meetings of the Counseling Program. These meetings shall be at least once a month.
- Develop and submit schedules for courses to the Department Chair for approval.
- Recommend budget expenditures to the Department Chair.
- Assign a faculty member to respond to inquiries from persons interested in the Mental Health Counseling Program.
- Recommend to the Department Chair a faculty member to oversee the clinical course sequence and act as the Mental Health Clinical Coordinator (*if one cannot be assigned*).
- Recommend to the Department Chair part-time adjunct faculty.
- Mentor untenured faculty members in scholarship and teaching.
- Work with coordinators of other academic programs housed in the department.
- Oversee the Student Learning Outcomes data collection, analysis, and review process including administration of the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam-CPCE (*if this role cannot be assigned – CPCE Coordinator*).
- Convene meetings of the program advisory committee.
- Oversee distribution, retrieval, and analysis of alumni surveys, supervisor surveys, and employer surveys.
- Facilitate annual program review.

- Prepare and post reports of annual program reviews.
- Appoint and oversee the CACREP liaison.
- Maintain and update the student handbook.
- Represent the program in campus and community forums.

Student Progress Review Process

A point-in-time review process

Making Progress: Faculty convene to discuss student progress based on certain criteria (see “criteria for advancement” section) at three different times during a student’s progress to graduation: 1. After successful completion of each student’s first two semesters (approximately 9 to 15 semester credit hours), faculty will review for continuance of work towards the completion of the plan of studies. If the student is not making the expected progress, a remediation plan will be developed and enacted. 2. After students have completed 15-40 semester credit hours (except for practicum and internships) and applied for a practicum course, faculty will review dispositions for each student to determine their preparation for practicum. If remediation is needed, a remediation plan is developed. 3. During a student’s last internship, faculty will review the student’s progress one last time to assess whether the student has met all program milestones and graduation requirements. If remediation is needed, a remediation plan is developed (see the retention and review policy).

Remediation plan: The purpose of the remediation plan is to help students improve and graduate. After review, if the faculty agrees that a student is not meeting expectations based on certain criteria (see “criteria for advancement” section), the faculty assists the student’s advisor with ideas for a constructive plan to support the student’s progress in the program. Afterwards, the advisor meets with the student to review the ideas and in collaboration with the student, decides on the final constructive plan or remediation plan to help the student meet expectations. Depending on severity, a remediation plan may serve as a Retention and Review Policy’s (RRP - see definition below) Corrective Action Plan. Therefore, if faculty concerns about the student’s progress disposition escalate beyond the parameters of a remediation plan, the Counseling Program Coordinator in consultation with faculty may move the student’s case forward to step four of the RRP process (see Retention and Review Policy section).

Student Retention and Review Process

Conducted as needed

Although the student progress review (see previous definition) documentation may be included in a retention and review process, the retention and review policy (RRP) is not the same as the student progress review. A primary difference is that the student progress review happens at three distinct times (i.e. point-in-time) over the course of a student’s educational journey in a counseling program, and the RRP may happen at any time during the student’s tenure as a student or up to graduation. The RRP is relevant when a student is struggling to meet the academic, personal, interpersonal, and professional expectations to such an extent that there is a need to address it before the time of a standard designated period for student progress review or beyond the extent of a basic remediation plan as a result of a student progress review. The RRP is a four-step process that is initiated by a faculty member. For more

information about initiation and steps in the process see the Retention and Review Policy in section three of this handbook (page 29).

Teaching Assistants:

A graduate student who works under the supervision of an assigned faculty member to support the program in areas that can include teaching and research needs.

Mental Health Counselor:

The American Mental Health Counseling Association (AMHCA) defines clinical mental health counselors as "highly skilled professionals who provide flexible, consumer-oriented therapy. They combine traditional psychotherapy with a practical, problem-solving approach that creates a dynamic and efficient path for change and problem resolution."

Professional Counseling Associations

Mental Health Counseling students are strongly encouraged to engage with local, state, and national counseling professional associations and organizations. These associations offer valuable resources, networking opportunities, and professional development experiences that can greatly enhance students' understanding of the field and support their career aspirations.

Membership in these associations is often available at discounted rates for students and provides access to a wide range of benefits, including:

1. **Training and Workshops:** Many associations offer specialized training events, workshops, and conferences where students can learn about the latest research, counseling techniques, and best practices in the field.
2. **Networking Opportunities:** Associations provide platforms for students to connect with experienced professionals, mentors, and peers in the counseling community. These connections can lead to valuable mentorship, job opportunities, and collaborative projects.
3. **Professional Development Resources:** Members often have access to a wealth of resources such as journals, newsletters, online forums, and webinars that keep them informed about industry trends, legislative updates, and emerging issues in counseling.
4. **Discounted or Free Malpractice Insurance:** Some associations offer discounted or free malpractice insurance coverage for student members, providing essential protection as they engage in supervised clinical work or internships.

By actively participating in professional associations, Mental Health Counseling students can deepen their understanding of the profession, build meaningful connections, and gain valuable insights that will support their development as competent and compassionate counselors. Below are several associations relevant to our region and profession with hyperlinks to their websites.

- A. [American Counseling Association \(ACA\)](#):
 - [ACA Divisions](#)
- B. [American Mental Health Counselors Association \(AMHCA\)](#):
- C. [Texas Counseling Association \(TCA\)](#):
 - [Texas Mental Health Counselors Association \(TMHCA\)](#):
 - [Texas Association for Counselor Education and Supervision \(TACES\)](#):
- D. [Chi Sigma Iota \(CSI\)](#):
 - Chi Sigma Iota Counseling Academic & Professional Honor Society International is the international honor society of professional counseling and professional counselors.
 - CSI Upsilon Tau Epsilon is the Student Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) International Counseling Honor Society at UTEP.

Computer, Internet, and Communication

Students are expected to have access to and be able to utilize a computer with an internet connection. Please note that the University of Texas at El Paso does make computers with an internet connection available in its library and college facilities and in some common areas on campus. Mental Health Counseling courses make extensive use of Blackboard, an online education platform. Therefore, students are expected to take the university training to learn how to use Blackboard. Additionally, students will be assigned a University of Texas at El Paso e-mail address, which will be utilized by the faculty and administrators in the Guidance and Counseling Program as the primary means of electronic communication.

How to Use This Handbook

This student handbook is essential reading for all students newly admitted to the Counseling Program Mental Health Counseling track. Upon admission to the program, students should obtain this handbook and read it in its entirety. This handbook contains valuable information about successfully progressing through the program. It describes the Academic Standards and Evaluation policies, the Personal Growth expectations, and the Ethical Standards of the program, and delineates the process of attaining licensure as a mental health counselor in the state of Texas.

Your Academic Advisor, who will be assigned to you by the Counseling Program upon your admission, is available to assist you as you progress through the program. However, you are responsible for knowing the content contained within this handbook. Advisors and instructors in the program will assume you have read it thoroughly and will hold you responsible for the information contained herein. Reviewing this handbook periodically is therefore highly recommended. For specific questions and concerns it is always a good idea to speak directly with your Academic Advisor or other Counseling faculty members. To help guide you through the program and as an aid to understanding the steps you will take to complete your degree refer to this handbook, the Practicum/Internship Handbook (or orientation), and your assigned Academic Advisor. You are encouraged to contact us concerning any issues that may arise throughout the

course of your education in our program and have supplied faculty contact information in the Appendix.

My Advisor is: _____

My Advisor's email: _____

Office Phone: _____

SECTION TWO: THE MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING PROGRAM

Allowable Transfer of Graduate Credits:

Transfer of graduate credit from a CACREP accredited program within a regionally accredited institution* is limited to 9 hours for the master's degree. All transfer credit must have been completed with a grade of "B" or better, completed within the last six years, and approved by the Counseling program faculty and the University of Texas at El Paso. Transfer credits should be evaluated and approved by program faculty during the student's first semester. The course being transferred into a degree program should be a direct equivalent to the course within the certification/degree program or meet the requirement of an elective. Students should work with their advisor to have courses evaluated for transfer. This may include submission of an official transcript sent directly from the institution to the University of Texas at El Paso, a course catalog description of course(s) to be transferred from that institution, and a copy of the syllabus for the course(s) to be transferred. Transfer credit is not guaranteed and subject to Counseling faculty review and approval. Previous work experience is not accepted as transfer credit into the program.

*Recognized by the United States Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation

CACREP: Core Counseling Curriculum

**Does not include the example indicators for each standard*

F. The eight common core areas represent the foundational knowledge required of *all* entry-level counselor education graduates. Therefore, counselor education programs must document where each of the lettered standards listed below is covered in the curriculum:

1. PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING ORIENTATION AND ETHICAL PRACTICE
2. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY
3. HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT
4. CAREER DEVELOPMENT
5. COUNSELING AND HELPING RELATIONSHIPS
6. GROUP COUNSELING AND GROUP WORK
7. ASSESSMENT AND TESTING
8. RESEARCH AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

CACREP: Clinical Mental Health Counseling Specialty Standards

**Does not include the example indicators for each standard*

Students who are preparing to specialize as clinical mental health counselors will demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to address a wide variety of circumstances within the context of clinical mental health counseling. Counselor education programs with a specialty area in clinical mental health counseling must document where each of the lettered standards listed below is covered in the curriculum.

1. FOUNDATIONS
2. CONTEXTUAL DIMENSIONS
3. PRACTICE

The Mental Health Counseling Curriculum

The Mental Health counseling program at UTEP is a Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)-an accredited program that offers an M.S. degree program consisting of 60 hours requirement for Licensure as a Professional Counselor in the state of Texas. This program prepares students for counseling positions in various settings such as mental health centers, family counseling centers, social service agencies, psychiatric hospitals, and private practice.

The MHC Program is taught almost entirely in a traditional face-to-face format or hybrid format with a combination of face-to-face instruction and online assignments.

Students who are accepted into the Mental Health Counseling program will follow the below 60-hour program, grouped according to the level of professional development and not as a precise sequence of study:

I. Foundational Counseling Requirements (18 Semester Hours)

- EDPC 5310 - Applied Research Design for Counseling and Special Education
- EDPC 5317 - Human Growth & Development
- EDPC 5320 - Lifestyle & Career Development
- EDPC 5322 - Mental Health Counseling
- EDPC 5324 - Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in Counseling
- EDPC 5341 - Theories of Counseling
- EDPC 5346 - Counseling Multicultural and Diverse Populations

II. Advanced Mental Health Counseling Requirements (24 Semester Hours)

Courses in parenthesis are required before taking the aforementioned course

- EDPC 5333 - Crisis Counseling
- EDPC 5335 - Principles of Appraisal & Assessment (EDPC 5317, EDPC 5341, EDPC 5345, EDPC 5346)
- EDPC 5338 - Group Counseling (EDPC 5317, EDPC 5339)

- EDPC 5339 - Techniques of Counseling (EDPC 5341)
- EDPC 5345 - Abnormal Human Behavior
- EDPC 5347 – Addictions Counseling (EDPC 5342, EDPC 5345)
- EDPC 5360 – Introduction to Marriage and Family Therapy (EDPC 5341)

III. Specialization Electives (3 Semester Hours)

Courses in parenthesis are required before taking the aforementioned course

- EDPC 5349 – Cognitive/Behavioral Therapies (EDPC 5341)
- EDPC 5356 – Couples Therapy (EDPC 5360)
- EDPC 5350 – Neuroscience and Counseling (EDPC 5341, EDPC 5339)
- EDPC 5362 – Counseling Children, Adolescents and Families (EDPC 5317, EDPC 5341)
- EDPC 5368 – Play Therapy (EDPC 5362)
- REHC 5350 – Psychiatric Rehabilitation
- PSY 5309 – Seminar in Psychopathology

IV. Clinical Experience (9 Semester Hours)

Courses in parenthesis are required before taking the aforementioned course

- EDPC 5371 – Mental Health Counseling Practicum (Completion of 36 credits including all foundational coursework, EDPC 5335, EDPC 5338) *Students will take the CPCE exam.*
- EDPC 5372 – Mental Health Counseling Internship I (EDPC 5371)
- EDPC 5373 – Mental Health Counseling Internship II (EDPC 5372)

Students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 throughout the program.

All course sequences should be reviewed by the Academic Advisor before registering for each semester. It is recommended that all Foundational Counseling courses be completed within the first 18 credit hours of coursework and before progressing to Advanced Counseling Courses.

Your Academic Advisor will be a member of the Counseling faculty, assigned based on the first letter of your surname (last name). Refer to the Academic Advising section for further details.

Directed Individual Study and Special Topics Courses

Directed Individual Study does not replace scheduled classes and is available only under extenuating circumstances or for research purposes for students who are approved by the Counseling Program Coordinator. Course work in a Directed Individual Study format is not available for clinical sequence courses (Group Counseling, Techniques of Counseling, and Practicum) because they require extensive experiential learning. Students facing an extenuating circumstance that will make it difficult or impossible to take a required course in a timely fashion

should contact their Academic Advisor to discuss the possibility of taking a course as a Directed Individual Study. If in agreement, the Academic Advisor will present a plan for a Directed Individual Study to the Counseling Program Coordinator or Department Chair for approval. Once completed, the Directed Individual Study course will be substituted on the student's degree plan (Preliminary Program of Study) for a required course.

Special Topics Courses may be offered when an instructor has certain expertise in an area that is not currently in the curriculum.

Academic Advising

Upon initial acceptance into the Mental Health Counseling Program each student must attend a mandatory counseling program orientation meeting at which time he/she is assigned a Faculty Academic Advisor (*and the student signs an official graduate degree plan signed by faculty advisor and graduate advisor- if a graduate advisor has not been designated then the program coordinator signs in his or her place*). Academic advising is an essential element in assuring the individual's development of the core competencies of a mental health counselor which are necessary for graduation. The Mental Health Counseling program is committed to monitoring each student's academic, professional, and personal development as the individual progresses through the coursework and clinical demands of the program. Throughout the student's progress in the Mental Health Counseling Program, a Faculty Academic Advisor closely monitors the student's overall progress and confers with the student to maintain adherence to the Mental Health Counseling program's requirements, including completion of the appropriate sequence of coursework, to ensure that all requirements for timely graduation are met. The typical sequence of progress through the Mental Health Counseling Program is three years, though students are allowed to take up to six years to complete the program.

Year 1:

The role of a Faculty Academic Advisor changes during the course of the Mental Health Counseling Program as the academic, personal, and professional demands of the program change. During the student's first academic year, their Academic Advisor guides the student as he/she begins academic coursework toward their Mental Health Counseling degree. The Academic Advisor closely monitors the student's progress. The first individual meeting between the student and the Academic Advisor is usually during his/her first semester of course work just before the registration process for the following semester. This meeting enables the student and the Academic Advisor to review the student's achievement in his/her first course(s) and to support the student as he/she moves forward into the next academic course(s).

Development of the student's degree plan initially begins during the mandatory New Student Orientation Meeting at this time. The next meeting between the student and the Academic Advisor typically follows during the second semester of coursework before registration for the following semester. At this time, the student is expected to be in the process of completing 9 to 15 credit hours of academic work. At this time the Academic Advisor reviews the student's criteria for degree candidate status. If the student is making progress as a degree candidate, then

the Academic Advisor guides the student in entering further courses, advises the student regarding the sequence of courses needed to complete the Mental Health Counseling program, and if necessary, modifies the student's Program of Study document with the student. Any deviation from this Program of Study may result in a delay in the student's graduation.

Year 2:

Any changes to the student's Program of Study should be reviewed in advance by the Academic Advisor and/or the Graduate Advisor.

Year 3:

During the student's third academic year the student will usually apply for and if approved take the Practicum/Internship course(s). It is significant to note that if a student is on a remediation plan, the student must meet the requirements as set forth by the remediation plan to receive approval for entering practicum (see Student Progress Review Definition). Upon approval, the student will receive notification from the Mental Health Counseling system with orientation and tutorial information to be read and viewed by the student. The student will follow the online approval process in collaboration with the Mental Health Counseling clinical coordinator to solidify an internship site and site supervisor. The student will also work with the practicum and internship instructor of record whose responsibility, among others, is to act as the student's instructor and faculty supervisor/mentor/advisor during the student's third academic year. The student and professor of record will establish a regular supervision meeting schedule and consultation plan with the student's site supervisor that meets the Mental Health Counseling Program's requirements for supervision during the Practicum/Internship.

Field Experience

The Mental Health Counseling program field experience currently consists of a practicum and two internships. These courses represent the formal clinical field experiences required by the program. Practicum and internship courses are offered during the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters. In these clinical courses, the primary focus is to gain field experiences in direct service (e.g., individual and group counseling) as well as to acquaint the student with a wide variety of other professional activities. These courses should provide the student with a broad orientation to the developmental guidance aspects of the Mental Health Counseling field, allow the student to learn how to interact with other mental health professionals, initiate the student into a supervised counseling experience, and prepare the student for the more intensive professional experiences that follow.

These courses consist of a semester-long (approximately 15 weeks in Fall and Spring and 10 weeks in Summer) field placement at which time the student must complete a total of 700 supervised clock hours across the three courses (i.e. 100 hours- Practicum; 300 hours for each Internship). Practicum, internship I, and internship II **must** be taken consecutively. As part of the 100-hour practicum, students must complete a minimum of 40 clock hours of direct service and

60 clock hours of non-direct service. As part of the 300-clock hour requirement for each internship, students must complete a minimum of 120 clock hours of direct service (i.e. client contact). The remaining 180 hours of Practicum may be completed in indirect counseling-related activities, including supervision by the student's Site Supervisor, which is to consist of at least one hour per week of clinical supervision. Other non-direct activities include functions such as staff/agency meetings, in-service training seminars, the site orientation process, paperwork (case notes, progress notes, record keeping, report writing), observation of work, interactions with colleagues, and networking. Supervision hours provided at UTEP (i.e. the practicum and internship class meetings also count toward non-direct clock hours). For additional information pertaining to student responsibilities see the course syllabus and/or Mental Health Counseling Practicum/Internship Handbook [here](#) or directly on our program's website.

Exiting the Program and Licensure Requirements

In addition to completing the degree requirements and student review processes, the student must pass the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE). Students must successfully pass this exam in order to graduate. Students must also be enrolled during the semester that they graduate so if all coursework has been completed and the student has not passed the exam, they will need to register for a course the next semester. Once students pass the CPCE, they can register for and take the National Counselor Exam (NCE) which is required for licensure in Texas.

The CACREP Accredited Mental Health Counseling Program at the University of Texas at El Paso fulfills the academic requirements for Licensed Professional Counselor (initially LPC Associate) licensure in Texas. To be fully licensed as LPC in Texas, in addition to the 60-hour master's program, a student must have:

1. Three thousand (3,000) clock hours of post graduate supervised experience; and
2. A passing score on the National Counselor Exam (NCE) or National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Exam (NCMHCE).

Applying for Licensure:

Utilize this link to apply:

- [Texas Behavioral Health Executive Counsel](#)

Course Registration and Withdrawals

Registration

Students must have approval (i.e. complete course clearance form) in order to register for courses. This is true for every course you take, every semester you are in the Counseling program. You must contact the administrative assistant for the department in order to secure approval to register. The permission to enroll generally takes 2 working days. After you are cleared for the class, **you then must register in Goldmine.**

Typically, registration for Spring classes will be available beginning in late October or early November. Registration for Summer and Fall classes will occur simultaneously beginning in late March or early April. Approvals (clearances) for courses will begin about two weeks prior to the start of registration and will continue through the first week of the semester. Although this is the typical sequence, always see **UTEP Academic Calendar** to verify registration schedule.

Course drop/adds are accepted during published registration and drop/add periods. Registration will usually be accomplished online or in person during posted registration periods. Course clearances must be obtained from the department's administrative assistance. As the financial aspects of the program can vary over time, please refer to the university website in order to obtain all current information regarding tuition, fees, financial aid, and payment plans.

*Please understand classes may close quickly, therefore, we encourage you to register as quickly as possible. If you have a "hold" on registration, this needs to be addressed with the Registrar's Office. **The department cannot override or remove "holds".**

Withdrawing From a Course

Should you choose to terminate your attendance in a particular class after the drop/add deadline, you should officially withdraw from the class. Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty prior to the course withdrawal deadline stated in the University Academic Calendar. Withdrawing from a course does not release a student from financial responsibility or obligation for the course. If you stop attending the class, it is your responsibility to withdraw from the course. You will not be automatically withdrawn from a course. Failure to withdraw before withdrawal deadline results in a grade of "F." A grade of "W" is recorded on the student's record for official withdrawals.

SECTION THREE: ACADEMIC STANDARDS and EVALUATION PROCESS

Criteria for Advancement

All graduate students are expected to establish him/herself as a student in good standing, who demonstrates the skills and aptitudes necessary to develop into professional counselors. There are several criteria listed below that the student must meet in order to successfully progress through the program. These criteria are reviewed by the student's Academic Advisor and the Counseling faculty throughout the program.

After completion of 9 to 15 semester hours of credit, students will be evaluated based on the areas listed below. A less than satisfactory evaluation, based on any of the areas may result in the student receiving a remediation plan. If such is the case, a subsequent evaluation will take place. A satisfactory evaluation will result in the student ultimately being eligible for graduation. A less than satisfactory evaluation may result in suspension or expulsion from the Counseling Program.

Academic Progress:

The student will have successfully completed academic courses, as well as, met criteria in the sequence specified by the program and identified on the student's degree evaluation. A sample Program of Study form can be found in the Appendix of this handbook.

Academic Success:

The student will have maintained a grade point average in all classes completed of at least 3.0 (i.e., B average) or higher based on specific course requirements.

Interpersonal Skills and Personal Growth:

The student is expected to demonstrate effective interpersonal skills and commitment to personal growth, both of which are considered requisite to the counseling field. These skills include the ability to:

- Establish and maintain effectiveness in close interpersonal relationships such as functioning effectively with fellow students and faculty;
- Establish facilitative relationships that are open and adaptable with many different kinds of people such as being open and adaptable in relationships with fellow students, faculty, clients and agency personnel;

- Demonstrate flexibility and openness to feedback and learning such as demonstrating self-awareness by being open to self-examination and commitment to personal growth;
- Demonstrate a positive attitude toward the learning process and toward fellow students, faculty, and staff; and
- Cope effectively with stressors precipitated by the academic and clinical expectations/requirements of the program and additional stressors such as jobs and family situations.

Professional Behavior:

The student will have consistently demonstrated commitment to professionalism in all aspects of his/her student experience, including:

- **Ethical Behavior** – The student is expected to demonstrate awareness of and adherence to the ethical standards of the American Mental Health Counseling Association, American Counseling Association, and Texas LPC Board rules of Practice, both in field experiences (i.e. visits to practicum sites as part of a classroom assignment) and in the classroom. Each student is expected to demonstrate awareness of and concern for the ethical standards of *educators and counselors*. Ethical behavior will be monitored and assessed in several venues throughout the student’s academic career, including:
 - In the classroom, as evidenced by ethical conduct in issues concerning peer relationships and works of scholarship; and
 - In the community, as evidenced by ethical conduct at Practicum placements, including adherence to the employment policies of practicum/internship sites.
 - Ethical standards mental health counselors abide by include:
 - i. *2014 American Counseling Association Code of Ethics*:
<https://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/ethics>
 - ii. *AMHCA Ethical Standards for Mental Health Counselors*:
<https://www.amhca.org/events/publications/ethics>
 - iii. *Texas LPC Board Rules of Practice*: The rules of practice are set forth in Texas Administrative Code to provide rules of practice for professional counselors in Texas <https://www.bhec.texas.gov/statutes-and-rules/index.html>

A. **Professional Attitudes and Skills:** This is a professional program. Students, supervisors, and faculty should conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times with faculty, fellow students, college staff, and with the staff with whom they will work at the agencies at which they will do their practicum and internship placements. The use of profanity and other forms of socially inappropriate behavior

will not be tolerated. The Counseling Program expects proper regard for the professional status of faculty, supervisors, administrators, and fellow students. When conflicts arise, they should be handled with appropriate attention to the maintenance of dignity and respect for all parties involved. Students should represent conduct that is becoming of a professional counselor. Standards for Progressing Through the Program

The Counseling Program aims to produce highly knowledgeable, clinically competent, self-aware, and ethical professionals. Course grades reflect your performance in classes that are designed to increase your knowledge, refine your skills, enhance your self-awareness, and confirm your commitment to ethical behavior in the Mental Health Counseling field.

Retention and Review Policy

The Counseling Programs are committed to assisting students to achieve their goals while in the program. The retention and review policy is not the same as the student progress review (see definition section for distinctions). The Retention and Review Policy of the Program is designed to ensure that a student's failure to meet the academic, personal, interpersonal, and professional expectations necessary to be a successful counselor is addressed in a timely and coherent fashion.

When a faculty member observes a student's inability to adhere to the standards of academic, personal, interpersonal, and professional expectations, the faculty member is required to meet with the student in question, express the specific concern(s) to the student, and seek to establish a mutually agreed upon informal plan to resolve the situation before more action is required.

The formal Retention and Review Intervention Process will be initiated upon one of two conditions:

1. The faculty member and student are unable to agree upon an informal plan to resolve the situation; or
2. The faculty member observes continued difficulty on the part of the student to adhere to the standards despite the institution of the informal plan.

In either case described above, the faculty member in question is required to consult with the Counseling Program Coordinator concerning the student's difficulty. A Retention and Review Intervention Process will only be initiated with the agreement of the Counseling Program Coordinator. If the Counseling Program Coordinator and faculty member decide to initiate the Retention and Review Intervention process, the student will be notified in writing in a timely fashion and directed to respond to the Counseling Program Coordinator. If more than one faculty member has approached the Counseling Program Coordinator with these concerns, the Counseling Program Coordinator will designate which faculty member will have primary responsibility for the Retention and Review Intervention Process. The faculty member or

designated will consult with any other faculty member with similar concerns throughout the Retention and Review Intervention process.

Retention and Review Intervention Process

Consultation:

The faculty member will seek consultation with the Counseling Program Coordinator concerning the student's ongoing difficulty. The Counseling Program Coordinator will assist the faculty member in the development of a Corrective Action Plan.

Corrective Action Plan:

In consultation with the Counseling Program Coordinator, the faculty member will develop a written plan ("Corrective Action Plan") that specifies goals (areas of difficulty targeted for improvement), objectives (required activities on the part of the student), interventions (required activities on the part of the faculty member meant to facilitate the student's progress), and outcomes (observable behaviors that indicate attainment of the goal(s) assigned to the student in the Corrective Action Plan). The Corrective Action Plan will include a timeframe, usually no longer than sixty (60) days, for its successful completion by the student. The Corrective Action Plan will be reviewed by the Counseling Program Coordinator for approval and then distributed to the student. In certain cases, a Student Progress Review's remediation plan may serve as a Retention and Review Policy's (RRP) Corrective Action Plan (see definition section: student progress review).

Corrective Action Plan Review:

Upon completion of the timeframe specified in the Correction Action Plan, the faculty member will meet with the student to review his/her progress. If all goals in the Corrective Action Plan have been met then the faculty member, with approval from the Counseling Program Coordinator, should discharge the Student from the Retention and Review Intervention process.

If the Student has not demonstrated sufficient progress toward the goal(s) of the Corrective Action Plan, then the faculty member must consult with the Counseling Program Coordinator before advising the student of his/her failure to achieve these goals. The Counseling Program Coordinator may direct the faculty member to extend the timeframe of the Corrective Action Plan, modify the goals, objectives, interventions, and/or outcomes of the Corrective Action Plan (if the timeframe has been extended), or initiate a Retention Review Hearing (Step Four).

Retention Review Hearing:

The purpose of the Retention Review Hearing is to determine if the student's failure to achieve the goal(s) in the Corrective Action Plan warrants further actions, including either the discharge of the student from further Corrective Actions, the creation of another Corrective Action Plan, or termination of the student from the Counseling Program. The Retention Review Hearing shall be conducted by a Retention Review Committee, which shall consist of a minimum of three

members including: The Counseling Program Coordinator, a Counseling faculty, and a designee assigned from other faculty within or outside the College of Education by the Dean or the chair of the department. Additional Counseling faculty may be assigned to the Retention Review Committee as deemed necessary.

During the Retention Review Hearing, the Counseling Retention Review Committee will review the student's academic performance, interpersonal skills commitment to personal growth, and ethical behavior, and will determine the student's status in the program. The student will attend the hearing and be provided the opportunity to present any appropriate information specific to the situation that led to the Retention Review Intervention Process. The faculty member will also have an opportunity to elaborate on the nature of the concern and the student's progress on the Corrective Action Plan instituted in Step Three.

After the concerned faculty member and the student have been heard by the Counseling Retention Review Committee, a decision will be made which may include one of the following:

- A. The concerns raised by the faculty member do not warrant further action, and the student will be allowed to continue in the program without restriction.
- B. The student will be placed on "Professional Probation" with specific requirements established for remediation. Procedures will also be specified for progress to be monitored by the concerned faculty member, the student's Academic Advisor, and the Counseling Program Coordinator. The Counseling Retention Review Committee will also decide if and or when the student may be removed from "Professional Probation." While on "Professional Probation," the student will not be allowed to enroll in the Practicum and internship courses but may be enrolled in other courses upon requesting and receiving permission to do so from the Counseling Program Coordinator.
- C. The student may be terminated from the Counseling Program and may not enroll in further Counseling courses.

After the Counseling Retention Review Committee decides, the student will be informed of the decision through written communication within 10 days of the committee meeting.

The student may appeal the Counseling Retention Review Committee's decision to the chair of the department. Such appeal must be in writing and must be postmarked no more than thirty (30) days following the date of the written notification of the decision from the Retention Review Committee

Please note that this Retention and Review Policy is not intended to replace or supersede actions that may be taken against a student by the University of Texas at El Paso, for unsatisfactory academic progress or violations of the student code of conduct, by the Academic Review Committee or the Student Disciplinary Committee, respectively.

Grading Standards and Grade Appeals: Content Course Curriculum

Grades in the Mental Health Counseling program courses will be based on your academic performance, as evidenced in a variety of ways including tests, papers, presentations, skill performance, and class participation. Your classroom behavior, including professionalism, respect for others, and personal integrity, also influences your grades and/or standing in the program.

As indicated in the UTEP Graduate Catalog, if you believe that a course grade is inaccurate or that an instructor is not teaching the material in the syllabus, you first should discuss the problem with your instructor. If the issue is not resolved to your satisfaction, make an appointment to discuss it with your Faculty Advisor, the Counseling Program Coordinator, and/or the Department Chair. If the matter is still not resolved to your satisfaction, you may appeal to the Dean of the College of Education. Formal grade appeals may also be submitted to the Faculty Senate Grievance Committee (See Dean of Student's Office for additional information: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/dean-of-students-office/resources/grade-grievance.html>).

Note: If an issue or concern emerges during a course, try to address it immediately, rather than waiting until the course is over.

Grading Standards and Grade Appeals: Clinical Course Curriculum

Grades in the Clinical Sequence will be based on your performance in Techniques of Counseling, Group Counseling, and Practicum. A primary aspect of assessment of student performance during the Clinical Sequence is the student's demonstration of competency in core counseling skills. Performance is also measured and assessed in a variety of other ways, including adherence to course requirements concerning hours spent at clinical sites, timely and accurate submission of paperwork associated with the clinical experience, the quality of the student's written and oral presentations, and the quality of class participation.

Grades in the Practicum and Internship are calculated using the standard developed by University of Texas System:

Grade	Explanation
S	Satisfactory. The student has met expected standards of professionalism. This grade signifies acceptable performance of the course objectives. Please see the narrative, below, for a comprehensive explanation.
I	Incomplete. Extension granted to complete course work. Failure to complete course work within 12 months from the ending of the course results in a final grade of "U." Please see the narrative, below, for a comprehensive explanation.
U	Unsatisfactory. The student has not met the minimum course requirements and/or has not been able to meet the

	Goals of a Mandatory Remediation Plan. Please see the narrative, below, for a comprehensive explanation.
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A grade of “S” indicates that the Practicum/Internship student has met all of the requirements of that particular Clinical Sequence course, including:

1. The student has been approved for practicum and completed the necessary requirements site and site supervisor approvals.
2. The student has accurately documented practicum/internship activities, tasks, and hours.
3. The student has submitted all end of practicum course forms including field and site supervision forms.
4. The student has met the requirements of the Attendance Policy for all clinical courses.
5. The student has met the ethical standards of practice.
6. The student’s Site Supervisor has made no indication of less than Satisfactory performance of observation or evaluations.
7. The student has submitted all written work and made all required oral and written presentations as described in the Syllabus for each course, in a timely and complete fashion. In addition, the written and oral work that is presented meets the developmentally appropriate clinical standard as defined by the Instructor in the course and described in the Course Syllabus.

A grade of “I” indicates that the Practicum student has failed to meet one or more of the requirements of the Practicum course and may possibly be allowed to successfully complete those requirements with the permission of the instructor. Typically, no longer than an additional semester.

Attendance Policy

The experiential nature of many Counseling Program courses makes student participation essential (*in-person, online, or virtual*). Classes normally meet once a week, between two and one half and five hours or longer if offered in a weekend modular format. Personal growth, professionalism, and skill development are addressed and assessed through class participation. For these reasons, attendance is mandatory for all classes. If a student is unable to attend a class it is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, before the class, if possible, of the reason(s) for the absence and to make arrangements to obtain notes, handouts, and assignments from class. The instructor may use his/her discretion to excuse the absence without penalty. At the discretion of the instructor and/or the Counseling Program Coordinator, the final letter grade of the student may be lowered as a response to an unexcused absence or series of absences. If in the judgment of the instructor and/or the Counseling Program Coordinator, a student’s attendance record indicates that the student will be unable to master the knowledge and skills presented in the course, the student will be advised to withdraw from the class without receiving academic credit or risk failing the class.

APA Writing Standards

Students in the Counseling program are expected to write well. Good written communication skills are at the core of the counseling process, and writing is a form of communication used extensively in the counseling profession. Program faculty will help students learn to write clear, thoughtful, substantive, well-organized, scholarly papers and reports using APA format – as described in the latest edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (current edition)*. Clear writing reflects clear thinking, and clear, organized writing is one way to demonstrate and refine good critical thinking skills.

Students are expected to enter the program with satisfactory writing skills and to seek assistance from appropriate sources (e.g., a tutor trained to teach writing skills, undergraduate coursework available at the university, etc.) when needed. Faculty members, in general, tend to provide extensive feedback on written work and sometimes offer students an opportunity to rewrite certain assignments. It is hoped that students will become excellent writers by the time they graduate and writing assignments and feedback are designed, in part, to fulfill this goal. The writing skills of all students are assessed upon entering the program, and, if indicated, recommendations are given to seek assistance to improve their writing. In addition, it is necessary that all accepted students acquire a copy of the APA Publication Manual and read the first two chapters before beginning their course work in counseling. This book is an invaluable aid in guiding the graduate student in writing academically appropriate papers.

Academic Integrity

Students in the Counseling Program at the University of Texas at El Paso are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic pursuits including completion of examinations and the production of written documents. Plagiarism (whether intentional or not) is the inclusion of someone else's words, ideas, or data as one's own. When a student submits work that includes the words, ideas, or data of another, the source of that information must be acknowledged through complete, accurate, and specific references, and, if verbatim statements (i.e. word for word) are included, they must be in quotation marks. When the student places his or her name on the submitted work, the student certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgments. Plagiarism covers published and unpublished sources.

Foundational Values Regarding Academic Integrity: 1) Honesty/Truthfulness; 2) Trust/Confidence that Values will be Upheld; 3) Fairness and Equity of Treatment; 4) Respect for Others and Their Ideas/Opinions; 5) Responsibility/Accountability

UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures (<https://www.utep.edu/hoop/>): Academic dishonesty includes committing (or attempting to commit): the following:

Plagiarism – taking credit for work that is not your own (e.g., copying and pasting from the internet, failing to cite sources of information, failing to attribute direct quotes to the original author, or submitting work from another course without prior permission).

Self-plagiarism – information is borrowed from one’s previous works without citing those works.

Cheating – includes copying another student’s work during an exam; using notes, books, or electronic devices during exams without prior permission; taking an exam for another student; and communicating with or helping another student during an exam.

Collusion – any collaboration with another student without the permission of the instructor

Any Instances of academic dishonesty or professional misconduct will be reported to the Dean of Students office.

Students are urged to consult with individual faculty members, program administrators, and/or the UTEP handbook of operating procedures if they are uncertain as to what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it.

SECTION FOUR: PERSONAL GROWTH STANDARDS

Ongoing Evaluation by Faculty

As described in the Academic Standards section of this handbook, for the student to progress to Practicum and Internship, he/she must meet the academic, interpersonal, and personal growth, and professional standards established by the Counseling programs. It is the responsibility of each faculty member to assess students in every course according to these standards. If a faculty member has evidence that a student has failed to meet these standards while taking a course, then the faculty member is required to submit documentation that makes clear the student's failings in any one or more of the criteria for student advancement. To assist faculty with documentation, a faculty member may use any of the accompanying forms in the appendix section (e.g. **Student Evaluation Form, Peer Group Feedback Form data**) to the Counseling Program Coordinator for the specialty in which the student is enrolled (e.g. school, mental health, rehabilitation). Student Evaluation Forms submitted by a faculty member are reviewed by the Counseling Program Coordinator and the student's Academic Advisor, who will discuss any problems that have been noted during advisement sessions.

Personal growth is particularly important in the development of the student's counseling skills and attitudes, and it is assessed according to several criteria, beginning with the quality of interaction between the student and his/her peers and with the instructor. Students in the Counseling Programs are expected to demonstrate openness and adaptability in their relationships with fellow students, faculty, and, when in the Practicum phase of their education, clients, and agency or institutional personnel. Furthermore, many of the assignments in the Counseling Program require a demonstration of self-awareness through self-examination and demonstrable commitment to personal growth. Faculty members are encouraged to observe whether a student's attitude toward the learning process, fellow students, faculty, and staff is positive and appropriate. Finally, each student must demonstrate the capacity to cope with the stressors presented by the expectations of the Counseling Programs, including the academic requirements, the demands of the Practicum period, and the student's life stressors such as job status and family situations.

Over and above these written and established norms of interpersonal behavior and personal growth, students in the Counseling Programs make a commitment to integrity and honesty by creating an atmosphere of open, civil discourse and careful, respectful listening where freedom of thought and expression are valued and protected. From the outset of the student's experience in the Counseling Program, he/she commits to incorporate the values of counseling as articulated by the Code of Ethics of the American Counseling Association (ACA), American Mental Health Counseling Association, and Texas LPC Boards Rules of Practice. All students are expected to read this Code of Ethics before their first classroom experience. In a program committed to human development through humanistic, person-centered principles, students must demonstrate these values and principles in all of their activities and interpersonal actions.

Evaluation During Practicum and Internships

The Practicum and internship experiences are a period of intense personal growth calling for more specific standards. During these periods, the student is evaluated by the Counseling faculty and the student's site supervisors. Students are evaluated according to the following personal growth criteria:

1. The ability to accurately understand the basic motivations of oneself and others. When personal growth in this area is exemplary the individual's understanding of self and others demonstrates deep insight into one's own and others' motivations.
2. The ability to consistently demonstrate emotional sensitivity to the needs of oneself and others. When personal growth in this area is exemplary the individual's level of emotional sensitivity leads to the ability to become interpersonally facilitative in a demonstrable manner.
3. The ability to respond to others, including faculty, students, college staff, agency staff, and students in an interpersonally effective manner. When personal growth in this area is exemplary the individual's level of behavioral responsiveness is maintained despite elevated levels of stress in the interpersonal environment.
4. The ability to consistently display professional levels of functioning within the classroom and at the site placement as demonstrated by adherence to the administrative demands of practicum coursework and agency policies, including documentation and record-keeping. When personal growth in this area is exemplary the individual's level of professionalism has led to instances of professional leadership while still performing as a student-intern.
5. The ability to function effectively without excessive need for clinical supervision, whether in a group or individual setting, during one's practicum period. When personal growth in this area is exemplary the individual functions with minimal need for clinical supervision.

Policy Regarding Personal Counseling

The Counseling Program highly recommends that students experience professional mental health counseling as part of their educational process. As part of our commitment to human growth and development, professional counselors first must address their issues so that they will not interfere

with the emotionally demanding process of interpersonal therapy. The experience of personal counseling/therapy is highly recommended as a vehicle to assure competent and ethical practice.

Students seeking a therapeutic relationship are encouraged to consult with a trusted faculty member for help in locating a qualified professional. Mental health professionals who are qualified to provide therapy must be trained and credentialed in an appropriate counseling and psychotherapeutic discipline. Examples of qualified therapist credentials include Licensed Professional Counselors, Licensed Psychologists, Licensed Clinical Social Workers, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists, and Licensed Psychiatrists. The University of Texas at El Paso has a Counseling Center that is available to all students enrolled in the university. Students are not required to attend personal counseling, but it is encouraged should they encounter personal difficulties that may impede their progress in the program. Students can contact the UTEP Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/counsel/> for additional information.

Non-Discrimination and Accommodations Policy

Students are expected to follow the University of Texas at El Paso's policy on equal opportunity, non-discrimination and non-retaliation:

<https://www.utep.edu/eoaa/university-policy-letters/equal-opportunity.html>

Students who have a disability are asked to notify the Center for Academic Student Services (CASS) <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/> as soon as possible and before registration. Early notification prevents delays in the initiation of services and ensures the student's access to educational activities.

Students with disabilities that affect learning, including but not limited to Learning Disabilities (LD) and attention deficit disorder (ADD), are required to provide the office with recent documentation from diagnostic testing. After consulting with the student, the CASS office will prepare an accommodation plan that will authorize services for the student and inform the appropriate offices on campus.

Sexual Harassment Policy

The University of Texas at El Paso is committed to providing a working, educational, and social environment for all members of our university community, including all faculty, staff, and students, that is free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment in any form is unacceptable behavior and will not be tolerated. It is a form of misconduct that undermines the institutional mission of the university. Sexual harassment may be defined as unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors, other verbal or physical conduct, written communication or printed materials of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or educational experience;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions affecting such individual; and/or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work, academic performance, participation in co-curricular activities, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working, learning, or social environment.

Sexual harassment can take many forms, and the determination of what constitutes sexual harassment will vary according to the particular circumstances. Sexual harassment may be described generally as unwelcome sexual behavior that a reasonable person would find offensive and that adversely affects the working or learning environment.

In order to promote and uphold the university's commitment to a harassment-free environment, it is the responsibility of all members of the university community to report alleged violations of this policy to the appropriate university official. Allegations involving a faculty or staff member should be reported to the Vice President of Academic Affairs or the Office of Institutional Compliance. Allegations against a student should be reported to the Office of Institutional Compliance. Investigations will be conducted as promptly and in as confidential a manner as possible. Anyone who retaliates against any individual making complaints of sexual harassment, or anyone making a false or malicious charge against a member of the community is in violation of this policy and will be subject to sanctions accordingly.

APPENDIX

Mental Health Counseling Program Advising Form

(08/10/2023)

Term	Foundational Requirements (6 courses; 18 semester hours)	Prerequisites
	EDPC 5317 Human Growth and Development	N/A
	EDPC 5320 Lifestyle and Career Development	N/A
	EDPC 5322 Clinical Mental Health Counseling	N/A
	EDPC 5324 Ethical, Legal and Professional Issues in Counseling	N/A
	EDPC 5341 Theories of Counseling	N/A
	EDPC 5346 Counseling Multicultural and Diverse Populations	N/A
	EDPC 5310 Applied Research Design for Counseling and Special Education	N/A
Term	Advanced Requirements (6 courses; 18 semester hours)	Prerequisites
	EDPC 5333 Crisis Counseling	N/A
	EDPC 5338 Group Counseling *	5317, 5339
	EDPC 5339 Techniques of Counseling*	5341 and additional 9 credits
	EDPC 5345 Abnormal Human Behavior	N/A
	EDPC 5347 Addictions Counseling*	5341, 5345
	EDPC 5360 Introduction to Marriage and Family Therapy*	5341
	EDPC 5335 Principles of Appraisal and Assessment*	5317, 5341, 5345, 5346
Term	Clinical Sequence (3 courses; 9 semester hours)	Prerequisites
	❖ Courses may not be taken concurrently	
	EDPC 5371 Practicum*	36 hours, all foundational requirements, EDPC 5335, 5338
	EDPC 5372 Internship 1*	5371
	EDPC 5373 Internship 2 *	5372
Term	Specialization Courses (3 courses; 9 semester hours)	Prerequisites
	EDPC 5349 Cognitive and Behavioral Therapies*	5341
	EDPC 5362 Counseling Children, Adolescents and Their Families*	5317, 5341
	EDPC 5363 Couples Therapy*	5360
	EDPC 5368 Play Therapy*	5317, 5341, 5362
	REHC 5350 Psychiatric Rehabilitation*	5345
	PSYC 5309 Seminar in Psychopathology	Instructor Approval
	EDPC 5370 Special Topics in Educational Psychology and Counseling	

- ❖ Total 60 semester hours
- ❖ * Indicates the course requires the completion of prerequisite course(s).
- ❖ Prerequisites must be completed with a B or above before taking the course. Prerequisites cannot be taken concurrently.
- ❖ Students may take the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE) during 5371

Worksheet by Year in Program

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 5
Year 1					
Fall __					
Spring __					
Summer __					
Year 2					
Fall __					
Spring __					
Summer __					
Year 3					
Fall __					
Spring __					
Summer __					
Year 4					
Fall __					
Spring __					
Summer __					
Year 5					
Fall __					
Spring __					
Summer __					

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

**University of Texas at El Paso
Counseling Program**

STUDENT EVALUATION FORM

Student evaluations are to be completed by faculty members at the end of each course, using the rating scale below *for any student for whom the faculty member has a concern in any of the identified areas*. Note that a score of “3” is the expected level of performance for Counseling students. A score of “1” or “2” should be assigned when the student’s behavior or performance is noticeably different from that which is standard and expected of a Counseling graduate student. Please use the back of the form to document reasons for assigning a score of “1” or “2”.

- 1 = Unsatisfactory (needs substantial improvement)**
- 2 = Marginal (needs moderate improvement)**
- 3 = Satisfactory (at or above the expected level for a Counseling student)**

Course:
Instructor:

Year and Term:
Site:

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Marginal</u>	<u>Satisfactory</u>
<u>I. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE</u>			
a. Exhibits general alertness to and participation in class activities	1	2	3
b. Makes appropriate and knowledgeable contributions to class discussions	1	2	3
c. Prepares for class by reading and completing assignments on time	1	2	3
d. Adheres to expectations of academic integrity	1	2	3
<u>II. INTRAPERSONAL FACTORS</u>			
a. Displays psychological insight and self-awareness	1	2	3
b. Identifies and expresses feelings appropriately	1	2	3
c. Demonstrates motivation and commitment to personal growth	1	2	3
<u>III. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS</u>			
a. Demonstrates appropriate sensitivity and respect in interactions with peers	1	2	3
b. Displays appropriate decorum in interactions with instructor	1	2	3
c. Maintains appropriate emotional boundaries with others	1	2	3
<u>IV. PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR</u>			
a. Displays the interest, motivation, and commitment necessary to complete the education and training to become a professional counselor	1	2	3
b. Demonstrates the attitudes, skills, demeanor, and maturity necessary to perform the duties of a professional counselor	1	2	3
c. Exhibits awareness, concern, and, ability to adhere to ACA Ethical Standards	1	2	3
<u>V. OVERALL EVALUATION</u>			
Overall assessment of the student’s status based on observed academic, personal, interpersonal, and professional behaviors.	1	2	3

Please make comments regarding all ratings of 1 or 2 on the back of sheet.

Student Progress Review Form

Name of Counseling Specialty _____

Student: _____

Advisor: _____

The review and remediation will be an ongoing process throughout the student's enrollment in the Counseling program. There will be three reviews. An initial review will occur approximately between 9 to 15 credits in the program are completed. A second review will occur before the beginning of the practicum. A final pre-graduation review will occur upon completion of all required practicum/internship courses. Benchmarks to assist in the review of student performance and competence are scores of 3 on all rubric dimensions, and, scores of 70% on exams. If students do not meet the benchmarks remediation will be required. As well, in some cases, remediation may be recommended.

(1) Initial Progress Review Decision

Date: _____

_____ **Meet Standards**

_____ **Approaches Standards (but the student must complete remediation plan)**

_____ **Does Not Meet Standards. Referral for Retention and Review Process (Fails to Meet Standards)**

Decision based on a review of:

- 1) **Grades are posted on the student's transcript for all graduate courses completed since beginning the Counseling Program.**

	Insufficient 1	Approaching Proficiency 2	Satisfactory Proficiency 3	Exemplary Proficiency 4
Academic Success	No grades of B or better or at least one failing grade	No more than one grade of C, with all other grades B or better	All grades of B or better	All grades of A

- 2) **Key Professional Dispositions Indicators (Based on scores on the Student Evaluation Form for the period of time from the date of entry into the Counseling program up until the date of this review.)**

	Unsatisfactory 1	Marginal 2	Satisfactory 3
Academic Performance/Progress			
Interpersonal Skills & Personal Growth			
Professional Behavior			

For a rating of “2” or below remediation is required and a Remediation Plan must be developed and signed. For a score of “3”, remediation can be recommended without formal initiation of a Remediation Plan. All remediation activities should be identified below. If no remediation is required or recommended, please also note this.

No Remediation Needed _____	
Remediation Recommended _____	Remediation Plan Required _____
Description and Comments	
Student Signature: _____	Date: _____
Advisor Signature: _____	Date: _____

Status of Remediation Plan for Initial Program Review

Recommended Remediation:	Completed _____	Not Completed _____
Required Remediation:	Completed _____	Not Completed _____

Advisor Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

(2) Practicum Application Review Decision

Date: _____

- _____ Meets Standards to begin Practicum.
- _____ Approaches Standards to begin Practicum (student must complete remediation plan)
- _____ Does Not Meet Standards to begin Practicum. Students must complete a remediation plan to receive approval.
- _____ Does Not Meet Standards. Referral for Retention and Review Process to ascertain if the student should be allowed to remain in the program.

Decision based on a review of:

- 1) **Academic Success/Progress (Based on courses completed and grades posted on the student’s transcript for all graduate courses completed since beginning the Counseling program.)**

	Insufficient 1	Approaching Proficiency 2	Satisfactory Proficiency 3	Exemplary Proficiency 4
Academic Success, Performance, and Progress	GPA is below 3.0	GPA is 3.0 or above but has not satisfactorily completed all pre-requisite courses and/or sufficient number of advanced course credits	GPA is 3.0 or above and has satisfactorily completed all pre-requisite courses and sufficient number of advanced course credits	GPA is 3.7 or above and has satisfactorily completed all pre-requisite courses and sufficient number of advanced course credits

- 2) **Key Professional Dispositions Indicators (Based on scores on the Student Evaluation Form for the period of time from the date of entry into the Counseling program up until the date of this review.)**

	Unsatisfactory 1	Marginal 2	Satisfactory 3
Academic Performance/ Progress			
Interpersonal Skills & Personal Growth			
Professional Behavior			

*Based on Review of Student Evaluation Forms

3) **Key Performance Indicators of Student Learning Outcomes (Based on core foundational course exam scores and specialty area foundational course case study project scores)**

	Unsatisfactory 1	Marginal 2	Satisfactory 3	Good 4	Exemplary 5
<u>2.F.1-Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice</u> (5324 – Exam)					
<u>2.F.2-Social and Cultural Diversity</u> (5346 – Exam)					
<u>2.F.3-Human Growth and Development</u> (5317 – Exam)					
<u>2.F.4-Career Development</u> (5320 – Exam)					
<u>2.F.5-Counseling and Helping Relationships</u> (5341 – Exam), (5339 – Exam), (5360 - Exam)					
<u>2.F.6-Group Counseling and Group Work</u> (5338 – Exam)					
<u>2.F.7-Assessment and Testing</u> (5335 – Exam)					
<u>2.F.8-Research and Program Evaluation</u> (5310 – Exam)					
SC Specialty Area <u>Foundations</u> (5.G.1.b – Models of SC Programs (5321 – Exam)					
SC Specialty Area <u>Contextual Dimensions</u> (5.C.2.g – At Risk Students -) (5362 – Exam)					
MHC Specialty Area <u>Contextual Dimensions</u> (5.C.2.d) Diagnostic Process (5345 – Exam)					

For a rating of “2” or below remediation is required and a Remediation Plan must be developed and signed. For a rating of “3” remediation can be recommended without formal initiation of a Remediation Plan. All remediation activity should be identified below. If no remediation is required or recommended, please also note this.

No Remediation Needed ____	
Remediation Recommended ____	Remediation Plan Required ____
Description and Comments	
Student Signature:	Date:
Advisor Signature:	Date:

Status of Remediation Plan for Practicum Application Review

Recommended Remediation:	Completed ____	Not Completed ____
Required Remediation:	Completed ____	Not Completed ____

Advisor Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

(3) Final Pre-graduation Review Decision **Date:** _____

____ Meet Standards for graduation

Approaches Standards for graduation (Student must complete remediation plan to receive clearance to graduate)

Fails to Meet Standards for Graduation with Counseling Degree. Referral for Retention and Review Process to ascertain if the student should be allowed to remain in the program.

Decision based on a review of:

- 1) **Academic Success/Progress** (Based on the number of courses completed, grades posted on the student's transcript for all graduate courses taken since beginning the Counseling program, and the overall score on the comprehensive examination.)

	Insufficient 1	Satisfactory Proficiency 3	Exemplary Proficiency 5
Academic Success, Performance, and Progress	GPA is below 3.0 or there are grades of U on the transcript and/or has not satisfactorily completed all courses on the degree plan program of study and/or has not successfully completed the comprehensive exam with a passing score	GPA is 3.0 or above, has satisfactorily completed all courses on the degree plan program of study, and has successfully completed the comprehensive exam with a passing score	GPA is 3.7 or above and has satisfactorily completed all courses on the degree plan program of study and has completed the comprehensive exam with a distinguished score.

- 2) **Key Professional Dispositions Indicators** (Based on scores on the Student Evaluation Form for the period of time from the date of entry into the Counseling program up until the date of this review and scores on Personal & Professional Characteristics & Potential for Growth Scoring Rubric completed by Practicum Site Supervisor.

	Unsatisfactory 1	Marginal 2	Satisfactory 3
Academic Performance/Progress*			
Interpersonal Skills & Personal Growth*			
Professional Behavior*			
Interpersonal Awareness/Understanding			
Emotional Sensitivity			
Openness to growth			
Ethical Responsibility			
Knows Limitations and Seeks Supervision			

*Based on Review of Student Evaluation Forms

- 3) **Key Performance Indicators of Student Learning Outcomes** based on comprehensive exam scores, and clinical practice evaluation form. Section A for Mental Health Counseling students. Section B for Mental Health Counseling students.

A. CPCE and Site Supervisor evaluations (specific to Mental Health Counseling students)

	Unsatisfactory 1	Marginal 2	Satisfactory 3	Good 4	Exemplary 5
<u>2.F.1-Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice (CPCE Scale Score)</u>					
<u>2.F.2-Social and Cultural Diversity (CPCE Scale Score)</u>					
<u>2.F.3-Human Growth and Development (CPCE Scale Score)</u>					
<u>2.F.4-Career Development (CPCE Scale Score)</u>					
<u>2.F.5-Counseling and Helping Relationships (CPCE Scale Score)</u>					
<u>2.F.6-Group Counseling and Group Work (CPCE Scale Score)</u>					
<u>2.F.7-Assessment and Testing (CPCE Scale Score)</u>					
<u>2.F.8-Research and Program Evaluation (CPCE Scale Score)</u>					
<u>Specialty Area Contextual Dimensions (5.C.2.j) Cultural Factors & Diversity Skills (5371, 5372, 5373) Eval Item #7</u>					
<u>Specialty Area Contextual Dimensions (5.C.2.d) Diagnostic Process (5371, 5372, 5373) Eval Item #14</u>					
<u>Specialty Area Practice/Skills (5.C.3.b) Intervention/Treatment (5371, 5372, 5373) Eval Item #2</u>					

B. Clinical Evaluation Forms (specific to Mental Health Counseling students)

	Unsatisfactory 1	Marginal 2	Satisfactory 3	Good 4	Exemplary 5
2.F.1-Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice					
2.F.2-Social and Cultural Diversity					
2.F.3-Human Growth and Development					
2.F.4-Career Development					
2.F.5-Counseling and Helping Relationships					
2.F.6-Group Counseling and Group Work					
2.F.7-Assessment and Testing					
2.F.8-Research and Program Evaluation					
SC Specialty Area Foundations (5.G.1.b) <i>Models of Mental Health Counseling</i>					
SC Specialty Area Contextual Dimensions (5.G.2.g) <i>At Risk Students</i>					
SC Specialty Area Practice/Skills (5.G.3.d - academic; 5.G.3.f - social/emotional; 5.G.3.j -college and career readiness) <i>Interventions</i>					

For a rating of “2” or below remediation is required and a Remediation Plan must be developed and signed. All remediation activities should be identified below. If no remediation is required or recommended, please also note this.

No Remediation Needed ____

Remediation Recommended ____

Remediation Plan Required _____

Description and Comments

Student Signature:

Date:

Advisor Signature:

Date:

Status of Remediation Plan for Pre-graduation Review

Recommended Remediation:

Completed _____

Not Completed _____

Required Remediation:

Completed _____

Not Completed _____

Advisor Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Final Signatures

The student has been evaluated to meet academic, interpersonal, professional growth, and student learning outcome standards required to be cleared to graduate. All (if any) required remediation has been completed satisfactorily.

Advisor: _____ **Date:** _____

Student: _____ **Date:** _____

Faculty/Staff Contact Information

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Mental Health Counseling Student Handbook

By signing below, I attest that I have received a copy of the Mental Health Counseling Student Handbook. By signing I also agree that I have read and understood the program requirements outlined in the handbook. By signing, I agree to follow the requirements outlined in the handbook.

(Student's Signature)

(Date)

Practicum Placement

By signing below I attest that I have been informed of the following expectations regarding my availability for placement in the required Mental Health Counseling program practicum to be completed in my last year in the Mental Health Counseling program and that my placement is contingent upon meeting these expectations:

For practicum, I must be available to be at the site for a minimum of 4 hours during the normal hours of operation at the placement site for at least 4 days per week.

Additional hours needed to meet the requirements of practicum and internship must be earned in a manner agreed upon and approved by the Mental Health Counseling Clinical Coordinator and the placement site(s).

(Student's Signature)

(Date)