

Northwestern University
Master of Arts in Counseling Program
Academic Program Manual
Online Branch
2026 – 2027

Northwestern

The Center for Applied
Psychological and Family Studies

IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER: The information in this handbook applies to the academic years stated on the handbook and is updated periodically. The Counseling Program reserves the right to change, without notice, any statement contained in this handbook concerning, but not limited to, rules, policies, tuition, fees, curricula, and courses. Once the handbook is provided to a student, failure to read this information does not excuse a student from knowing and complying with its content. In addition to The Graduate School program policies ([See TGS Policies](#)) graduate students are subject to and should be aware of the [Northwestern Student Handbook](#) and University policies pertaining to students ([See Northwestern University Policies](#))



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SECTION 1: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Counseling Department in The Family Institute at Northwestern University delivers the Master of Arts degree program online via a digital learning platform and on-campus in Evanston, Illinois. While guidelines and policies of the online and on-campus program sites are well aligned, there are nuances related to degree completion in the different learning environments, and these are reflected in guidelines and expectations for students. This handbook pertains to the program's online branch site (Counseling@Northwestern).

The policies, procedures, and resources in this student handbook are guided by those of Northwestern University (NU), The Graduate School (TGS), The Family Institute (TFI), the program's accreditation body (the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs [CACREP]), and the American Counseling Association (ACA). Additionally, the policies and procedures of 2U, Inc., our educational partner who manages the digital learning platform, also inform guidelines and requirements in this handbook.

A. PROGRAM VISION, MISSION, AND PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

VISION

We are leaders in creating an enriching educational community that prepares clinically competent, professionally engaged, and ethically driven counselors who promote the mental health and wellness of all people.

MISSION

Our mission is to deliver innovative clinical mental health counselor training grounded in contemporary psychodynamic theory and holistic best practices, preparing skilled counselors to serve clients and communities from all walks of life.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

On completing our graduate degree, students will:

- a. Possess an in-depth understanding of Clinical Mental Health Counseling
- b. Understand strategies to integrate psychodynamic thought and emerging best practices into clinical work.
- c. Demonstrate self-reflective counseling skills honed through extensive and closely supervised clinical practice.
- d. Recognize and integrate the impact of personal and client values on the counseling relationship within a pluralistic society.
- e. Embody a professional counselor identity.
- f. Showcase a scientific mindset and an interest in scholarship and profession-centered activities



SECTION 2: GENERAL POLICIES

A. DEGREE TYPE

The Counseling Department offers a Master of Arts (MA) degree. On students' transcripts, Clinical Mental Health Counseling is the major or plan of study.

To receive the degree, students must fulfill these requirements:

- a. Complete residency requirements.
- b. Complete approved and required coursework.
- c. Complete clinical training hours.
- d. Complete all coursework with officially recorded grades.
- e. File and receive official approval for graduation.

B. DEGREE POLICIES

1. TIMEFRAME FOR DEGREE COMPLETION

Students must complete all requirements for the master's degree within five years of the date of their initial registration in The Graduate School. Beyond five years, students will be considered not in good academic standing and placed on Academic Probation. Only rarely, under extenuating circumstances, will students be granted permission to continue beyond five years.

2. TRANSFER CREDIT AND DEGREE COMPLETION POLICY

The program does not accept transfer credit for coursework completed at other institutions. To earn the Master of Arts in Counseling degree from Northwestern University, students must complete all required coursework through Counseling@Northwestern or the on-campus counseling program.

3. CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT IN OTHER DEGREE-GRANTING PROGRAMS

Students cannot be enrolled in another degree-granting program concurrently with enrollment in the Counseling program at Northwestern.

4. COURSE WAIVERS

Required coursework will not be waived. No coursework will be accepted from another academic institution. All courses must be taken within a single integrated degree program at Northwestern University. The program's leadership approves all curriculum plans for a master's degree. In addition to requirements directly related to gaining a degree, all students must abide by Northwestern's standards of [Academic Integrity](#) and the program code of academic ethics.

5. CREDIT FOR COURSEWORK

With a few exceptions, courses carry one unit of credit (4 quarter hours). Students must register for and complete all course units designated as required by the program, to receive credit toward residency. See a list of the program's credit-bearing [counseling coursework](#). See the Northwestern formula for credits here ([See NU coursework credit breakdown](#)).



6. TUITION

The program does not set the tuition rates. The tuition rates for each course are established by the University annually and may change each academic year. View tuition cost details ([Tuition Costs](#)).

7. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

To receive their degree, students must:

- a. Complete the Application for a Degree form by the date specified in the [Academic Calendar](#).
- b. Complete the Master's Degree Completion Form and receive program approval by the date specified in the Academic Calendar.
- c. Have no incomplete (Y) or in-progress (K) grades on the transcript.
- d. Complete all required coursework, including clinical training courses
- e. Have at least a 3.0 GPA.
- f. See TGS graduation requirements link here ([TGS Master's Degree Requirements](#))

C. PROGRAM CURRICULA

1. REQUIRED CURRICULA OPTIONS SELECTED AT ENROLLMENT

The courses required for the Master of Arts in Counseling are reflective of the national counselor education program standards. The program is accredited through the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) through March 2031 and will adjust curricular offerings to the most recent CACREP Standards. See Appendix I and II for a full breakdown of all curricula and coursework requirements.

Admitted students enroll in one of two curriculum plans that determine the number of courses taken to complete the degree. The core or standard curriculum includes 24 courses required to complete the Master of Arts degree in Counseling. The Bridge curriculum includes 3 introductory courses, in addition to the core curricula plan, for a total of 27 courses towards the degree (see Appendix I). In order to be admitted to the Standard program, applicants must have a completed undergraduate degree in Psychology or a related field with the appropriate coursework OR at least two years of professional clinical mental health counseling experience (volunteer experiences do not qualify). All others will be admitted through the Bridge to Counseling curriculum (aka the Bridge curriculum).

The Bridge curriculum is required for students with no prior coursework or experience in human and social services. Applicants can also self-select to be in the Bridge study plan. Students have a variety of elective options that can be taken with the core and Bridge curricula plans. Elective courses are courses taken beyond the 24 or 27 required for the degree.

Note: Optional elective coursework incurs additional tuition payments.

2. CHILD AND ADOLESCENT SPECIALIZATION

In the Core or Bridge curricula, students can elect to study in the child and adolescent specialization. This specialization enables students to gain expertise in child/adolescent mental health and to increase their marketability as experts with this population. Once students declare an interest in working with



children and adolescents, they must enroll in versions of core coursework with an emphasis on children and adolescents.

These courses include:

- a. **COUN 413-6** — Human Growth and Lifespan Development-2 (Child & Adolescent Focus)
- b. **COUN 426-2** — Assessment-2 (Child & Adolescent Focus)
- c. **COUN 436-6** — Counseling Children and Adolescents
- d. **COUN 453-6** — Evaluation and Treatment of Trauma-2 (Child & Adolescent Focus)
- e. **COUN 440-6** — Play Therapy

In addition to required child/adolescent coursework, students must complete fieldwork experience related to this area of professional interest in working with youth. Students must communicate their interest by the end of the first quarter, to arrange appropriate fieldwork. Students may accept sites that offer child/adolescent-focused practice and supervision, and these experiences will be a part of the program's records.

Note: *With program approval, students who entered the program prior to Fall 2022 (before some specialization elements were finalized) may be approved to receive the specialization with fewer requirements. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis with the approval of the Coordinator of the Child/Adolescent Specialization. Students completing the specialization will receive an official letter of completion. See Appendix I and II for a full breakdown of the specialization coursework and clinical training requirements.*

3. DEGREE PROGRAM PATHWAYS

Students in the Core or Bridge curricula, with or without the specialization option, complete their degree on three timelines: Accelerated, Traditional, or Part-time. These timelines determine the pacing of studies. Admission staff help students to determine the most appropriate timeline for studies based on availability and other demands (e.g., part-time employment). A description of the curricula timelines is in Appendix I.

- a. **Accelerated timeline** — Students complete core or specialization courses over six (6) academic quarters, or 18 months, taking four (4) classes per quarter. The Accelerated timeline is intensive, and students begin fieldwork in the first quarter of the program.
- b. **Traditional timeline** — Students complete core or specialization courses in nine (9) academic quarters or 24 months. Typically, students enroll in three (3) courses per quarter. Clinical training occurs in the last six (6) quarters of the traditional track.
- c. **Part-Time 12 timeline** — Students complete core or specialization courses in twelve (12) academic quarters or three years, taking two (2) courses per quarter. Most academic courses are taken in advance of Counseling Methods, Research, Advanced Topics, and elective coursework per quarter. Practicum and internship courses occur after most academic courses are completed.

Counseling@Northwestern is a CACREP-accredited program. Although most states have adopted CACREP requirements for their licensure eligibility requirements, some states have unique requirements not governed by CACREP. Students must keep their state licensure eligibility requirements in mind when completing curriculum planning (at the time of enrollment) to ensure they are mapping to their state licensure requirements.



D. REGISTRATION POLICIES

2. HOW TO REGISTER

To register for courses, see [The Graduate School's General Registration Policies](#). Any NU holds (financial or otherwise) must be cleared up before registration for classes. To confirm registration, check quarterly class schedules in [CAESAR](#). After enrolling in courses, registration changes can only be made by following The Graduate School's policies (see [Changes in Registration](#)).

3. WHO CAN REGISTER FOR CLASSES

Only officially admitted, active students (i.e., students not on leave of absence) can register for courses toward a degree. [The Office of the Registrar](#) maintains an up-to-date quarterly class schedule (see the 'View the Quarterly Class Schedule' link on CAESAR). Students register in CAESAR, within the assigned period, on the Office of the Registrar's website. For registration assistance, please contact your Student Success Advisor.

4. ACCELERATING AND DECELERATING STUDIES

Students must receive written approval from an Associate Program Director to accelerate or decelerate coursework. Accelerating a program of study requires students to document how they will manage the increased workload. Decelerating only academic classes while in Clinical Training is not permitted. If students enrolled in Clinical Training receive approval to decelerate their degree progress, they must decelerate both Clinical Training and academic classes. To plan and implement deceleration, ensure continuity of care for clients, and meet professional expectations at sites, students must work closely with their Clinical Training Director (CTD) and site supervisor.

Acceleration and deceleration will only be accommodated upon entry to the program and in completing the Practicum before starting an Internship. Acceleration or deceleration may also be considered on a case-by-case basis, based on extenuating circumstances and academic remediation or discipline. A student's appeal to accelerate or decelerate can be denied by program leadership, and the original curriculum plan will be upheld. In such cases, to continue an existing study plan, students may take a leave of absence.

5. ADDING OR DROPPING COURSES

Students may drop a course after the add/drop period and before the scheduled 'last day to drop a course' deadline. View the [Refund Schedule](#) to determine how much tuition will be refunded, based on what percentage of the quarter has elapsed. Students must pay close attention to the implications of adding or dropping a course in their overall curriculum plan. Adding or dropping a class can impact degree timeline, overall tuition costs, and potential impact on post-masters licensure eligibility.

6. AUDITING POLICY

Students are not allowed to [audit classes](#).



7. MAINTAINING CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION

All active students must register continuously in fall, winter, spring, and summer terms until all degree requirements have been completed. Failure to do so will result in being discontinued from the program. Students who are discontinued for non-enrollment will need to reapply for admission to the program.

Students approaching graduation who have incompletes in clinical training courses must consult their Clinical Training Director (CTD) to determine the appropriate registration (TGS 512) to fulfill the continuous registration policy. A grade of Incomplete (Y) in any course and maintaining continuing registration to complete clinical training requirements impact students' ability to graduate on their preferred timeline. The program will advise students on the need to maintain continuous enrollment until degree requirements are maintained.

Note: *It is the student's responsibility to know and to pay close attention to program and university correspondence, guidance, and messages to complete the actions that impact whether they have met conditions to earn their degree.*

8. STUDENT REGISTRATION CHANGES — IMPACTS ON CLINICAL TRAINING

Dropping a course can significantly impact a student's degree progress, including readiness to begin clinical training. Students are strongly advised to seek program approval to understand the ramifications of withdrawing from an established course rotation. The counseling curriculum follows a prescribed sequence that is intentionally designed to support counselor development, meet CACREP accreditation requirements, and ensure students achieve the program's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) before advancing to subsequent coursework and clinical training. Because each course builds upon knowledge and skills acquired in prior courses, courses cannot be taken out of sequence. Students are responsible for understanding the impact that any course changes may have on their academic progression, eligibility for clinical training, and anticipated degree completion timeline.

Counseling@Northwestern is designed to support clinical mental health licensure eligibility across the country. As such, all course content and curriculum are tailored specifically for that purpose. Therefore, students seeking to take courses from other colleges at Northwestern University are not permitted to register in COUN courses.

E. WITHDRAWAL AND READMISSION POLICIES

1. WITHDRAWAL AFTER ACCEPTANCE OF ADMISSION

Students who accept the offer of admission but cannot begin in the academic quarter of admission, AND who want to begin in a subsequent quarter must request a deferral before the registration deadline for classes. Students who register but wish to defer must, in writing, withdraw from the program. Students who are registered but do not officially start the program will be discontinued and will be required to reapply.



2. WITHDRAWAL FROM PROGRAM

Continuing students who wish to withdraw from the program must inform program leaders, such as Associate Program Directors, academic advisors, and student support personnel, and follow [The Graduate School's Withdrawal policy](#).

3. READMISSION

Students who wish to take a leave of absence from one or more quarters must do so through official requests. Students who miss one or more quarters of registration (including summer) without an official leave of absence or who fail to request to return after an approved leave will be *discontinued*. Students who are discontinued and wish to return to the university/program must submit an [Application for Readmission](#). The decision to readmit a former student is at the discretion of the Department Chair and The Graduate School.

F. LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICIES (LOA)

1. DEFINING LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A leave of absence is a temporary separation from the university and program. Students wishing to take a leave of absence for any reason should carefully review [The Graduate School's Leave of Absence Policy](#). Students should also contact their Student Support Advisor and Faculty advisors to determine how leaves of absence may affect their curriculum plans. All medical leaves of absence documentation and registration paperwork must be submitted to the Associate Program Director over student experiences for approval and processing.

2. LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY IN ASSOCIATION WITH CLINICAL TRAINING

Special care must be taken about leaves of absence from clinical training sites. In general, leaves of absence from clinical training are discouraged and endorsed only in emergency circumstances (e.g., personal or family health issues or crises). A leave of absence will impact student fieldwork assignments. A plan for completion of fieldwork requirements will be made with the student's Clinical Training Director (CTD), the Assistant and/or Associate Program Directors, and/or the Department Chair. When a leave of absence is requested, students are expected to work with their sites to provide continuity of care for clients and discuss the plan with their respective Clinical Training Director and site supervisor.

3. PARENTAL ACCOMMODATION POLICY

The program recognizes the unique needs of new parents (whether by childbirth or adoption) and follows [The Graduate School's Parental Accommodation Policy](#).

4. LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND COURSE CURRENCY

Students returning from an extended leave of absence are expected to demonstrate current knowledge and competency in previously completed coursework before progressing through the curriculum. Because counselor education is built upon sequential learning and reflects evolving



professional standards, ethical guidelines, and evidence-informed practices, coursework completed prior to a prolonged interruption may no longer provide an adequate foundation for advanced study.

Students who accumulate an extended interruption in enrollment (e.g., multiple leaves of absence resulting in a significant lapse between completion of a course and subsequent progression in the curriculum) may be required to retake one or more previously completed courses. In these circumstances, the original course will be converted to a **Permanent Y (Permanent Incomplete)**, and the student must successfully complete the course again before advancing.

This determination is made by the program based on the length of the interruption, curricular sequencing, accreditation requirements, and the need to ensure students possess current knowledge and skills. This policy is not punitive and does not reflect a deficiency in the student's prior academic performance. Rather, it is intended to preserve the integrity of the curriculum, support student success, and ensure that graduates enter clinical practice with knowledge that reflects current professional standards and best practices.

SECTION 3: CLASSROOM POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS

A. ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE

- **Attendance Requirement:** Attendance at all synchronous (live, online or on-campus) class sessions is mandatory.
- **Excused Absences:** There is no distinction between excused and unexcused absences; all absences are treated equally.
- **Grade and Point Penalties:** Any absence will result in the forfeiture of participation and engagement points for that session.
- **Failure Threshold:** Missing three (3) synchronous class sessions results in an automatic failing grade for the course, regardless of the student's current academic standing or prior performance. This policy is uniform across all academic (non-clinical training) departmental courses and is non-negotiable.
- Absences due to religious observance will be accommodated according to departmental and university policy.
- **Accommodations:** All course instructors will strictly adhere to documented student accommodations on an individual student basis as dictated by the AccessibleNU office.
- Show up to class sessions on time. Class will start promptly at the scheduled time. Showing up either 15 minutes late or leaving 15 minutes early, more than once, will be counted as a full absence and the absence policy will apply.
- For online classes, attend classes via both video and audio. Ensure that technology to attend classes such as webcams, phone, and headsets are in working order for class each week. When a pattern of technology issues negatively impacts the student's ability to attend class, the absence and tardy policies will apply.
- Refrain from recreational use of your devices during class. Your computer or tablet should be used only for notetaking and attending live sessions. Texting, emailing, shopping, surfing the web, and similar non-academic activities are prohibited. Points will be deducted from the student's final course points if this behavior is distracting to the class session.



B. LATE WORK AND PREPARATION

- **Deadline Requirement for preparatory work:** All required asynchronous materials (discussion prompts, videos, reading material) and preparatory questions or work must be submitted no later than 24 hours before class starts each week. Asynchronous material that is not completed 24 hours before class will earn 0 points. Students are still required to complete all asynchronous materials, even if they are no longer eligible to receive points.
- Class assignments are due as dictated on the syllabus. See the assignment outline for due dates.
- **Life circumstances and extensions:** Personal life circumstances, minor illnesses, professional conflicts, and other non-academic events do not qualify for deadline extensions or penalty waivers. All late submissions are subject to the standard penalty without exception.
- If your life circumstances are impacting your ability to learn and perform in this course, please reach out to your respective student support team according to delivery method (Online students reach out to your SSA and the Director of Student Support; On-campus students reach out to your advisor and the Student Experience Advisor).
- **Late Submission Penalty:** Any assignment submitted after the deadline will receive an automatic 5% grade deduction from the final percentage earned. An additional 5% grade deduction will be applied every 24 hours past the deadline.
- **Zero Score Threshold:** Cumulative late deductions will accrue at 5% per day until the assignment grade drops below 70% (passing threshold); i.e., any coursework submitted more than 6 full days past the assignment deadline will automatically receive a grade of zero (0) with no opportunity for makeup or resubmission.
- **Excused Lateness:** There is no distinction between excused and unexcused late submissions; all late penalties are applied uniformly.

C. ACCOMODATIONS

Course instructors will strictly follow each student's documented accommodation as determined by AccessibleNU and the Northwestern Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance. Accommodations as determined by AccessibleNU are not retroactive. Students are strongly encouraged to contact AccessibleNU before the start of the quarter or upon receipt of a syllabus to ensure accommodations are in place.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

In teaching and training, instructors and students may share de-identified examples from their clinical practice experiences. These discussions enrich course dialogues and enliven theoretical material. Students and instructors have ethical and legal obligations to maintain confidentiality and to protect the identity of clients and their disclosures as outlined in the American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics and the American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA) Code of Ethics.

E. PROHIBITION OF RECORDING CLASS SESSIONS BY STUDENTS

Unauthorized student recording of classroom or other academic activities (including advising sessions or office hours) is prohibited. Unauthorized recording is unethical and may also be a violation of University policy and state law. Students requesting the use of assistive technology as an accommodation should



contact AccessibleNU. Unauthorized use of classroom recordings – including distributing or posting them – is also prohibited. Under the [University's Copyright Policy](#), faculty own the copyright to instructional materials – including those resources created specifically for the purposes of instruction, such as syllabi, lectures and lecture notes, and presentations. Students cannot copy, reproduce, display, or distribute these materials. Students who engage in unauthorized recording, unauthorized use of a recording, or unauthorized distribution of instructional materials will be referred to the appropriate University office for follow-up and potential discipline.

F. GUIDANCE ON CLASS RECORDINGS

Instructors will inform students if they record class sessions for educational purposes. Your instructor will communicate how members of the class can access the recordings. Portions of the course containing images, questions or commentary/discussion by students will be edited out of any recordings saved beyond the current term.

For Counseling@Northwestern courses, all live sessions will be recorded for educational purposes. Recordings can be found on 2NU. The recordings will remain on 2NU and are available for your review up to six months after graduation. Recordings may be used for research, training, and evaluation purposes. Please use professional judgment in personal disclosures that you might not want to remain on recordings.

G. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students enrolled in Northwestern courses are required to comply with [Northwestern's academic integrity policy](#). All papers submitted for credit in this course must be submitted electronically unless otherwise instructed by the professor. Your written work may be tested for plagiarized content. Any form of cheating, including improper use of content generated by artificial intelligence, constitutes a violation of Northwestern's academic integrity policy.

The Counseling Department adheres strictly to Northwestern's academic integrity policies. Academic integrity is fundamental to the scholarly process, and every student is held accountable to honest and ethical conduct. In every course, Turnitin is used to assist students and faculty in tracking plagiarism (including self-plagiarism). Each suspected academic integrity violation will be reported directly to The Graduate School for adjudication.

H. POLICY ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) AND CLINICAL INTEGRITY

1. Originality and Authenticity

- **Prohibition on Generative Editing:** You may not use AI to generate, rewrite, or alter your writing to the point that it is no longer in your own words.
- **Reflective Integrity:** Using AI to draft 'Self-As-Counselor' papers, reflective journals, or cultural self-assessments is prohibited. Generating self-reflection via AI constitutes a falsification of professional disposition.
- **Permitted Tools:** Basic spell-check and standard grammar tools are allowed; generative re-writing tools are not.



2. Skill-Based Restriction

- **Restricted Tasks:** Unless explicitly authorized in an assignment prompt, AI is prohibited for summarizing required readings, analyzing case studies, or drafting discussion board posts.
- **Clinical and Client Red Line:** AI must never be used for clinical decision-making (diagnoses, risk assessment, treatment planning) or for entering any real, de-identified, or masked client/site data (HIPAA/ACA violation).

3. Transparency and Attribution

When an assignment explicitly permits AI usage, transparency is mandatory.

- **Verification Duty:** AI platforms frequently generate fake sources ('hallucinations'). You are held 100% liable for the accuracy of your bibliography. Submitting unverified or fictitious citations is treated as academic dishonesty.
- **Disclosure and APA Citation:** Any authorized AI use must be cited in-text and in your reference list per APA 7th Edition guidelines, accompanied by an AI Disclosure Statement on your title page.

4. Faculty Verification

The instructor retains the right to use text-analysis tools to evaluate submission authenticity. If unauthorized AI use is suspected, you will be held to an academic integrity inquiry. See academic integrity policy.

I. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

If a student has a concern about a course instructor or with course content or process, they should first reach out to the instructor directly to discuss the issue. If the concern is not resolved at the instructor level, students should follow the program's conflict resolution policy, as described in this Student Handbook.

J. ACCESSIBILITY

Northwestern University is committed to providing a supportive environment for students with disabilities. Should you anticipate or experience disability-related barriers in the academic setting, please contact [AccessibleNU](#) to move forward with the university's established accommodation process. If you already have established accommodations with AccessibleNU, please let your instructor know as soon as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of the term, so we can work with you to implement your disability accommodations. Disability information, including academic accommodations, is confidential under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

We understand that disclosing a disability can be a challenging process. Registering with AccessibleNU protects your rights as well as provides instructors with more flexibility in creating an equitable and accessible learning environment that meets the needs of all students.

Any student needing reasonable accommodations for a disability or other condition that may affect academic achievement should register with [AccessibleNU](#) (1-847-467-5530). "A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a course, program, service, or activity that enables a qualified student with a disability to obtain equal access. Equal access means an opportunity to attain the



same level of performance or to enjoy equal benefits and privileges as are available to a similarly situated student without a disability. Only the peripheral requirements of courses, programs, and activities are subject to modification; essential elements of courses, programs, and activities must remain intact". (Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act & The Americans with Disabilities Act). Reasonable accommodations are individualized and flexible based on the nature of disability and the academic environment. They provide equal access, not an unfair advantage. *A formal request for disability accommodations should be confidentially shared with each individual instructor of courses taken.*

K. SUPPORT FOR WELLNESS AND HEALTH

UWill is a leading mental health and wellness solution that provides cutting edge technologies that facilitate best-in-class video and message-based counseling within a secure environment. This free teletherapy platform enables Counseling@Northwestern students to receive real-time counseling online from a network of licensed mental health professionals for issues including depression, stress, anxiety, trauma, specific relationship problems, family concerns, academic performance difficulties, loneliness, and sleep disturbance, among others.

Once you set up a profile students are almost immediately connected to a licensed mental health counselor based on their unique needs and preferences including choosing a therapist based on your preferences (issue, gender, language, ethnicity), choose a time that fits your schedule (day, night, weekend availability), and choose the appointment type (video, phone, chat, message). Uwill provides 24x7 technical support by email support@uwill.com or phone (833) 99Uwill. <https://uwill.com>

L. COURSE DETAILS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Please note that the specifics of a course syllabus are subject to change in the case of unforeseen circumstances. Instructors will notify students of any changes as soon as possible. Students will be responsible for abiding by the changes.

M. DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Northwestern University does not permit discrimination or harassment on the basis of protected characteristics. View Northwestern's [non-discrimination statement](#) and [Title IX statement](#). If students have concerns, they may [submit a report](#) or contact the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance (OCR) at ocr@northwestern.edu. All University employees (including student employees) and graduate students with teaching or supervisory authority are [required to report](#) all allegations of sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and sexual harassment), discrimination based on a protected category, and harassment based on a protected category of which they become aware in the scope of their work for the University to the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance unless they are identified as a confidential resource. Read more about the University's discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct policies and resources on the [Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance website](#).



N. PREGNANCY-RELATED ACCOMMODATIONS

Students who are pregnant can reach out to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance (accommodations@northwestern.edu; 847-467-6165) for assistance with pregnancy accommodation requests. Northwestern provides accommodation for pregnant students during all stages before pregnancy, during pregnancy, and postpartum.

O. PROVIDING DISPLAY/PREFERRED NAMES AND PRONOUNS

Northwestern community members can change their personal information by logging into [NUValidate](#) and selecting the “Edit Online Directory Information” tile. Any updates to your display name and pronouns will be visible to your instructor within a few days. For additional information visit [their website](#).

P. RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

Northwestern is committed to fostering an academic community respectful of and welcoming to people of differing backgrounds. To that end, the [policy on academic accommodations for religious observance](#) stipulates that students will not be penalized for class absences for religious observance. Students for whom a religious observance conflicts with a class meeting, exam, or assignment deadline, should consult with their instructor by the end of the second week of the term. Note for undergraduates: if observance of a religious observance conflicts with a [common midterm](#) (i.e., a midterm scheduled outside of the regular class meeting time) or [final exam](#), you should submit an accommodation request to the [Office of the Provost’s religious accommodation request form](#).

Q. ADHERE TO NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Specifically, student conduct that persistently disrupts live classes will be subject to Remediation and Discipline (Section 5.D-J). Also see the NU Student Handbook.

1. CONDUCT YOURSELF ETHICALLY AND HONORABLY IN AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM

- a. Do not recycle papers written in other classes for assignments in this course (self-plagiarism).
- b. Attend class in a private setting to comply with FERPA, which forbids exposure of synchronous class sessions to anyone except the student. There should be no other people visible in your background while attending class online.
- c. Treat your classmates' disclosures with respect and a nonjudgmental stance. Use the Chat Box online to comment only on materials being discussed in class. Do not pause your camera, except in emergencies.
- d. Check with your instructor about eating in class. In some classes, this might be distracting to the learning process.
- e. Keep your visual area free from distractions, including children and pets.
- f. Do not smoke or vape while attending class.



R. STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Students can complete evaluations for every course twice each quarter. This feedback is valued by the program to enhance the quality of the learning experience both in real-time (MQEs) and with overall assessments (CTECs).

1. **Mid-Quarter Evaluations (MQEs):** All students are requested by the program to complete one MQE for every course they take each quarter. The MQEs are available for students between weeks 4 and 5 each quarter and provide an opportunity to share feedback to help improve the course before the quarter ends.
2. **CTECs:** All students are requested by The University to complete CTECs for every course they take each quarter. CTECs are official evaluations that are recorded by the University in weeks 9 and 10 each quarter to recognize and understand student experiences in each class. Student and Alumni Affairs will notify students when CTECs become available and provide guidance on completing course evaluations.

S. GRADING POLICIES

1. GRADES CONFERRED

See The Graduate School's [Grading Policy](#).

2. INCOMPLETE GRADES

- a. Incomplete grades (Y, X, PY) should be avoided given their impact on student academic standing and degree progress. For instance, four incomplete grades result in a student's placement on academic probation. Incomplete grades in certain classes can also prevent a student's progress to clinical training experiences, subsequent courses, or delay graduation. Extenuating situations may arise that justify the need for an incomplete grade, and the policy below must be followed.
- b. The majority of the course and coursework must already be completed for the petition of an incomplete grade to be requested or considered.
- c. The student discusses the extenuating circumstance that leads to a request for an incomplete grade in class. Instructor may request evidence supporting the existence of conditions that make it difficult to complete the class.
- d. The instructor seeks consultation with the course lead (or other program leaders as the situation may require) as to whether an incomplete should be approved or disallowed.
- e. At earliest convenience, the instructor communicates a decision about the incomplete grade to the student, with clarity of why the incomplete is allowed or disallowed.
- f. If approved, the student and instructor will create a documented plan for completion that includes: (1) a list of the outstanding course material, (2) a timeline for completion, and (3) clear consequences for not completing the coursework within that timeline. The plan needs to be realistic for both instructor and student and should not exceed one academic year or four active quarters.
- g. If the incomplete is not approved, the student must consider the next steps to protect their GPA. Depending on the time in the quarter, the student may consider dropping the class and retaking it the quarter immediately following.
- h. Incomplete grades not resolved within one active academic year (four consecutive active quarters; LOA quarters do not count) will automatically be converted to an F or failing grade.



3. PASS/FAIL, NO CREDIT OPTION

No required coursework can be taken for pass/fail grades or zero-credit options (except those approved in the program's curriculum).

4. FAILING A COURSE

If a student fails a course (earns an 'F' grade), they must repeat the course to earn a quality grade (e.g., A, B, C) to satisfy curriculum and graduation requirements. There are no exchange or replacement courses in the curriculum.

Students must repeat failed courses immediately in the following quarter (or in the next quarter the course is offered). Should students fail the same course a second time (earning two 'F' grades for the same course), this will impact their academic standing. If, after failing for a second time, the student's GPA remains at 3.0 or above, they may repeat the course a third time but must pause all other coursework or clinical training activities.

Note: *The student will NOT be allowed to advance in the program without passing the failed course. If the second failing grade drops the student's GPA below 3.0, they will be on academic probation by The Graduate School, with the possibility of dismissal (See [Academic Probation Policies](#)). If a student is on Academic Probation, they are required to collaborate with the Director of Student Support and Associate Program Director on an academic remediation process.*

Because most courses are required as part of the CACREP-accredited degree program, students should seriously consider the impact of this policy on their academic and financial planning.

5. INCOMPLETE AND PROGRESSING GRADES IN METHODS COURSES AND CLINICAL TRAINING

In COUN 481-6, 481-7, or 481-8 Supervised Practicum in Counseling, if a student is missing documentation such as a clinical training agreement, an evaluation from supervisor, hours log or approvals are not up-to-date or is missing any other form, the student will receive a grade of Y which indicates that requirements are incomplete. When a student cannot complete the practicum requirements due to obtaining a placement late or is still acquiring the required clinical hours through no fault of their own, a grade of K (in-progress) is given until the hours or documentation is completed. Students will not be allowed to enroll in or complete internship coursework unless all practicum courses and Methods courses are completed and graded. When the student provides the required documentation, a grade is assigned pursuant to the grading rubric. Failure to complete Methods coursework may result in delayed entry into Internship. Students unable to complete Methods or Practicum will need to take an extension of Practicum, i.e. RPX.

Similarly, in COUN 482-6, 482-7, or 482-8 Supervised Internship in Counseling, if a student is missing documentation such as a clinical training agreement, an evaluation from supervisor, hours log or approvals are not up-to-date, or is missing any other form, the student will receive a grade of Y which indicates that requirements are incomplete. When a student cannot complete the internship requirements due to obtaining a placement late or is still acquiring the required clinical hours through no fault of their own, a grade of K (in progress) is given until the hours or documentation is completed.



When the student provides the required documentation, a grade is assigned pursuant to the grading rubric.

SECTION 4: ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICIES

A. SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Students must follow The Graduate School's [Satisfactory Academic Progress Policies](#). In addition, students must also be in good clinical standing at training sites and must complete all fieldwork requirements. Students are advised to review the clinical training section of this handbook carefully.

B. PROBATION BY THE GRADUATE SCHOOL AND PROGRAM

The Graduate School's academic probation policies can be found at the [Academic Probation Policies](#) page. Students whose GPA remains below 3.0 for two consecutive quarters in the program over Fall, Winter, or Spring will be placed on academic probation by The Graduate School. Students with more than three (3) Incomplete (Y) or In-Progress grades (K) are placed on academic probation. Summer quarters are excluded from the academic probation requirement. Students on academic probation are required to meet with the Director of Student Support or the Associate Program Director for academic and curriculum coaching and remediation planning.

Although The Graduate School excludes the summer quarter from the Academic Probation Requirement, Counseling@Northwestern requires students to maintain satisfactory academic progress all quarters. Therefore, students whose GPA falls below 3.0 or have 4 or more incomplete grades (K and/or Y grades) are subject to the following:

- a. Students must meet with the Director of Student Support or otherwise designated faculty members immediately to create a plan to remediate the deficiency.
- b. Any Clinical Training efforts will be paused and suspended until the academic deficiency is remediated.
- c. The student must meet with their student success advisor to create an updated curriculum plan. Once the deficit has been remediated the student may return to their Clinical Training Placement.

C. PROGRAM ACTION RELATED TO ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS

The Associate Program Director monitors the student's experience from admission to graduation and is notified when a student repeats and fails a course a second time. The Associate Program Director is also advised when a student's official Northwestern University Cumulative Grade Point Average falls below 3.0, the minimum required to graduate.

When a student's academic progress is unsatisfactory, The Graduate School will notify the student and program leadership. Students on their first term of Academic Probation must meet with the Director of Student Support to outline a remediation plan to resolve their academic probation. Student Remediation Plans will identify performance objectives and strategies to solve academic problems and identify expected outcomes (e.g., instructor mentorship, AccessibleNU, writing support, or consultations with the Director of Student Support).



Students in their second quarter of academic probation must meet with the Director of Student Support or the Associate Program Director to determine if an extension of the student's academic probation is needed. Should either determine that an extension is warranted, a petition to The Graduate School from the student will be submitted. The Graduate School will determine whether to grant the extension and inform the program. Academic remediation planning will continue until the probationary status resolves.

D. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICIES

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is fundamental to every facet of the educational process and is expected of every student in The Graduate School in all academic undertakings. Integrity involves firm adherence to academic honesty and to ethical conduct consistent with values and standards that respect the intellectual efforts of both self and others. Ensuring integrity in academic work is a joint enterprise involving both faculty and students. Among the most critical goals of graduate education are maintaining an academic integrity environment and instilling in students a lifelong commitment to intellectual honesty that is fundamental to good scholarship. These goals are best achieved because of productive dialogue between students and faculty mentors regarding academic integrity and the examples of academic community members. Their intellectual accomplishments demonstrate sensitivity to the nuances of ethical conduct in scholarly work.

2. USE OF TURNITIN AND TRACKING OF VIOLATIONS

In every course, "Turnitin" (See [website](#)) is used to assist students and faculty in tracking issues of plagiarism (including self-plagiarism). **Note:** *Turnitin now includes an evaluation of papers written using Artificial Intelligence Software which is forbidden as an ethical violation.* If a student is suspected of violating the TGS policy on academic integrity/plagiarism, they will be subject to Northwestern University's guidelines and procedures for academic integrity violations ([TGS Academic Integrity Policies](#)). Each academic integrity violation will be reported to The Graduate School who is the primary investigator of all academic integrity occurrences. Students suspected of academic integrity violations will be notified by the instructor. The instructor will share alleged violations with program leadership and notify The Graduate School, provided evidence of the alleged violation. If deemed appropriate, The Graduate School will investigate, often requiring that the student meet with a TGS official, to share their perspective of the situation. The Graduate School will then inform both the program and the student of their findings. If academic integrity violations are upheld by The Graduate School, in addition to any university sanctions, repeated violations will subject students to the program's remediation and discipline process (see Section 5: D-J). Repeated violations of Academic Integrity risks exclusion from the program and university.

3. POTENTIAL FOR EXCLUSION BY THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

The Graduate School may exclude (dismiss) students who fail to meet the academic progress requirements. See a full description of exclusion policies ([Exclusion Policies](#)).



SECTION 5: POLICIES RELATED TO PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS AND CONDUCT

A. HONORING THE HIGHEST VALUES IN MANAGING GRIEVANCES

1. MANAGING GRIEVANCES

Students represent themselves, their future careers as professional counselors, and the program in their handling of conflicts and grievances. This responsibility is enhanced with students' engagement with choice of a field that prioritizes emotional management, repair of relational ruptures, and emotional intelligence in dealing with others. Some conflicts with faculty, peers, administrators, or others, or frustration with program experiences are bound to happen. The way students deal with conflict is the target of this policy.

We hold all members of the community, including students, accountable to abide by sound conflict management principles around their grievance handling. The principles of this grievance management policy are to honor one's own values and validate one's own emotions; self-explore to understand the exact nature of the other person's offense and its impacts on you; communicate effectively and respectfully about upsets towards resolution; following a reasonable chain of escalation towards resolution; to any extent possible remain open to effective repair. We require students to follow these principles in relation to any rupture in the learning community.

2. GRIEVANCE IN THE CLASSROOM OR WITH INSTRUCTION

Students should make a good faith effort to resolve any academic- or course-related difficulty or conflict in the classroom directly with the instructor. If, after making a reasonable faith effort, the problem persists and if, after meeting with the instructor the difficulty continues, the student should escalate their concern to the Course Lead. Names of course leads are listed on the first page of all course syllabus. If the instructor is the Course Lead or if the issue is not resolved with the Course Lead, the student may escalate their concern to the Director of Affiliated Teaching and Instruction who will determine if an escalation is needed to the Assistant or Associate Program Directors or to the Department Chair.

For matters of grading disputes, while students might follow the chain of escalation on the grading concern, the student should note that there is no formal grade appeal process at the level of the program or The Graduate School. For matters other than grading if a resolution is still not found after meeting with program officials, the student may initiate a formal grievance process as described in A.7.

3. GENERAL GRIEVANCE (NOT-CLASSROOM RELATED)

Students should make a good faith effort to resolve non-class-related difficulties or concerns directly with the individual related to the area of concern (e.g., faculty advisor, staff). If no resolution is found, the student should discuss the matter with their faculty advisor, who will try to understand the concern to offer solutions and, if needed, direct the student to the right program leader, faculty, or staff to find a resolution. In most cases, the student will be connected to an Associate Program Director. Depending on the matter, the Department Chair may be involved directly. Most concerns are resolved via this



process. If a resolution is still not found after meeting with program officials, the student may initiate a formal grievance process as described in A.7. The grievance process is designed to ensure that the student is treated fairly and that alternative resolutions can be made to resolve the dispute.

4. GRIEVANCES WITH CLINICAL TRAINING SITE PERSONNEL

Grievances in Clinical Training (e.g., with a clinical supervisor, university supervisor, or Clinical Training Director) can be just as important as those in other areas of the program. Whenever there is a conflict or problem at a field site or with a site supervisor, students must follow the appropriate steps toward resolution:

- a. Speak with the site supervising personnel directly (unless there is an ethical violation that needs to be reported immediately to the Clinical Training Director).
- b. On hearing the matters, the Clinical Training Director may consult the Assistant or Associate Program Director who oversees clinical training or site supervisor in managing the concerns.
- c. If the Clinical Training Director is the person with which the student is aggrieved and there is no resolution after providing feedback directly, the student should contact the Assistant or Associate Program Director who oversees clinical training directly.
- d. Clinical Training Directors will discuss steps to facilitate further resolution of this problem, which may include several processes or steps.
- e. In resolving escalated and complex disputes clinical training leaders will consult with the Department Chair to identify resolutions.
- f. If a resolution is still not found after meeting with program officials, the student has the right to initiate a formal grievance process as described in A.7.

5. GRIEVANCES WITH UNIVERSITY SUPERVISORS (RPS OR CCS)

Whenever a student has a problem with their University Supervisor (RPS or CCS), clinical training faculty will hold students accountable to following appropriate steps toward resolution:

- a. Address the concern directly in the RPS or CCS group, respectfully and sensitively, to invite peer input and process the experience together to acquire a reasonable resolution together.
- b. Speak with the University Supervisor directly (unless there is an ethical violation with the supervisor that needs to be reported immediately to the student's respective Clinical Training Director) to express concerns.
- c. The Clinical Training Director may discuss the matter with the Director of University Supervision and the Assistant or Associate Program Director who oversees clinical training or the Department Chair if needed, to take steps to facilitate further resolution.
- d. Clinical Training Directors will discuss steps with the student to facilitate further resolution of the problem, which may include several processes or steps.
- e. If a resolution is still not found after meeting with program officials, the student has the right to initiate a formal grievance process as described in A.7. The grievance process is designed to ensure that the student is treated fairly and that alternative resolutions can be made to resolve the dispute.

IMPORTANT: Students are not permitted to switch university supervision groups (RPS and CCS groups). These groups remain the same throughout the three quarters of Practicum and three quarters of Internship. Only in extreme cases will changes be made to group arrangements, for example, when



students take a leave of absence, or when students are unable to continue for any other well-justified reason.

6. GRIEVANCES RELATED TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

For matters related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), students might be referred to or seek consultation with the Department Chair. Referrals or student consultation are meant to coach, support, and resource students with DEI concerns. In addition, the Northwestern University policy, “anyone in our community who has been the target of, or who witnesses, sexual misconduct, discrimination, or harassment based on a protected category is encouraged to report the incident to the [Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance](#) so that those impacted can be provided with information on available resources and options.” Students may file a report directly with the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX (see <https://www.northwestern.edu/equity/, file a report>). Students can also contact the Associate Program Director for assistance in filing a report.

7. FORMAL ESCALATION OF A GRIEVANCE BEYOND THE PROGRAM

To escalate a dispute that was not successfully resolved within the program, students should prepare a brief written statement of their position regarding the dispute and submit this statement to the Chief Academic Officer (CAO), Dr. Anthony Chambers (achambers@family-institute.org) of The Family Institute at Northwestern University. The matter will be reviewed by the CAO, who will then meet with the parties involved on one or more occasions. The CAO may consult with The Graduate School as needed. If this process fails, the student may grieve the process to [The Graduate School](#).

B. DISPOSITION AND CONDUCT REQUIRING REMEDIATION/DISCIPLINE

Northwestern University and the Counseling Department have established core behavioral standards with fair and equitable enforcement procedures. Students are subject to both entities (e.g., [NU Student Handbook](#)). Graduate-level counseling students are also clinical mental health counselors-in-training and have professional responsibilities to provide adequate supervised care for clients in program-endorsed clinical training experiences. This responsibility necessitates applying professional competence standards endorsed by the American Counseling Association ([ACA Code of Ethics](#)) and the American Mental Health Counselors Association ([AMHCA Code of Ethics](#)).

C. PROGRAM AND UNIVERSITY INVESTIGATION AND RESOLUTION PROCESSES

Actions by students fall under the Department's purview. However, some actions are required to be addressed at Northwestern University as a first recourse. For example, academic integrity violations are investigated by The Graduate School centrally. Also, alleged violations of sexual misconduct or discrimination against members of a protected class are resolved through Northwestern University's Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance (see <https://www.northwestern.edu/civil-rights-office>). It should be noted that consideration of a matter by Northwestern University or a law enforcement authority does not preclude students from also going through the program's Remediation and Discipline (see Section 5.D-J). The program may impose its own sanctions or actions it determines to be warranted based on standards of professionalism for Clinical Mental Health Counselors in the ACA and AMHCA Codes of Ethics. When it is not clear which remediation or disciplinary procedures apply, the Assistant/Associate Program Directors



or Department Chair will seek guidance from appropriate University officials to decide whether the program, University, or both will oversee the investigation and the resolution of alleged misconduct.

D. PROGRAM OBLIGATIONS TO ASSESS STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISPOSITIONS

1. FACULTY OVERSIGHT OF STUDENT DISPOSITIONS AND CONDUCT

Counseling program leaders, core faculty members, and relevant affiliated program personnel (e.g., site supervisors, instructors) have a professional, ethical, and potentially legal obligation to a) establish criteria and methods through which professional competency areas may be assessed that include, but are not limited to, emotional stability and well-being, interpersonal skills, professional development, and personal fitness for practice; and b) ensure that students who complete the Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling are competent to manage future professional relationships effectively and appropriately (e.g., with a client, colleagues, supervisors, the public, etc.).

2. DISPOSITIONS AND CONDUCT UNDER REVIEW

Because of their professional and ethical commitment, and within the parameters of their administrative authority, the program's leaders and core faculty will not advance, graduate, or recommend students who fail to achieve minimum levels of expected competence in relationships with clients, professional colleagues, supervisors, employers, or the public at large. As such, program leaders and core faculty will evaluate student competence in areas other than, and in addition to, coursework in the digital learning community, clinical training at field sites, in scholarship and related program requirements, and professional competencies. These evaluative areas include but are not limited to a) interpersonal and professional competence (e.g., how students relate to clients, peers, faculty, allied professionals, the public, and individuals from diverse backgrounds or histories); b) self-awareness, self-reflection, and self-evaluation (e.g., knowledge of the content and potential impact of one's own beliefs and values on clients, peers, faculty, allied professionals, the public, and individuals from diverse backgrounds or histories); c) openness to supervision (e.g., the ability and willingness to explore issues that either interfere with the appropriate provision of care or impede professional development or functioning); and d) resolution of issues that interfere with professional development or judgment or functioning satisfactorily (e.g., by responding constructively to feedback from program faculty members and relevant program personnel; by completing remediation plans).

The obligation to assess student conduct applies to settings and contexts in which evaluation occurs typically (e.g., coursework, clinical training, academic events) rather than settings and contexts ordinarily unrelated to the formal process of education and training (e.g., non-academic, social contexts). However, irrespective of environment or context, when a student's conduct clearly and demonstrably a) impacts the performance, development, or functioning of the student, b) negatively affects the development of other students, c) raises questions of an ethical nature, d) represents a risk to public safety, or e) damages the representation of the clinical mental health counseling profession, the program's leadership and core faculty members may review such conduct within the context of the program's evaluation processes. When there is a question about a student's suitability for the practice of clinical mental health counseling, or if there are allegations of irregular or inappropriate behavior or other specific misconduct, the student will be required to enter the program's Remediation



and Discipline (see Section 5.D-J), which includes levels of intervention commensurate with the seriousness of the violations.

3. DISCLOSURE OF CRIMINAL CHARGES AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

The Counseling Program is committed to ensuring the safety of the public, maintaining the integrity of our clinical training environment, and upholding the ethical standards of the counseling profession. Consequently, all students enrolled in the counseling program are required to disclose in writing to the Department Chair any arrest, charge, indictment, or conviction of a criminal offense—including misdemeanors and felonies—that occur at any time during their enrollment.

This obligation encompasses, but is not limited to, offenses involving violence, substance-related incidents, or crimes of dishonesty that may impact a student's eligibility for clinical placement, professional liability insurance, or future licensure. Such notification must be provided within 48 hours of the event or the student's awareness of the charge; failure to provide timely disclosure constitutes a breach of professional conduct and is subject to immediate disciplinary action, up to and including exclusion from the counseling program.

Upon receipt of such disclosure, the department will initiate a confidential review process to assess the student's ongoing fitness to practice. During this assessment, the department reserves the right to implement interim measures, such as suspension from clinical activities, pending a formal review. The outcome of this process may include the implementation of a professional improvement plan or, if the safety of the public or the program's clinical standards are compromised, the recommendation for permanent separation from the program.

Students are reminded that transparency is a fundamental component of professional accountability and that a criminal record may have significant implications for their future professional practice.

E. ASSESSMENT OF KEY PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS: A CACREP REQUIREMENT

1. CACREP POLICY ON ASSESSMENT OF KEY PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

- a. All programs accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) are required to assess key professional dispositions (KPDs) in students to help them reach their highest potential to become effective professional counselors. KPDs offer a framework to maintain a high standard of professional accountability that protects clients' well-being in counseling relationships by assessing and remediating students' deficiencies. Specifically, CACREP's 2024 standards and guiding documents contain the following excerpted requirements:
 - i. In the CACREP Standards (2024), KPD are defined as "The commitments, characteristics, values, beliefs, and behaviors that influence the counselor's professional growth and interactions with clients, faculty, supervisors, and peers, including working in a diverse, multicultural, and global society with marginalized populations" (p. 35). Also, "The counselor education program faculty systematically assess each student's professional dispositions throughout the program. The assessment process includes the following: a) identify and define professional dispositions to be assessed; b) measurement of student professional dispositions over multiple points in time; and c) review or analysis of individual student data for the purpose of retention, remediation, and dismissal" (p. 9).



- b. The counselor education program has a systematic process in place for communicating feedback to students on their individual assessments of knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions. The counselor education program faculty systematically assesses each student's professional dispositions throughout the program. The assessment process includes the following:
 - i. identification of key professional dispositions,
 - ii. measurement of student professional dispositions over multiple points in time
 - iii. review or analysis of data.
- c. The counselor education program faculty has a systematic process in place for the use of individual student assessment data in relation to retention, remediation, and dismissal.
- d. In keeping with this accreditation requirement, the following procedures are implemented in the program to assess students' key professional dispositions and to use data derived for students' developmental enhancement, personal growth through remediation and discipline. Table 1 below summarizes the four key professional dispositions to which students are held accountable as clinical mental health counselors in training:

TABLE 1: Key Professional Dispositions

Key Professional Disposition	Description
Professionalism	The student's behavior demonstrates respect, courteousness, dependability, timeliness, and cooperation in the classroom and training environment. The student adheres to program and agency policies and procedures and completes tasks as expected.
Problem Resolution	The student demonstrates the ability to act constructively to prevent and resolve issues related to education and training and show openness to others' solutions. The student identifies potential problems on their own or responds to opportunities to address known concerns.
Respect for Cultural Differences	The student displays contextual and cultural awareness by valuing all people's fundamental rights, dignity, and worth (peers, faculty, clients, supervisors, administrators). This includes respect for the intersectionality of all identities, including age, culture, disability, ethnicity, race, religion/spirituality, gender, sexual orientation, marital/partnership status, language preference, socioeconomic status, veteran status, military connections, immigration status, or any basis prescribed by law or as defined by individual experience.
Self-Awareness / Self-Reflection	The student proactively considers how their personal beliefs, behaviors, and values may impact others. The student is willing to engage in self-examination, challenging assumptions, and receiving/integrating feedback. The student effectively navigates interpersonal differences.



2. PROCEDURES FOR KPDS

A review of student dispositions will be ongoing. Specifically, program faculty will formally assess student KPDs at a minimum of three specific and planned time points. Every student will be rated on the KPDs three times a) at the end of their first or second term, b) at the midpoint in their degree program, and c) by the midpoint of their internship year. Assessments will also be completed situationally, or when (a) there is a critical incident related to one or more of the KPDs defined by the program or (b) when a student's professional behavior or performance is deemed substandard, unethical, illegal, and/or professionally unbecoming at any time during coursework and clinical training (including in-class, practicum, internship, and co-curricular activities) in the professional judgment of program faculty and leaders. A pattern of low scores on the KPD assessment (i.e., one or more ratings indicative of a dispositional concern by program faculty) will lead to a referral to the program's Remediation and Discipline (see Section 5.D-J). Students are informed of the KPD accreditation requirement at orientation and must sign that they understand the KPD rationale, process, and outcomes (See [Key Professional Dispositions Information](#))

a. Each KPD is rated on a 3-point Likert scale with the following item indicators:

1= Dispositional Concern | 2 = Appropriately Developing | 3 = Well-Developed

F. ASSESSMENT OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs): A CACREP REQUIREMENT

2. POLICY ON THE ASSESSMENT OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

Purpose

In accordance with the 2024 CACREP Standards, the program uses Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to systematically evaluate each student's acquisition and application of the knowledge and skills required for effective professional counseling practice. KPI assessment allows the program to monitor student development throughout the curriculum, provide students with timely feedback, identify areas requiring additional support, and make informed decisions regarding student retention, remediation, and dismissal.

Systematic Assessment and Review

KPIs are embedded in designated courses and fieldwork experiences and are aligned with the eight foundational curricular areas and the program's specialized practice area. The KPI Map identifies where each KPI is assessed. KPIs are evaluated through multiple measures and at multiple points throughout the program, including at least one assessment completed during fieldwork.

KPI results are recorded separately from students' course grades. Program faculty systematically reviews individual student KPI results each quarter to monitor progress, identify unmet performance expectations, and determine whether additional support or remediation is necessary. Students receive an updated KPI Progress Report each quarter documenting their performance and progress toward meeting all KPI requirements. Successful completion of all required KPIs is a requirement for degree completion.



Remediation and Reassessment

When a student does not meet the established minimum performance expectation for a KPI, the student will be notified and required to repeat the relevant KPI assessment. The program will communicate the reassessment requirements, expected timeline, and any preparation or support needed before the reassessment.

The grade originally earned in the associated course will remain unchanged because KPI performance is tracked separately from the final course grade. Once the student successfully completes the reassessment, the student's KPI Progress Report will be updated to indicate that the requirement has been met.

If the student does not successfully complete the KPI reassessment, the program will determine whether additional remediation or formal review is warranted in accordance with the program's student retention, remediation, and dismissal policies. All reassessment and remediation outcomes will be documented in the student's program record.

G. EFFORTS TO FACILITATE RETENTION, DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

The program makes every effort to retain students and offers support and structure to address challenges in professional dispositions and conduct, and toward that end, the program's remedial steps are described below:

Level 1 | Identification & Feedback

On an ongoing basis throughout a student's progression through the program, program personnel including Faculty Advisors, university supervisors, site supervisors, and other faculty observe and discuss student progress, strengths, areas for growth, and deficiencies as a developmental and systemic part of their graduate education and training to become clinical mental health counselors. Student strengths and concerns are discussed among faculty during program meetings, and with clinical supervisors and group supervisors as appropriate or needed. When there are concerns, faculty members, faculty advisors, or clinical supervisors will first attempt to discuss the student concerns directly with the student. This is the first level of advising and coaching.

Level 1 advising and coaching are advisory and facilitative of change. Feedback to students about their conduct and professional dispositions will be developmental in focus and linked to education and clinical training related to clinical mental health ethics and practice. The aim of Level 1 advising is to address and resolve deficiencies at this level. In addition, practicum and internship supervisors hold regular reviews with the Clinical Training team, and evaluations from site supervisors that are recorded in the online student database, FieldX. The goal is that fieldwork deficiencies are resolved at this level. Supervisors, group supervisors, and faculty inform the Clinical Training Director, Assistant/Associate Program Directors, or the Department Chair of any student concerns and resolutions at this level.

Faculty Advising is a collaborative process designed to support students in achieving their academic and professional development goals throughout the counseling program. Through interactions with their faculty advisor, students receive guidance in educational planning, professional counselor identity



development, and preparation for careers as clinical mental health counselors. Faculty advisors serve as guides, and when appropriate, engage in remediation to support students' academic and professional development. They assist students in connecting their academic experiences with their evolving professional goals while fostering ethical practice, self-awareness, and engagement within the counseling profession.

While faculty advisors are an important resource for academic and professional guidance, all questions related to practicum, internship, and clinical training should be directed to the student's Clinical Training Director. For other specialized concerns, faculty advisors assist in connecting students to the appropriate university resources and personnel.

Level 2 | Coaching

Any teaching or training faculty or personnel who believe that a student continues to display a deficiency not resolved at a first level will make a referral to the Director of Student Support indicating a need for Level 2 coaching. When this happens, the Director of Student Support will evaluate concerns regarding the student and seek additional information as needed from the referring party. If the Director of Student Support determines that Level 2 coaching is NOT warranted, they will contact the referring faculty or staff on how to proceed with corrective actions that may resolve concerns about the student.

When warranted, the Director of Student Support or designee will hold a coaching meeting with the student for coaching. This coaching session is a supportive meeting to understand the student's perspective, resolve the identified deficiency, and provide the student with specific ideas on what corrective actions they can take.

If asked to attend a Level 2 coaching meeting, the student must show up at the designed time and virtual location. If the student is unresponsive to Level 2 coaching and remedial strategies, and if the student's disposition or conduct does not improve and deficiencies persist, the Director of Student Support, in consultation with the Associate Program Director, will refer the student to Level 3. In the instance when the Director of Student Support may have a conflicting role with the student, another faculty member or the Associate Program Director will conduct the Level 2 coaching.

Level 3 | Development of Remediation Plan / Goals & Monitoring

If remediation fails at Level 1 and Level 2, in consultation with the Department Chair and the Associate Program Director, or the Director of Student Support, the faculty with first-hand knowledge of the challenge will initiate Level 3. If a student is dismissed from a clinical training site with cause or a student leaves a clinical training site without program knowledge or support, the student may be automatically referred to level 3.

At Level 3, students will be referred to a designated committee of the program, the Student Review Committee (SRC). The SRC will assess students' issues and make recommendations to the Department Chair for additional remediation and discipline. A full description of the SRC process is described below in Section F.



Note: For severe conduct violations or egregious professional competence breaches as determined by the Associate Program Director, and/or Department Chair, remediation will begin at Level 3.

Level 4 | Leave of Absence, Withdrawal, Dismissal

Students must demonstrate progress in all areas of academic performance, clinical skills, and professional conduct. Egregious or unprofessional conduct that violates the ACA or the AMHCA Codes of Ethics or Northwestern Community Standards, for example laid out in the Student Handbook or program policies, will involve a disciplinary review at Level 3. A persistent pattern of serious dispositional concerns as indicated on KPD assessments indicates a serious barrier to progression or successful completion of program requirements will result in the recommendation to dismiss the student. Similarly, continued failure on a KPI after remediation support will result in the recommendation for dismissal. Also, continued failing or marginal performances in multiple or repeated clinical training courses in one or more years may lead to the SRC's or student appeals committee's recommendation for expulsion of a student. Expulsion will be based on the number and nature of conduct concerning failed training experiences without extenuating circumstances. If a student behavior is considered egregious (e.g. direct violation of ethical code, harm to others, or legal violations) the Department Chair can consider dismissal after first violation. If the Department Chair endorses a decision for exclusion (dismissal), the student will be notified in writing via email/or by registered mail, and the decision will be final. Students excused (dismissed) from the Counseling Department at The Family Institute at Northwestern University will not be allowed to reapply to complete the Master of Arts Degree. Expelled students will have a right of further appeal to The Graduate School.

Note: For severe conduct violations, egregious professional competence breaches as determined by the Assistant Program Director or Department Chair, remediation will begin at Level 3.

H. STUDENT REVIEW COMMITTEE, RATIONALE, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Student Review Committee (SRC) is appointed to address dispositional and conduct concerns in the student body that are in violation of standards established by Northwestern University, The Graduate School, The Family Institute, or the Counseling@Northwestern Program's leadership and core faculty as outlined in this Handbook. The SRC's goal is to examine allegations of student issues or violations, assess supporting documentation and evidence, and where relevant or necessary, provide remedial or disciplinary actions and recommendations to the Department Chair.

1. FACULTY MEMBERSHIP

The SRC is comprised of three (3) core faculty members appointed by the Department Chair for a one-year term, with the possibility of annual renewal. To address scheduling conflicts and conflicts of interest on the part of permanent appointees, a roster of six (6) core faculty are appointed and trained to serve as SRC faculty alternates. Faculty SRC members will be selected from both sites of the program. Note: *In extremely rare circumstances, when there is difficulty scheduling three (3) faculty SRC members, which can delay a student's hearing, a quorum of two (2) faculty will be sufficient for the hearing to continue ensuring at least two (2) core faculty are present for each SRC hearing.* SRC



faculty are well versed with coursework, clinical training, and competence standards in the counseling profession.

2. STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

The SRC includes a roster of volunteer students trained to serve as SRC student members. Student SRC members are selected from Online and On Ground sites. This addresses scheduling conflicts and conflicts of interest on the part of student appointees. At least two (2) student SRC members will be present for each SRC hearing.

Note: *In extremely rare circumstances, when there is difficulty scheduling student SRC members, which can delay a student's hearing, a quorum of one (1) student member will be sufficient for the hearing to continue.* Student members of the SRC must be in good standing in the program, show a strong academic record and high standards of personal and professional behavior. The Associate Program Director (On ground); the Assistant/Associate Program Directors (online), the Student Experience Advocate (On ground), and Director of Student Support (Online) will be *ex officio* members of the SRC with non-voting privileges. All student and faculty SRC committee members must sign confidentiality agreements that comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations.

3. ACTIVATING THE STUDENT REVIEW COMMITTEE (SRC) PROCESS

Program leaders (excluding Department Chair) or Core faculty refer to the SRC if Level 1 and Level 2 of remediation fail (See Section 5.E and 5.F). In severe conduct violations or egregious professional confidence breaches as determined by Program Leadership, the process automatically leads to the referral of a student to the SRC for initiation of remediation at Level 3.

4. SETTING UP SRC HEARINGS

A SRC referred student will be given official written notice of the policy they are accused of violating and an explanation of the conduct alleged to have broken the policy (SRC Referral). Notification of details of the process along with the related hearing time and place will be delivered by email to the student's official Northwestern University email account. Referred students should be present at their SRC Hearing. Should a student be absent from the requested hearing, the meeting will proceed in their absence.

5. SRC HEARING LOGISTICS

Student Review Committee (SRC) hearings are held in a private virtual meeting room and include the SRC committee members, the referred student, and approved support person. Every effort will be made to schedule the SRC hearing in a timely fashion to minimize any delay to degree progression.

6. PROCEDURES DURING SRC HEARINGS

During the SRC hearing, the student will hear the allegations brought against them and can provide their narrative and explanations to the allegations. The referred student has the opportunity during the hearing, as well as before the hearing, to explain and offer supporting documentation and evidence in support of their position. These hearings are closed, attended only by SRC committee members, the



referring faculty member, the referred student, and approved support person. The SRC determines what support person (people), if any, may appear.

7. SCOPE OF SRC DECISION MAKING

The SRC's scope of oversight includes: 1) deciding whether concerns require SRC involvement; 2) working with the to determine appropriate action; 3) development of remedial or disciplinary recommendations; 4) providing recommendations to the Department Chair around sanctions or disciplinary action for student concerns. The SRC convenes as needed to adjudicate student concerns. Early in the referral process, SRC members declare any conflicts of interest. Decisions of the SRC will be made by majority vote, and these decisions will be communicated in writing to the Department Chair. The Department chair will summarize the decisions of the SRC in a letter sent to the students Northwestern University email.

8. STUDENT USE OF A SUPPORT PERSON DURING SRC HEARINGS

A student may request the presence of a support person who is a member of their program, The Family Institute, or Northwestern University community, such as a trusted mentor. The support person cannot be a core faculty member, current counseling student, family member, mental health practitioner, attorney, or someone unaffiliated with the program. The support person will be oriented to the hearing by the SRC chair and must abide by its professional code of conduct. This person may be present to offer visual/physical support for the student during the hearing but does not have a speaking role and cannot address the SRC or otherwise participate in or interfere with the hearing process. Disciplinary hearings are not recorded.

9. SRC ACTIONS FOLLOWING HEARING

At the conclusion of the SRC Hearing and post-hearing deliberations, the SRC Chair communicates in writing the SRC findings and recommendations to the Program Chair. Described in the findings is the SRC's determination as to whether the student is held accountable for the referral violation(s) and recommend remedial actions that may be assigned to help the student improve. Recommendations to the Department Chair may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. No action.
- b. Specific reflective or learning activities designed to increase students' awareness and insight.
- c. Accountability to facilitate behavior or dispositional change.
- d. Termination of participation in selected program committees or activities.
- e. Recommendation for a leave of absence.
- f. Recommendation to The Graduate School .
- g. Probation.
- h. Suspension.
- i. Exclusion (dismissal).
- j. Any combination of the above or other appropriate action.



10. COMMUNICATING SRC DECISIONS TO STUDENTS

In alignment with the SRC's recommendations, the Department Chair will finalize and communicate written SRC decisions to the student. If found accountable for alleged violations, a plan for remediation or discipline will include the following elements below.

Note. *The Department Chair will weigh and if needed, will collaborate with the SRC chair to determine adjustments where there are issues of disciplinary parity with others on remediation plans, to foster alignment with Northwestern and program policies and procedures in the program handbook and, if needed, on the advisement of the university's office of General Counsel. The Department Chair will notify the student of the remediation decision and plan using the official university approved email.*

The Department Chair's communication on remedial or disciplinary actions will include:

- a. A description of specific violations or concerns
- b. A history of concerns where so indicated
- c. SRC's finding regarding accountability
- d. Goals and objectives of corrective actions to be achieved
- e. Requirements and recommendations for improvement
- f. Program personnel who monitor and to whom requirements are submitted
- g. Resources available to make improvements
- h. Deadlines for the achievement of requirements
- i. Consequences for failing to fulfill requirements of the Remediation Plan within the stipulated timeline
- j. Information on an appeal process

11. STUDENT FAILURE TO MAKE SATISFACTORY PROGRESS ON REMEDIATION/DISCIPLINARY REQUIREMENTS

If a student fails to make satisfactory progress toward remediation (based on the written plan), the Department Chair will reconvene the SRC without the student reviewing the student's status to consider additional remedial steps. Potential SRC outcomes for persistent conduct issues may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Ending the Student Remediation Plan without further action
- b. Recommending a leave of absence
- c. A period of probation with close monitoring
- d. Termination of participation in program committees or activities (e.g., clinical training experiences)
- e. Recommendation of the student's expulsion from the program
- f. Any combination of the above or other appropriate action

The SRC will make reports at core faculty meetings concerning only those students with whom they have established Student Remediation Plans. All documents related to referral to the SRC and reports of the SRC will become part of the program's educational record. The faculty and those students with established plans are expected to hold confidential all SRC activities and reports.



I. STUDENT REVIEW COMMITTEE ACTION RELATED TO PERSISTENT DISPOSITIONAL DEFICIENCIES

1. DISPOSITIONAL REMEDIATION

Any student receiving an overall KPD rated as “1” (dispositional concern) on one professional disposition will be referred to their advisor for follow-up directly. The advisor will support and coach the student to self-reflect and make improvements. Students who receive a mean overall rating of 1.5 or less OR have more than one KPD evaluated as “1” (dispositional concern) will be referred to the Director of Student Support for professional coaching. This procedure corresponds to Step 2 in the Remediation and Discipline (see Section 5.D-J). In consultation with the Assistant/Associate Program Directors or Department Chair, consecutive overall ratings of 1 (dispositional concern) over multiple timepoints of assessment will lead to a Referral to Student Remediation Committee (SRC) at Level 3. The SRC will gather information from program faculty, staff, or site supervisors to determine whether a significant problem exists. After meeting with the student to discuss their recommendations and consulting with the Department Chair, the SRC will provide written notification to the student about expectations for change via a formal Student Remediation Plan. Student Remediation Plans will identify performance objectives and strategies to solve problems and identify expected outcomes. Students whose dispositional concerns occur during clinical training placements will be assigned to work under the direct supervision of a core faculty member as part of the remediation plan. Remedial actions by the SRC may include but are not limited to:

Repetition of a course or other program requirement.

- i. Reduced practicum or course load.
- ii. Consultation with AccessibleNU and the program’s ADA advisor for documentation of disability related information.
- iii. Additional practice experience.
- iv. Increased supervision provided by a core program faculty member.
- v. Frequent and regularly scheduled meetings with specific program faculty members or other relevant program personnel, adherence to stated deadlines.

Restriction of participation in professional/program activities and other modifications or accommodations as appropriate. The remediation plan will contain specific details. Following the end of the remediation plan timeline, program leadership reviews the student’s progress and consults with program faculty members, practicum supervisors, and other program personnel as appropriate. The remediation plan may be ended satisfactorily (if all concerns have been adequately resolved), renewed or extended for a specific time, or modified as appropriate.

J. STUDENT REVIEW COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

1. CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

Student actions deemed inconsistent with departmental standards or professional competence standards that may be referred to the SRC include — but are not limited to:



- a. Inappropriate professional behavior or judgment, including but not limited to misrepresenting themselves, lying or falsifying records
- b. Violations of the ACA or AMHCA Codes of Ethics
- c. Conduct in the learning community or at field sites that provoke lack of respect or confidence from faculty, supervisors and peers, clients, and support staff
- d. Violation of the existing University or Departmental policies as defined in the NU Student Handbook or Program Student Handbook
- e. Persistent violations of established safety guidelines in the learning community
- f. Repeated unexcused absences or late arrival to live classes
- g. Egregious patterns of poor dispositions as evidenced by persistent low scores on the program KPD assessment

2. OVERSIGHT OF SERIOUS OFFENSES INVESTIGATED FIRST BY UNIVERSITY

Students subject to disciplinary proceedings by the University may also be referred to the program's SRC, including:

- i. Physical abuse of any person or any action that threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person in the digital learning community, at field sites or programs, or Northwestern university events.
- ii. Physical abuse of any person or any action that threatens or endangers the health or safety of any University or program employee or agent of Northwestern University or program, whether such abuse or action takes place on university premises, in public, or at field sites.
- iii. Theft of or damage to property on Northwestern University premises, field sites facilities, or at program events.
- iv. Obstruction or disruption of teaching, research, administration, hearing procedures, or other authorized activities in Northwestern University, the digital learning community, or affiliate field sites.
- v. Forgery, alteration, misuse of Northwestern University or program documents, records, or identification or knowingly furnishing false information to the university or program.
- vi. Impeding or misguiding a remediation process on a conduct violation.
- vii. Violation of rules and regulations set forth or otherwise enacted and published by Northwestern University or other delegated authority of the university.

NOTE: *Certain allegations, such as alleged sexual misconduct or academic integrity violations, will be referred directly to the relevant Northwestern University office or Department and will not be managed by the Counseling Department while the university's resolution process is pending.*

3. SRC OVERSIGHT OF CLASSROOM OR FIELD SITE OFFENSES

The violation of the [University's Code of Conduct/Student Handbook](#) that is grounds for referral to the SRC, include but is not limited to, the following:

- i. Aggression, harm, abuse, or theft from any person or property in the digital learning community, at the program-sponsored events, or on property owned by any affiliated field site or individual to which or whom the student may be assigned.
- ii. Giving, receiving, or utilizing unauthorized aid on examinations or assignments.
- iii. Plagiarism, misrepresenting the source of academic work, or falsifying attendance or clinical records.



- iv. Knowingly and intentionally falsifying or manufacturing scientific, educational, or clinical data and representing them as the result of scholarly research or client assessment.
- v. Entering or using affiliate institution facilities without authorization or disrupting teaching, research, administrative, or student functions in the digital community or at affiliate field sites.
- vi. Misusing institutional documents or instruments of identification to defraud.
- vii. Misrepresenting or identifying oneself as someone other than a counseling student and student clinician-in-training.
- viii. Misusing the computing and network resources of the university, program, its affiliated institutions. Being arrested and charged.
- ix. Participating in academic or clinical endeavors of the University, program, or its affiliated institutions while under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance.
- x. Placing a client in needless jeopardy.
- xi. Disclosing privileged information about a client or fellow student.
- xii. Having behavior, language, attire, or hygiene that provokes a lack of respect and confidence on behalf of clients, supervisors, or members of the training community at field sites.
- xiii. Refusing to provide care for a client in supervised experience.

K. STUDENT CONTINUATION OF STUDIES DURING SRC PROCESSES

While waiting for or during SRC deliberations, students may continue registration in credit-bearing non-training coursework and may continue to attend classes as a matter of due process. Specifically concerning practicum and internship courses, while the student remains registered in coursework, their placements at sites or placement searches may be paused (if the actions for which they are referred to the SRC can potentially cause disruptions in the supervisory/site experiences or cause potential harm to clients, or the environment of client care). In instances where a student's clinical training experience is paused, the SRC process will be expedited to every extent possible to alleviate potential delays in students' acquisition of clinical training hours. Other pauses may occur in program experiences, where the student actions threaten the safety of self or others in the learning community. The Department Chair must approve a pause in program participation, will be communicated in writing to students, and occur for a stipulated period.

L. STUDENT APPEALS COMMITTEE

1. RIGHT OF APPEAL OF SRC RECOMMENDATIONS

A student subject to the SRC/Program remediation requirements has the right to a hearing with a Student Appeals Committee, described below. A student will have the right to appeal to the Department Chair any decision of the SRC on the following bases: a) errors of procedure that could have affected the outcome of the SRC's decision; or b) an SRC decision or sanction that is manifestly unreasonable and unsupported by weight of evidence. The protocol for the appeal of an SRC's decision rendered for violation of behavioral or Departmental standards is the same as that for inadequate academic performance.



2. REQUESTING AN APPEAL

A request for appeal must be made to the Department Chair, within ten (10) days of the date of the SRC's decision and must indicate the following: 1) A clear intent to appeal the SRC remediation recommendations disseminated by the Department Chair; 2) basis for the appeal setting forth all the reasons for requesting an appeal; 3) specific action or actions requested on the part of the program as part of the appeal of remedial steps. The appeal document must be emailed to the Department Chair in writing by midnight on the 10th day after receiving the letter of remediation following the SRC hearing. The Department Chair may disallow the appeal if these conditions are not met. Students will be allowed only one appeal of remedial or disciplinary action based on SRC recommendations to the Department Chair.

3. THE STUDENT APPEALS COMMITTEE

An ad hoc committee is established by the Department Chair specifically to serve as a student appeal hearing. The Student Appeals Committee consists of two core faculty members of the Counseling Department (who are not members of the SRC) one of whom will be appointed as Chair, plus a member of a program-endorsed student group. All members of the ad hoc Student Appeal Committee must be present in a private virtual meeting to conduct official business. Decisions are made by members of the appeal committee by a majority vote (two members). Following the Student Appeals Committee's analysis, it may recommend to the Department Chair: (1) uphold the SRC's recommendations (deny the appeal), (2) modification of the Student Remediation Plan, or (3) other appropriate action.

The Department Chair will notify the students of the Student Appeal's Committee's decision in writing via email/or by registered mail. The Department Chair will also notify The Graduate School in writing. The Program's decision will be final. The student may have the right to further appeals to The Graduate School or University.

SECTION 6: PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE POLICIES

A. ENDORSEMENT OF CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

With online and on-campus sites, the Counseling Program is a unified CACREP-accredited program, offering an MA degree in Counseling with a specialization in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. As a result, students are prepared to utilize the skills and abilities of a Clinical Mental Health Counselor. When non-clinical work settings match students' interests and abilities, they will be encouraged to pursue training in such environments. Students who wish to focus on alternative counseling-oriented work or gain specialties other than in the clinical mental health setting will be encouraged to obtain additional education and training outside of the program's CMHC orientation.

B. STUDENT LIABILITY INSURANCE POLICY

Counseling students registering for all fieldwork courses, regardless of placement status, such as practicum or internship, must acquire student liability insurance. This insurance is available at student rates through professional organizations such as the American Counseling Association (ACA), where applications are



available online [ACA Liability Insurance](#), and the American Mental Health Counselors Association ([AMHCA](#)). Students must submit a copy of their current insurance certificate during Week 1 of every quarter when enrolled in Practicum or Internship.

C. COUNSELING PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE POLICY

Students enrolled in the Counseling degree Program may not engage in the independent professional practice of counseling or psychotherapy.

D. DUAL RELATIONSHIP POLICY

Current students are prohibited from having any non-clinical transactions with their current or recent clients seen through their site as long as the student is enrolled in the program. Examples of prohibited student activities include but are not limited to: Moving a current or recent client to the student's own "coaching" practice. Any other monetary or non-financial transactions with a client. Using their NU student status as part of advertising their business or non-clinical services. Representing themselves as "therapists" or call themselves "Coaches" without credentials to back up that claim.

E. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY POLICIES

In the digital learning community, technology is governed by Northwestern University's Information Technology (NUIT) policies. NUIT policies can be found at the NUIT Policies page. The rights and responsibilities for the use of network and computing resources at Northwestern University are summarized at NUIT Guidelines.

F. GUIDELINES — ELECTRONIC MEDIA, SOCIAL MEDIA, EMAIL

1. ELECTRONIC AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN A VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Electronic and social media are essential parts of the learning environment, including but not limited to, laptop computers, tablets, phones, recording devices, emailing, etc. The program promotes healthy and open discourse around electronic and social media free of dishonorable content such as racial, ethnic, sexual, religious, and physical disability slurs. The program upholds the [ACA Code of Ethics](#) as it pertains to electronic and social media; specifically, codes H.4 through H.6.d. Similarly, the program reserves the right to edit or amend any misleading or inaccurate content in student content/posts (e.g., in learning management systems or via emails).

Additionally, the program reserves the right to delete student content or posts violating the student code of conduct. Students are encouraged to maintain a professional presence on social media; take steps to protect their identity and security; assume that everything online is permanent. Students should not engage in contact with clients on social media channels to ensure HIPAA compliance. *Unauthorized photography, recording, and reposting of any program activity (classes or meetings) on social media sites are strictly forbidden as it violates FERPA regulations.* Should students violate these policies related to HIPAA violations and FERPA, they will be subject to the program's remediation and discipline process (see Section 5: C-J).



2. HIPAA-RELATED USE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Students are likely to collect, use, manage, and be exposed to protected health information (PHI). At no time should PHI be downloaded to a personal computer, tablet, smartphone, or other mobile devices, (except approved by the program). Neither should PHI be stored on portable mass storage devices (Hard disks, USB Flash Drives, etc.). Doing so violates TFI policies and HIPAA and is grounds for remedial action based on Step 3 (see Remediation and Discipline). Recordings of clients should be made through the HIPAA Compliant Fieldx and will be deleted automatically after Methods courses are completed. If the primary NU email address ends with the following domain: @u.northwestern.edu, the use of this account is mandated for communication with faculty, administration, and the professional staff of the Family Institute at Northwestern University. All official information and announcements will be delivered to this account. Messages sent to students' primary Northwestern email addresses will be delivered to their Microsoft Exchange mailbox. A variety of resources are available to assist in setting up computers and mobile devices. Please see the additional information here [NUIT Infrastructure](#). Students must continue to use Northwestern University's account as their primary academic email location. The @u.northwestern.edu email is not to be forwarded to any email account or third-party email system.

G. ONLINE LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM — SAFETY AND SECURITY

1. SAFETY AND SECURITY WITHIN THE LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

In alignment with the university's guidelines for general information technology use and guidelines for electronic media, social media, and email, the program also employs a robust policy to ensure a safe and secure online learning environment. This policy is referenced in tandem with other policies, such as the Academic Integrity Policy and the Student Code of Conduct. If a safety or security issue arises in the online learning systems, everyone shares equal responsibilities of identifying hazards and threats, following safety rules, and adhering to daily operating practices. Students should report unsafe conditions, school injury, or threat of violence directly to their instructor or program leadership immediately. Every effort will be made to remedy problems as soon as possible.

2. SAFETY AND SECURITY THREATS IN PERSON OR ONLINE

Students should assume that threats to security can occur in the learning communities, and they should be aware and alert to such occurrences. This might include concerning behavior from a student or faculty, suicidal or homicidal actions from a student or faculty, hostile or threatening students or faculty, national disasters, and acts of terrorism. All potential events can be expressed in an in-person or online environment and at immersion events.

3. SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING.

In alignment with National Homeland Security standards on how to report suspicious activity when unsure; the program supports the process of "see something, say something." Thus, if a student, staff, faculty, or others see behavior that is of safety concern, they should report suspicious activity to program faculty, to the university, or local law enforcement. Accurately describe what is observed, including:



- a. Who or what is seen.
- b. When it was seen.
- c. Where it occurred;
- d. Why it is suspicious.
- e. **If there is an emergency, call 911.**

4. LIVE SESSION EMERGENCIES

If, during a synchronous/live session, a student or instructor notices an immediate crisis of any sort (i.e., medical, physical safety, etc.) appropriate safety measures must be taken. The instructor will immediately pause class to check on the individual in distress. Should the instructor determine that the student's wellness/health/safety is at risk, the instructor must notify the Associate Program Director overseeing student experiences OR the Department Chair immediately so that a wellness check can be performed. Emergency contacts on record or local authorities (including emergency services) may be required to become involved. Every effort will be made to ensure the safety of all students and the instructor in the classroom.

H. CYBER OR IN-PERSON AGGRESSION: ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY

Students should be aware of Northwestern University's [Policy related to intimidation and aggression towards others](#). There is a zero-tolerance policy for acts of in-person or virtual bullying in the learning community. Students are expected to adhere to the student code of conduct both online and on the ground, e.g., in immersion experiences.

I. SAFETY AND SECURITY AT ON-CAMPUS EVENTS

Some on-campus immersions take place at the Family Institute, Northwestern, or other nearby locations. Although each site will have its safety guidelines, the following can also serve as a general framework to promote safety and security of self and others. Students should become fully aware of and follow. [Campus safety guidelines](#).

SECTION 7: CLINICAL PLACEMENT AND TRAINING

A. OVERVIEW OF CLINICAL TRAINING

The Clinical Training Program at Counseling@Northwestern provides students with essential hands-on experience in clinical mental health counseling. Students participate in supervised training that integrates theory with practice, fostering professional growth and competence. The program follows a structured approach aligned with CACREP accreditation standards. Students are required to complete Practicum and Internship, which offer immersive learning experiences through supervised clinical work at approved field sites.

The clinical training department is a deeply experienced team that oversees the depth, breadth, and quality of student clinical training experiences. Responsibilities include managing relationships and activities that create positive developmental trajectories towards becoming clinical mental health



counselors. During Practicum, students work in groups of no more than seven (7) students with a University Supervisor, who provides Reflective Practitioner Supervision (RPS). During Internship, students work in groups of no more than twelve (12) with a University Supervisor who provides Case Conference Supervision (CCS). University Supervisors work closely with Training Directors (CTDs; Core Faculty), who maintain close contact with students and various components of supervised professional practice.

B. CLINICAL TRAINING SUPPORT STRUCTURE ONLINE

- a. **Clinical Training Director(s)** -The Clinical Training Director (CTD) is a core faculty member who manages the clinical training experience for assigned students, sites, and supervisors. The CTD is responsible for the clinical training experience, from placement to internship completion. The CTD is supported by program leadership, in student discipline and grievance procedures. Oversees clinical experience and ensure compliance with program expectations and accreditation standards. Approves clinical sites and supervisors. Monitors student progress and addresses escalated concerns.
- b. **University Supervisors** - University supervisors work with students in Reflective Practitioner Supervision (RPS) groups during Practicum and Case Conference Supervision (CCS) groups during Internship. University supervisors meet with Clinical Training Directors and the Director of University Supervision regularly for support and supervision.
- c. **Clinical Training Coordinator (CNU Clinical Training)** - A clinical training coordinator supports the administration of clinical training and management of student documentation and grading.
- d. **Program Operations Team** - The Program Operations Team processes student requests for documentation for licensure as it pertains to clinical hours and course completion.
- e. **Student Success Advisor (SSA)** - Conducts placement onboarding and orientation in pre-practicum term. Monitors return from LOAs, moves, and other placement disruptions. Communicate regularly with CTDs and Placement Specialist to flag issues early.
- f. **Clinical Placement Team/Placement Specialist** - The placement team helps students to find training sites within their local communities throughout the country. Identifies clinical training sites based on program standards. Notifies students about interviews and site approvals.
- g. **Program Tracking System** - Clinical training activity is documented in a tracking system called FIELDX. Students, field supervisors, university supervisors, and the clinical training team review progress to ensure successful attainment of clinical training experiences. Student support offers help managing FIELDX problems and may refer students to Program Tracking System support when issues are irresolvable.
- h. **Other Faculty** - The Clinical Training Directors work alongside the faculty of the three courses in counseling methods to ensure skill requirements are met for students to proceed into Internship. An incomplete grade in any Methods course precludes a student from beginning an internship.

C. PLACEMENT POLICIES

1. PLACEMENT PROCEDURES AND EXPECTATIONS

The program's clinical training model is immersive in that it occurs alongside academic coursework throughout the period of study. Students are carefully guided to training experiences in all program curricula and complete a Practicum and Internship. Following are policies, procedure, and expectations



regarding placement services that students are expected to follow. Failure to do so may result in various consequences including, but not limited to:

- a. Delayed placement
- b. Deceleration of program which may result in an additional quarter(s) of coursework.
- c. Coaching (see Section 5: C-J)
- d. Immediate suspension from clinical site/clinical work (see Section 5: C-J)
- e. Expulsion (see Section 5: C-J).
- f. Other consequences as deemed appropriate by the Assistant Program Director in consultation with the Department Chair.

2. STUDENT PLACEMENT FORMS

Students receive a Placement Orientation from Student Success the quarter before their placement starts. Students will receive an email to their authorized university email with a unique link to their electronic Student Placement Forms. Students must complete these forms within three business days of receiving the email. The Placement team begins the process to secure a training site for students once these documents are submitted and accepted. Students may also search for placement sites in their local communities, maintaining close contact with the Placement Team (see #7). The Placement team, in conjunction with Student Success/Student Success Advisors, the accessible liaison, and the Assistant Program Director, will identify and convey any accommodation needs for clinical training. This accommodation may be disability-related or extenuating circumstance related, (i.e., safety).

3. COMMUNICATION EXPECTATIONS

Students will receive placement updates every 30 days from their SSA starting the quarter before pre-practicum 1. Once the student is overdue, starting practicum 1, the student will receive biweekly updates from their placement specialist. Throughout the placement process, students should respond to the placement team promptly to ensure timely acceptance at a training site. All placement communication will be sent to students' Northwestern emails. Students must respond within forty-eight (48) hours, allowing at least two (2) business days for the placement team to reply. Students should be professional and patient while the placement team explores appropriate placement options. Best practice is to include both their Student Success Advisor (SSA) and Clinical Training Director (CTD) (if assigned) on placement-related emails.

4. TRAVEL DISTANCE

The placement team aims to situate students as close to their preferred placement address as possible but may recommend placements up to seventy-five (75) miles away to ensure that training is appropriate and of high quality. If a telemental health placement is located, the physical office associated with the placement site will be within the state borders where the student resides. See the telemental health policy for further details.

5. PLACEMENT PROCEDURES

The following are important guidelines should note:



- a. The placement team begins searching for sites for students the quarter before they are set to start practicum. Most training settings require students to interview before placements. Once a potential placement has been identified for a student, the student will be sent an interview notification. The student must contact the site within two business days of notification to set up the interview date and time. Students are recommended to at minimum one placement site at a time and should treat the placement interview like a job interview. Once a student has a placement site confirmed by the placement team, the student must contact the site within 48 hours of notification to approve the placement start date, schedule orientation meetings, and complete any additional site requirements.
- b. Every effort will be made to help students meet the program's clinical training requirements. Students should begin placement in the first week of practicum 1. Students may not start at their site prior to week 1 of practicum 1. This means that no hours can be logged toward practicum prior to the first day of practicum 1. Students cannot start at their sites or see clients during pre-practicum. No hours can be logged for internship until the first day of internship.
- c. Once in placement, Practicum or Internship, students and sites are expected to maintain the policies and procedures as outlined. However, should challenges arise, students should follow the conflict resolution procedure outlined in Section 5.A of this handbook. Should this conflict resolution procedure not produce meaningful change, and the site does not meet expectations, students should consult with their Clinical Training Director for next steps. If the Clinical Training Director deems it necessary, a replacement site placement may be pursued to fulfill requirements. Only in rare instances will a replacement site be suggested to the placement team by a Clinical Training Director and site termination will be initiated with the original site. Clinical training leadership must approve replacement sites and can only be pursued at the discretion of the Clinical Training Director. **Note: Students may wait for up to 14 weeks for a replacement site.**
- d. Students who need an alternative site for an internship (because they are not staying at the same site for both practicum and internship) should anticipate some revisions to the timeline of training completion. When conflicts, challenges, or grievances cannot be resolved between the clinical training director, student, and placement specialist, the conflict, challenge, or grievance should be escalated to the Assistant Program Director (who oversees clinical training). Students are permitted to change sites for internship if they are in the Child and Adolescent Specialization and need child and/or adolescent experiences to fulfill the specialization.

6. DECLINING A PLACEMENT SITE

Once a student is notified to attend an interview at a vetted and approved site, attendance at the interview is required. Following the interview, if a placement offer is extended, the student has seven (7) calendar days to accept the placement or submit a Placement Decline Request Form to their Clinical Training Director (CTD). Failure to schedule or attend a scheduled interview will be recorded as an unjustified declination without CTD review.

Upon submission of a Placement Decline Request Form, the student will meet with their CTD to determine whether cause is justified.



Examples of justified causes:

1. A documented violation of a named Northwestern University or program policy, including issues of equity, harassment, or physical safety, with the specific policy cited;
2. A documented, irresolvable scheduling conflict with another required program obligation;
3. A clinical scope or population mismatch outside the student's approved training level as determined by the CTD.

The following do not constitute justified cause:

1. Personal scheduling preferences, including family obligations or employment;
2. Preference for a self-referred site;
3. General discomfort with population or setting without a clinical training rationale approved by the CTD.

Two determinations of unjustified cause will result in remediation as defined in the Remediation and Discipline section and could result in a placement delay. Placement delay means the student may be placed later in the academic cycle, resulting in difficulty accumulating required hours and potential extension of the practicum quarter, which may delay graduation.

7. STUDENT CONTRIBUTION TO PLACEMENT PROCESS

The placement procedures described above are the standard placement processes for all students. Sites are evaluated on how they meet the requirements of the program, not niche requests. If a student would like to contribute to the placement process and submit a site referral, they should request approval from a CTD or the Assistant Program Director if CTD is unassigned and learn about alternate procedures. Students should not contact, advertise for, or interview with sites before being informed of these alternate procedures. All potential sites must be vetted by the program prior to accepting a position. Failure to comply with stated placement process could result in a delay in placement or result in student remediation (see Remediation and Discipline).

D. PLACEMENT PROFESSIONALISM EXPECTATIONS

1. SCHEDULING

As clinical mental health counselors-in-training, students must adjust their schedules to that of sites, supervisors, and clients to complete the required training hours. Additionally, students must be available during regular business hours (Monday-Friday, 8 am-8 pm local time). When there is a scheduling conflict between site requirements and classes or supervision groups, the student must prioritize attending university classes/supervision groups.

2. PLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Students must meet and maintain the academic, ethical, and professional competencies and standards related to clinical training. Students should comport themselves professionally at their clinical training site. This expectation includes regular and on-time attendance, adherence to clinical site expectations, upholding Northwestern University's Code of Conduct, the ACA and AMHCA Codes of Ethics, and the program's student handbook policies.



3. RELOCATION POLICY

If a student plans to relocate, they should prioritize continuity of care for clients and develop a careful relocation plan. Relocation is encouraged to be timed to occur between Practicum and Internship to prevent disruptions to client care. A written notice must be given to the placement team at least 14 weeks prior to relocation.

4. INTEREST AREA POLICY

The primary goal of the placement team is to assist students in their efforts to secure placements that help the student to meet graduation requirements; this includes ensuring child and adolescent counseling experience for those students in the child and adolescent emphasis. Placement sites are not guaranteed to align with specific areas of student interest.

5. NO INTERNATIONAL PLACEMENT

Currently, the program does not accept international students and those in the U.S. who are in a visa status that is not approved for graduate studies. U.S. citizens and residents also cannot complete fieldwork placements outside of the continental United States and Hawaii. This policy includes completing fieldwork on international U.S. military bases, or in U.S. territories outside the continental U.S. or Hawaii. Students who may be U.S. citizens living abroad with an upcoming placement term will need to relocate to the continental United States or Hawaii to be assigned a placement.

Regardless of placement site location, students must be physically present within the continental United States or Hawaii during all clinical training activities, including telemental health service delivery. Students may not conduct clinical hours, sessions, supervision, or any direct client contact from an international location. A U.S.-based placement site does not authorize clinical training activity performed from outside the United States. Students found to be in violation of this policy will have affected hours invalidated and may be subject to remediation.

6. VARYING STATE LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS

The program is CACREP-accredited and adheres to the current CACREP standards for clinical training. Although most states have adopted CACREP requirements for their licensure eligibility requirements, some states have unique requirements not governed by CACREP (such as different hour requirements for practicum and internship). Students must keep their state licensure eligibility requirements in mind when completing curriculum planning to ensure they are mapping to their state licensure requirements.

7. FAILURE TO SECURE FIELD PLACEMENT

Although every attempt is made to assist students in their efforts to secure an appropriate clinical setting in a time that is conducive to completing the program on the student's desired schedule, timely placement cannot be guaranteed. In such cases, students may be required to decelerate their program until they can be placed in an appropriate and approved clinical setting.



8. DENIED PLACEMENT AFTER INTERVIEW

Students denied placement after an interview should proceed through the following steps:

- a. The student's Clinical Training Director will be alerted to the denied placement after the interview.
- b. The Clinical Training Director or placement specialist will obtain clarification regarding the denial of placement from the site interviewer/supervisor.
- c. The Clinical Training Director will debrief with the student the site's feedback and assess areas for potential growth (e.g., interview skills, disposition, experience, professionalism, other limitations).
- d. If coaching is necessary, based on Clinical Training Director assessment or student request, the Clinical Training Director will work with the student to support growth in areas to succeed in interviewing.
- e. A student will proceed with a second placement interview once another site indicates interest.
- f. If a student is denied placements after three interviews, the student's Clinical Training Director will decide if the student is placed in the Remediation and Discipline Process (see Section 5.D-J).
- g. Once Remediation and Discipline occurs and is successfully completed, the process above will begin anew. Prior denied placements after successful remediation will not be held against the student.

9. ADDING A SECONDARY CLINICAL TRAINING SITE

Students seeking to add a secondary clinical training site during Practicum or Internship must submit a written request to their Clinical Training Director and receive written approval prior to beginning any hours at the additional site. To be considered, students must demonstrate good standing, defined as: a minimum 3.0 GPA; no active coaching, remediation, or SRC plan; a satisfactory or above rating on their most recent site supervisor evaluation; documented hours on pace to meet requirements at the current site; current ELC documentation; and no open disposition concerns. Approval is at the discretion of the Clinical Training Director in consultation with program leadership.

E. CLINICAL TRAINING POLICIES

1. PRE-PRACTICUM AND PRACTICUM -1, AND -2

All students must successfully complete the Pre-Practicum in CMHC (481-4) prior to starting Practicum and prior to starting at a placement site. Pre-Practicum is a primarily asynchronous course designed to equip students for clinical training.

Clinical training includes 2 quarters of Practicum, and 3 quarters of Internship. During the Practicum season, students concurrently take Counseling Methods Courses. As they learn, practice, and demonstrate skills in the classroom, they also observe skilled clinicians at the placement site. Gradually, students should be given the opportunity to take on a client of their own, with close supervision. The Practicum courses, COUN 481-5 and 481-6, Supervised Practicum in CMHC 1 and 2 occur within the overall developmental training model. As such, Practicum accommodates the student's initial level of professional development to promote counselor identity, self-awareness, multicultural awareness, and the development of basic clinical skills. Practicum serves primarily to introduce students to clinical work, professional and clinical roles, the counseling process and



professional practice, supervision, and supervisory relationship. Practicum students are placed at program approved sites.

Requirements

- **Total Hours:** Minimum 200 hours, including a minimum of 50 direct client service hours, typically spread across 3-4 client sessions per week. Trainees must also accrue indirect hours, including supervision, documentation, and staff meetings.
- **Weekly Commitment:** 9-12 hours per week at the placement site. Note: Students are not permitted to pursue clinical training activities at a practicum site for more than 16 hours per week. This expectation will be upheld with students' sites and personnel.
- Practicum students are required to review their clinical skill development with their site supervisor via **live supervision** (supervisor sitting in on a clinical session) or **review of work** by using FIELDX Meet (Video) during regular supervision.

Supervision:

- University Group Supervision: Reflective Practitioner Supervision (RPS) weekly.
- Individual/triadic Site Supervision (minimum 1 hour per week).

Demographics

- Practicum students may only work with individual adults experiencing mild mental health concerns. Clients requiring intensive, specialized, or court-involved services are not appropriate.

Restrictions and Special Considerations

- Group Counseling: Students cannot lead or co-lead groups until completing the Group Dynamics Immersion.
- Client Population: Practicum students cannot work with children or adolescents; those in the Child and Adolescent Specialization will gain relevant experience during their internship.
- If there is uncertainty regarding client appropriateness, site supervisors should consult the Clinical Training Director before assigning a client to a student.
- Legal and Ethical Considerations: Students cannot appear in court, testify as an expert witness, or serve as the counselor of record.

2. INTERNSHIP -1, -2, AND -3

The internship courses, COUN 482-6, 482-7, 482-8, Supervised Internship in Counseling 1, 2, and 3, equip students with basic and advanced client management tasks and skills. The courses also allow students to participate fully in additional role-related clinical service and training activities as permitted or required by the site, and to gain experience working with a wide variety of client demographics and presenting issues. The selection of a specific internship site is coordinated between the student and the placement specialist with consideration of the desired graduation date and the facility's capacity to address the unique training needs and interests of the respective student.



Requirements

- **Total Hours:** Minimum 600 total hours, including 240 direct client contact hours, typically spread across 8-10 client sessions per week. Trainees must also accrue indirect hours, including supervision, documentation, and staff meetings.
- **Weekly Commitment:** Internship/CCS students must be at their sites for a minimum of 16 hours/week and no more than 32 hours/week. Students should calculate best number of hours per week based on meeting minimal Internship requirements by the last day of Internship 3 (e.g., 240 direct service hours/30 weeks of Internship).
- Hours for the internship can only be counted toward the required direct and indirect hour totals when enrolled in an internship course. During the break between practicum and internship, hours count toward practicum, not internship. Practicum requirements must be met by the last day of Practicum -3 for the student to proceed to internship the next term. Internship hours will begin to accrue on the actual start date of the internship quarter, on the first day when Internship -1 begins.
- Internship students are required to review their clinical skill development with their site supervisor via **live supervision** (supervisor sitting in on a clinical session) or **review of work** by using FIELDX Meet (Video) during regular supervision.

Supervision:

- University Supervision: Reflective Practitioner Supervision (CCS) weekly.
- Individual/triadic Site Supervision (minimum 1 hour per week).
- Internship students are required to engage in live supervision or review of HIPPA compliant recordings with site supervisors for evaluative purposes.

Demographics:

- Interns may see groups, families, children, and adolescents under appropriate supervision.
- Internship students still cannot appear in court or testify as expert witnesses or as the counselor of record given their student status.

Hour Requirements Table

	Practicum (2 quarters = 20 weeks)	Internship (3 quarters = 30 weeks)
Minimum TOTAL hours required – includes DIRECT, SUPERVISION, AND INDIRECT hours	200	600
Minimum DIRECT hours required	50*	240



Minimum Site Supervision – Individual and/or triadic supervision required every week CIT is seeing clients. Group site supervision, while beneficial, does not replace this requirement. Site Supervisors must report on either review of recording or live supervision every quarter.	1 hour every week beginning with the first week of orientation/onboarding	
Minimum University Group Supervision	RPS: 32 (16/qtr) (one meeting per term is individual and not group)	CCS: 54 (18/quarter)
Indirect Hours	There is no minimum requirement for Indirect hours. Students should account for everything they do related to clinical work at the site. Training, preparation, documentation, supervision, consultation with staff etc. Hours earned related to schoolwork (homework, assignments) or personal life (personal therapy) does not count as indirect hours. All hours must be approved by the site supervisor if placed. (Indirect hours will not be approved by the program if placed).	
Clinical Training Considerations		
Authorized Client Types	Adult individuals with mild-moderate severity of symptoms only Authorized to work with groups after GDI (taken in prac 3 or internship 1. Only authorized to work with kids, couples, families towards the end of practicum by CTD exception	Any and all client demographics and presenting issues
Hours at Site	Minimum: 9 hours Average: 12 hours Maximum: 16 hours	Minimum: 16 hours Average: 20 hours Maximum: 32 hours



Scheduled Direct Service/Caseload		
Recommended average of schedule direct service hours based on completing requirements in three (3) terms and accounting for client absences. Determination of case load is always negotiated with requirements and remaining length of time in Practicum or Internship.	3-4 hours/week	8-10 hours/week

3. GROUP COUNSELING

After the completion of Group Dynamics Immersion (GDI), students are strongly encouraged to lead or co-lead groups (either psychoeducational or process groups) at either their practicum or internship site. A group is defined as three (3) or more people who are not related.

4. PRACTICUM AND INTERNSHIP OVERALL REQUIREMENTS

The following is part of the clinical training experience:

- a. Students are expected to join the American Counseling Association (ACA) or the American Mental Health Counseling Association (AMHCA) as a student member, where they will secure Professional Liability Insurance. Failure to do so will result in suspension from the clinical training site until insurance is valid. Proof of current liability insurance must be submitted each quarter. Students must ensure that their coverage timeline extends to the end of their training experience. Submission of updated coverage may be requested at any time to prove coverage through graduation.
- b. A Clinical Training Agreement that documents the nature and parameters of the experience must be completed with the student's site supervisor within two weeks beginning the practicum or internship experience. Students are advised to discuss a schedule (time off can only be taken between terms and if the site supervisor and clinical training director approves the time away from the site; time off is not guaranteed) over the course of Practicum –1 and –2 or Internship - 1,-2, and -3. The Clinical Training Agreement is issued and submitted through Program Tracking System.
- c. Students are required to submit completed hours that document their direct service, indirect service, and supervision hours in the Program tracking System on a regular basis, all hours must be approved by site and university supervisors by the end of Practicum for the student to move to Internship, and by the end of Internship, to be approved for graduation. The clinical training team monitors submission for hours every term. Students are expected to enter and have their hours approved weekly. Students must take great care to confirm they are entering hours under the correct quarter (Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall), and the correct course (Practicum –1, -2 or



Internship -1, -2, or -3). Failure to regularly enter and submit hours will result in grade deduction, and the student may incur disciplinary action or sanctions. Timely submission of hours affords appropriate programmatic monitoring of the experience. Approval of site hours to the noted hour minimum is required for progression to internship and graduation, respectively.

- d. Practicum and Internship students are required to attend individual or triadic site supervision for at least one hour/week, where they will experience personal clinical supervision to discuss cases, develop skills, understand different professional expectations in their region, and develop a greater professional clinical counselor identity.
- e. Practicum and Internship students are required to meet with a university supervision group for two hours/week. Practicum students attend Reflective Practitioner Supervision to develop areas of: Professionalism, self-awareness, and group engagement in conjunction with emerging counseling skills (required participation verified throughout the quarter). An RPS Supervisor will facilitate understanding client transference and counselor countertransference, identifying biases that affect clinical objectivity and removing personal barriers to staying fully present with the client. Internship students are required to meet weekly in Case Conference Supervision to develop areas of professionalism, self-awareness, group engagement, and clinical skill development. CCS supervisors will provide discussion for intensive, individualized practice of clinical skills and professional development (required participation verified at the end of the quarter). Group supervision is required every week for two (2) hours per week. Students who have extenuating circumstances and miss group supervision should follow the absence policy outlined in the practicum and internship syllabi. Students are permitted only one missed supervision group per quarter (regardless of the reason, which could include supervisor cancellation or national holiday), and make-up opportunities are available.

Note. *Students who meet the hour requirement prior to the end of practicum 2 or internship 3 must continue to attend the placement site, see clients, receive individual/triadic site supervision, and participate in group university supervision through the end of the term. Completing hours is not a signal to end a placement early.*

- f. University Supervision Groups (RPS and CCS) remain the same throughout Practicum and again in Internship. Students are not permitted to change RPS groups and are not permitted to change CCS groups. The opportunity to change group time is at the time of registration for Practicum-1 and Internship-1.
- g. If a student has not completed the required hours by the last day of practicum 2, they will be required to extend their practicum and attend a practicum extension (RPX) university supervision group for an additional quarter. RPX is permitted for up to two terms when a student has a placement in progress or a secured placement to complete Practicum hours requirements. If a student has not completed Practicum requirements after one term in RPX, the student will be referred to the Assistant Program Director and Director of Student Support for a Remediation plan to ensure timely completion and the following clinical training policies. In extenuating or out of placement circumstances, a student can request and be granted a third term of RPX. Failure to complete Practicum requirements after three (3) terms in RPX will be considered unsatisfactory



academic progress, and the remediation and disciplinary policies related to academic progress will apply (See Remediation and Discipline).

- h. Similarly, Internship extension (CCX), is permitted for up to two (2) terms to complete required hours when a student has a placement in progress or a secured placement. If a student has not completed Internship requirements after one term in CCX, the student will be referred to the Associate Program Director and Director of Student Support for a Remediation plan to ensure timely completion and the following clinical training policies. In extenuating or out of placement circumstances a student can request and be granted a third term of CCX. Failure to complete Internship requirements after 3 terms of CCX will be considered unsatisfactory academic progress and the remediation and disciplinary policies related to academic progress will apply.

Note. *Students taking RPX or CCX must continue to attend the placement site, see clients, receive individual/triadic site supervision, and participate in group university supervision throughout the term, regardless of when required hours are met.*

- i. Practicum students must complete required hours with approval from site in Program Tracking System AND ensure all Methods 1 and 2 (or Play Therapy Methods) incompletes are resolved with a grade before moving to Internship. Any student with an unresolved Methods incomplete at the end of Practicum-3 or with unapproved hours will automatically be placed in an RPX group for the following term, unless there is a program approved custom curriculum plan.
- j. Students will be under the oversight of Clinical Training Directors (CTDs), who will meet with students at least once every quarter individually or during their RPS groups or CCS groups. Any needs that arise between sessions can also be addressed to the appropriate Clinical Training Director by contacting them for a meeting.
- k. Students must adhere to all clinical site or agency policies and procedures and represent themselves and the profession well by following all ethical guidelines of the American Counseling Association, the American Mental Health Counselors Association, their local and state guidelines, and program requirements, as indicated in the student handbook.

5. TRACKING CLINICAL TRAINING HOURS

Students in Practicum and Internship log all hours through Program Tracking System. Both students and supervisors are provided with technical assistance in setting up their Program Tracking System accounts. All hours are entered and submitted in Program Tracking System and are reviewed by the site supervisor. Hours documented in FieldX are a permanent record that can be accessed post-graduation as students seek licensure.

6. K AND Y GRADE RATIONALE AND GRADING IN CLINICAL TRAINING

A Y grade (INCOMPLETE) in practicum (COUN 481-5 or 481-6) or internship (COUN 482-6, 482-7, or 482-8) indicates that requirements of the clinical training experience are incomplete. For example, if a student is missing documentation such as a clinical training agreement, an evaluation from supervisor, hours log or approvals are missing or are not up to date, the student will receive a grade of Y. When



the student provides the required documentation, a quality letter grade is assigned based on the gradebook.

A K grade (IN PROGRESS) indicates that requirements of the clinical training experience are in progress. For example, when a student is unable to complete the requirements of practicum due to not obtaining a placement late or is still acquiring the required clinical hours through no fault of their own, a grade of K is given until the hours or documentation is completed.

7. ACADEMIC PROBATION AND CLINICAL TRAINING PROGRESS

The Graduate School excludes the summer quarter from the Academic Probation Requirement, but Counseling@Northwestern requires students to maintain satisfactory academic progress all quarters. Therefore, students whose GPA falls below 3.0 or have 4 or more incomplete grades (K and/or Y grades) are subject to the following:

- a. Student must meet with the Director of Student Support or otherwise designated faculty member immediately to create a plan to remediate the deficiency.
- b. All Clinical Training activities on site or placement searches will be paused and suspended until the academic deficiency is remediated.
- c. The student must meet with their student success advisor to create an updated curriculum plan. Once the deficit has been remediated the student may return to their Clinical Training Placement.

8. DECELERATION POLICY

Students who do not complete all the required hours for practicum by the end of the last day of practicum 3 will be required to extend their practicum experience into additional quarters until they meet the requirements. They will need to sign up for RPX university supervision and attend the entire quarter of groups regardless of when their hours are complete. Students cannot continue to internship until all required hours are entered and approved in the Program Tracking System or if they have an incomplete in a Methods 1, 2, or 3 class. The students' new curriculum plan will outline both academic and clinical training courses and must be adhered to in order to ensure timely graduation.

9. LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM CLINICAL TRAINING

A student's leave of absence from the training site and experience must follow a detailed process to ensure proper care of clients. Any student needing a leave of absence must be in close conversation with the Clinical Training Director. For ANY leave of absence, the student must:

- a. Meet with the Clinical Training Director to discuss the nature of the need for leave.
- b. Partner with Clinical Training Director and site supervisor to develop a plan for supporting client continuity of care.
- c. When a student is preparing to resume Practicum or Internship classes after a leave of absence, the following plans must be followed:
- d. The student must inform their Clinical Training Director of their intent to return from leave.
- e. The Clinical Training Director will decide the timeframe by which the student will return to a field site and assess the student's readiness to continue seeing clients.



- f. The placement team will be notified by the Clinical Training Director to verify re-entry to the clinical training experience.
- g. The student will work with the placement specialist to find another site to continue clinical training requirements. Note: Placement services will only resume once the student has returned from LOA. No placement searches will take place while the student is on LOA.

10. CONTINUING FIELD TRAINING BETWEEN TERMS

Students may continue to meet with and see clients in between quarters if weekly supervision is provided by a fully licensed counseling professional who is pre-approved by the Program. Students are required to receive at least 1 hour per week of individual or triadic supervision throughout their clinical training. Arrangements must be made between each student and the site and clinical training personnel to ensure the student maintains supervision and access to training support between terms. If supervision is not available during the break, students may not see clients under any circumstances and are expected to reschedule any client sessions for after the new quarter begins or until supervision resumes.

Students who continue to see clients after completing Practicum-3 will not begin accruing hours toward Internship until the quarter in which the student is officially enrolled in Internship 1. Internship-3 students must complete their total required internship hours before the end of the term to complete graduation requirements. Failure to do so will result in delayed graduation and enrollment in CCX for an additional quarter. See information below under "Completing Internship, conferring your degree."

11. COUNTING HOURS IN PRACTICUM VERSUS INTERNSHIP

Clinical training hours earned when enrolled in any Practicum class may only be credited to Practicum requirements. There is NO procedure to roll over Practicum (or Post-Practicum) clinical training service hours to meet Internship requirements. Completion of Practicum training involves more than requirements to fulfill minimum hours. Practicum training is designed to give students foundational clinical competency and develop strong counselor identity using an integrated model of coursework, site and university supervision, and other program elements (e.g., course prerequisites). Once students achieve the required number of hours for Practicum completion, additional hours are not wasted, in that they also serve to expand skills, develop counselor identity, and contribute towards the total required hours for Practicum. No hours can count toward Internship until the first academic day of the quarter during which the student is enrolled in Internship-1.

12. COMPLETING INTERNSHIP, CONFERRING DEGREE

Students are required to remain at their clinical site for the full duration of the internship terms, regardless of when the minimum required hours are met. Internship is not solely about completing hours, it is a developmental experience that includes sustained client care, supervision, and professional engagement throughout the entire process.

Ending internship early without prior written approval from the Clinical Training Director is not permitted and may result in course failure or remediation. Students are expected to uphold their site



commitment, as early departure can negatively impact client care and the program's relationship with the site

Students must complete all required clinical training hours and documentation requirements for both Practicum and Internship to confer their degree. Conferral may be delayed if the student is being investigated for concerns related to clinical, ethical, or dispositional issues at the clinical internship site. When a student does not finish their internship, several considerations will be necessary:

- a. Students still working to complete hours for Internship-3 after the quarter has ended must enroll in the following quarter in TGS-512, which currently costs \$100/quarter (See [here](#)) if they are not taking any other courses.
- b. Students must receive clinical supervision from their site supervisor until hours are accrued, and required documentation is completed, as indicated in the fieldwork contract signed in Internship-1.
- c. Students with an incomplete in Internship-3 but still accruing hours must continue taking the CCX group for supervision until the end of the quarter.
- d. Enrollment and participation in CCX are for the entire term.

13. STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN UNIVERSITY SUPERVISION GROUPS

Participation in university supervision groups is required throughout Practicum and Internship, regardless of placement status. Students are permitted one absence per term, regardless of the reason. Students should communicate with their University Supervisor (RPS/CCS) when missing a supervision group. The Practicum/Internship syllabi provide information clarifying the attendance policy and how to utilize a make-up group when necessary. Missing two or more group supervision sessions for any reason will result in a failing grade for that quarter. Failing university supervision for one quarter will require the student to repeat the experience to ensure that the practicum or internship coursework meets the program's requirements. Students unable to finish Practicum (after enrollment in Practicum-3) must register for and participate in an RPS Extension (RPX) group each quarter until Practicum is completed. Similarly, students unable to finish Internship (after enrollment in Internship-3) must register for and participate in a CCS Extension (CCX) group each quarter until Internship is completed.

F. SITE SUPERVISION

Site supervisors play a critical role in student development and are expected to provide structured supervision and guidance. Responsibilities include:

1. QUALIFICATIONS

Site supervisors must meet the following requirements:

- a. A minimum of a master's degree, preferably in counseling, or a related mental health profession (social work, counseling psychology, marriage, and family therapy)
- b. Relevant certifications and state licensure for independent practice (preferably LPC, LCPC, LMHC, but also LCSW, LMFT, LP, etc.). A psychiatrist (MD) may also be used as a site supervisor.
- c. For sites located in border states and telemental health sites, the site supervisor must be licensed for independent practice in the state where the client resides.



- d. A minimum of two (2) years post-licensure professional experience in the program area
- e. Knowledge of the program expectations, requirements, and evaluation procedures for students
- f. Relevant training in counselor supervision. The program provides supervision training for individuals who have not completed previous training in counselor supervision.
- g. The site supervisor must agree to connect with program faculty (CTDs) at least twice per term.
- h. The site supervisor must agree to allow the student to record client sessions (with client permission) for educational purposes (review of work) or participate in live supervision (sitting in on a session for supervisory purposes).

2. STUDENT ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

- a. Provide appropriate training and orientation to the culture and policies of your site.
- b. Ensure that students understand the crisis and emergency procedures associated with your site.

3. SITE SUPERVISION

Site supervision includes both clinical supervision and administrative supervision. For example, clinical supervision may be considered a process or intervention provided by a senior member of a profession to a junior member or members of that same (or similar) profession. This relationship is evaluative, extends over time, and has the simultaneous purpose of enhancing the junior colleague's professional functioning.

Supervision also involves monitoring the quality of professional services offered to the clients and serving as a gatekeeper for entering the profession (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). The ACA (2014) Code of Ethics requires that administrative supervision ensures the junior professional fully understands the training context, climate, and culture such as the site's mission, vision, operations, and infrastructure, schedule, paperwork, and evaluations.

There is an overlap between clinical supervision and administrative supervision. Site supervision is continuous, often face-to-face, and examines the interface between life experiences and clinical practice. Best practices associated with site supervision and associated modalities are modeling, role-reversal, and process recall. Site Supervisors are required to either review a section of an audio/video recording or provide live supervision at least once per quarter. Students and site supervisors should schedule site supervision in person, on-site or, if indicated or necessary, virtually. Students should prepare to meet weekly with site supervisors for consultation on cases or other matters of clinical development.

Supervision Tasks:

- Provide at least one continuous hour of individual (one-on-one) or triadic (one supervisor with two students) clinical supervision every week.
- Review of student counseling skills via live supervision or recordings at least once per quarter.
- Review student clinical documentation skills regularly to ensure accuracy and compliance.
- Encourage students to come to supervision meetings prepared to discuss clients they are currently seeing.
- Group Supervision (3 or more trainees) is not required and does not replace the requirement for 1 hour/week individual or triadic supervision.



Additional Tasks:

- Approve student time sheets each month in FIELDX for both direct and indirect hours, as well as site supervision hours. (Failure to approve hours, contracts, or evaluations in a timely manner may delay student progress.)
- Complete quarterly evaluations of students and use assessment findings to set clear learning goals for the following term.
- Help students secure enough clients to support their required hours.
- Ensure that students meet the clinical training hours expected for practicum and internship.
- Address any barriers that may impact a student's ability to meet hour requirements early in the process to avoid delays.

4. STUDENT SAFETY

Placement sites are responsible and accountable for ensuring the safety of students at their places of practice. While some risk to safety is expected with any natural experience, site supervisors and sites agree to provide safety supports, standards, and protocols that address the student's physical, emotional, and psychological needs in practicum or internship. Whenever any concerns arise about student safety, the Clinical Training Director must be notified immediately so an appropriate plan can be established. Students who believe that safety standards or well-being at sites are compromised might attempt to address concerns directly with site supervisors (unless this further endangers the student). While many situations will be resolved satisfactorily, student safety is paramount. In some situations, program faculty will summarily terminate a site/student relationship to protect students' wellbeing.

If a site supervisor is not physically present at the site, the student must clearly outline the plan with the site supervisor to manage unanticipated emergencies. The student and site supervisor must work together to ensure the policy protects all involved. If the student does not have a plan in place, they must inform their University Supervisor or Clinical Training Director to facilitate this issue's resolution.

5. CLINICAL TRAINING ONLINE PLATFORMS

The program strives to use the best resources the internet has to offer in supporting the clinical experience. Students are expected to maintain proper documentation on 2NU and Program Tracking System for Practicum and Internship.

- a. 2NU - Students are responsible for keeping track of their documents in the 2NU Practicum/Internship course room. This includes uploading the insurance verification every quarter. If the policy ends before the end of a quarter, students will be asked to verify another year of coverage to cover the entire duration of Practicum and Internship. Failure to maintain current insurance coverage will result in temporary suspension of clinical activity until proof of insurance is submitted.
- b. Program Tracking System is the online verification program used for tracking clinical hours, documentation, and completing evaluations for both Practicum and Internship. Please note that precise instructions will be listed on the course wall in canvas, and students are advised to follow the instructions very carefully to avoid a loss of points for turning in hours or documents late.
- c. Telemental health/HIPAA compliant platform.



- d. Site supervisors who support telemental health and are approved sites will provide a HIPAA secure platform of their choosing to conduct telemental health (see J below).

G. RESOLVING CONFLICTS IN CLINICAL TRAINING

1. ENDING SITE RELATIONSHIPS

- a. Students are not permitted to end the relationship with a site or site supervisor before following the grievance handling steps described in this handbook and getting permission from CTD. A self-determined cessation of clinical training at a placement site violates standards of professionalism and site-program relationship and may result in student remediation. Students should closely follow grievance handling policies outlined.
- b. If students experience conflict at a site with site personnel, the student should first carefully review Section 5.A and Sections 7.G of this handbook. These policies address a series of escalatory steps to raise concerns towards resolution and, if possible, repair.
- c. After determining whether this area of concern is worthy of reporting, the student should begin a conversation with the Clinical Training Director. The Clinical Training Director will enact a series of conversations with site team and the student, individually and to get to understand the matters and forge resolutions. In some cases, the issues of concern may be resolved. In extreme cases where no resolution can be found, a site separation and replacement may be considered. The student should be aware that a site replacement may delay the training timeline.
- d. When there are issues of physical or psychological safety of the student, the student will be removed, and appropriate steps will be taken to determine future placement of students or site use.

IMPORTANT: Students must not end the relationship with a site or site supervisor during Practicum or during Internships before following the steps described as this violates standards of professionalism and site-program relationships. The student risks a failing grade, and remediation/discipline for premature and unannounced withdrawal from the supervisory relationship. Under certain conditions, clinical training faculty may terminate a student's relationship with a site and/or supervisor (e.g., for reasons of safety) and program personnel will manage any exit arrangements.

H. STUDENT CLINICAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

1. TIMING OF EVALUATIONS

Students are formally evaluated quarterly by their site supervisors and are required to send the evaluation form to their supervisors via Program Tracking System. The evaluation includes the site supervisor's assessment of student counseling skills after providing live supervision or watching a section of a recorded client session. After completing the evaluation, the supervisor will review the evaluation with the trainee, and it will be available to the student in Program Tracking System. Once the student reviews and approves the evaluation through Program Tracking System, it will be received and reviewed by the student's Clinical Training Director. The supervisor's fieldwork evaluation is one component of the course grade. Failure to submit evaluations will lower the cumulative grade in practicum or internship, and until the student and supervisor submit the evaluation the student will earn an incomplete grade (Y) and not be able to progress to the next level in the sequence.



2. EVALUATION IN METHOD COURSES

Students' clinical skills are also evaluated in courses Methods I, II, and III in conjunction with the Practicum courses. Students are required to complete all transcriptions/recordings and requirements in Methods I, II, and III before they are permitted to proceed to Internship. In cases where students have not turned in transcripts but have finished Practicum-3, they still will not be permitted to register for Internship-1 until those assignments are completed. Methods instructors will secure any missing assignments necessary for student advancement; however students are expected to communicate and collaborate in these efforts to resolve any incomplete assignments.

3. ASSESSMENT OF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

In addition to the knowledge, skills, and practices essential to becoming a professional counselor, students will also be formally assessed on several Key Professional Dispositions (as required by CACREP). This includes but is not limited to openness to new ideas, flexibility, cooperativeness with others, cross-cultural awareness, willingness to receive and implement feedback, awareness of your impact on others, ability to deal with conflict effectively, ability to accept personal responsibility, ability to express feelings and opinions effectively and appropriately, attention to ethical and legal considerations, initiative, and motivation.

For any student about whom there are dispositional concerns—to the extent that those concerns raise questions about the student's ability to complete their program or to succeed professionally, those concerns will be addressed as soon as possible to achieve the best possible outcome. Our training model and guidelines are meant to be preemptive and proactive; the idea is to support students' development throughout the academic program's duration. Students should be aware that failure to abide by policies and standards set forth by Northwestern University, the program, and the ACA and AMHCA Codes of Ethics will result in Remediation and Discipline (see Section 5.D-J)

4. REMOVAL FROM A FIELDWORK PLACEMENT SITE

Students must be able to complete their required hours within their fieldwork placement site (for Practicum or Internship) and satisfactorily follow all the policies and procedures associated with the site. To be in good standing in the program, a student must remain in good standing with the fieldwork placement site's policies. This includes, at the end of the clinical training experience, appropriate termination of clients, and successful completion of all paperwork associated with clients' termination/transfer. Being in good standing also includes making appropriate arrangements, to the extent possible, in emergencies to prevent disruptions in client care.

IMPORTANT: Dismissal from a training site during placement for cause may be grounds for remediation at LEVEL 3. Depending on the nature of the site dismissal (e.g., harm to clients), clinical training may be paused until SRC hearing deliberations are complete. See Remediation and Discipline (Section 5: c-j) in this handbook and the policies and procedures documentation offered by placement sites.



5. STUDENT DISCLOSURE STATEMENT EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to work with their site supervisors to provide ethical disclosure statements to their clients. While students and site supervisors must work together to satisfy any requirements of the state in which they live, students must provide open disclosure to clients about 1) their status as a “student” or a “counselor in-training,” and 2) the need for recording the session. Other areas of consent and disclosure include:

- a. Level of experience
- b. Supervision
- c. Nature of Counseling
- d. Counseling Relationship
- e. Effects of Counseling
- f. Appointments and Cancellation
- g. Postponement and Termination
- h. Crises
- i. Permission to Participate and Confidentiality
- j. Safety
- k. Client Rights
- l. Privacy Rights under HIPAA

Every quarter, students are also required to attest that they are using a Professional Disclosure Form with their clients. Sample verbiage for professional disclosures is provided in the Practicum/Internship syllabi.

6. OFF-SITE COUNSELING

On occasion, students may be required to participate in clinical training experiences away from the designated clinical training site, also known as off-site counseling. All off-site counseling will require special approval by the appropriate Clinical Training Director before participating. Students may participate in off-site counseling if the clinical supervisor or a licensed professional accompanies the student. In some cases, the qualified professional supervisor may be a licensed or certified school counselor.

J. TELEMENTAL HEALTH (TMH) OR ONLINE COUNSELING AND ONLINE SUPERVISION

1. PROVIDING TELEMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Some practicum or internship sites may offer clients the opportunity to receive some services via telemental health (TMH) platforms. The following are guidelines for students and sites to ensure that hours and experience will fulfill academic requirements:

- a. TMH services can only be provided to clients who live in states where the site supervisor is licensed for independent practice.
- b. TMH must be done utilizing both video and audio – no phone-only or text-message-only counseling (unless there is an extenuating circumstance for a client that has been approved by the site supervisor).
- c. Clients and counseling students are strongly encouraged to meet in person before starting TMH.



- d. Once approved for practicum or internship, appropriate training on the online counseling platform and TMH is required.
- e. HIPAA compliance must be attested to by the site (an email from the site supervisor to the assigned Clinical Training Director).
- f. Counseling must adhere to state and local laws regarding TMH or online counseling and online supervision.
- g. Face to face supervision between student and supervisor is preferred, and if permitted in the state of residence, student and supervisor may engage in online supervision.
- h. Clinical hours obtained via TMH must be tagged in Program Tracking System as TMH.

In alignment with legal and ethical standards, counseling students enrolled in practicum and internship may only provide telemental health services when they are physically located within the United States or its territories. This applies regardless of the client's location. Students are not permitted to engage in clinical services from international locations during their placement. This restriction ensures compliance with:

- State licensure and jurisdictional laws
- Supervisor and institutional liability protections
- Professional standards of care and client safety
- Accreditation and documentation requirements

Students planning international travel during a clinical quarter must inform the Clinical Training Director and site supervisor in advance and arrange appropriate time off. Failure to comply with this policy may result in suspension from clinical activities and/or disciplinary action.

K. PRACTICUM COMPLETION AND INTERNSHIP

1. PRACTICUM AND METHODS SEQUENCE OF COURSES

The full Practicum sequence (Pre-Practicum, 1, and 2) is taken simultaneously with Methods 1, 2, and 3. Successful completion of the Methods courses requires recording counseling sessions during the Practicum clinical training experience. Students must complete all requirements in all Methods courses before completing Practicum and moving into Internship. The nature of recordings must be discussed between supervisors and students, with full and proper disclosure being offered to clients following the state laws governing the placement site. Further details about Methods requirements may be found through the Methods course instructors and syllabi.

2. MOVING INTO INTERNSHIP

Students may not move from Practicum to Internship if any of the following circumstances are present:

- a. The student has not completed the required clinical training hours for practicum and obtained the approval of hours submitted.
- b. The student is being investigated for concerns related to clinical, ethical, or dispositional issues at the clinical practicum site.
- c. The student has incompletes (Y) or in-progress (K) grades in Methods 1-3 or a failing grade in Methods 1-3.
- d. The student has incompletes (Y) grades or a failing grade in Pre-Practicum, Practicum 1 and 2.



- e. Students with an incomplete grade in Practicum-3 but still accruing hours must continue taking the RPX (Practicum Extension) for one additional quarter until hours are completed.

3. COMPLETING PRACTICUM OR INTERNSHIP AT WORKPLACE

Typically, students are not allowed to complete clinical training at their workplace due to potential conflicts of interest. An exception can be made at the discretion of the Assistant Program Director. Role differentiation must be ascertained, and the requirements of practicum or internship placement established for exemptions to be granted.

4. PAID PRACTICUM OR INTERNSHIP

In rare instances, students are offered a paid practicum or internship. Students are permitted to accept paid practicum or internships if they understand that the program does not guarantee payments for practicum or internship and that all clinical policies still apply when training is paid or unpaid. Receiving payment for a practicum experience also does not determine how student performance will be evaluated. Students assume the benefits and risks of paid practicum or internship. The title at the given site is one of practicum student or intern (student). Students can only be paid via stipend or salary. Students cannot be paid as "Independent" contractors.

5. CHARGING CLIENTS FOR SERVICES

Some sites may charge clients for student-provided services. The field supervisor is expected to abide by national, state, and local and acceptable billing practices. Site placements and supervisors are responsible for complying with all regulations and standards per their state. Should it be discovered that a site is inappropriately or unethically charging a client or insurance company for student-provided services, program faculty may terminate the student's placement.

L. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN CLINICAL TRAINING

In addition to The Graduate School policy on academic integrity, all records submitted for any fieldwork/clinical training documentation must adhere to all authenticity and accuracy standards. Misrepresenting or falsifying clinical training experiences violates the academic integrity policy of the program and will result in immediate remediation action at Level 3 (see Remediation and Discipline).

M. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The program supports all students regardless of ability status. Any student admitted to the program will receive support to obtain a fieldwork clinical placement site that supports their needs. Students must register a disability status with AccessibleNU to receive accommodation. Accommodation does not change the number of hours required to complete Practicum or Internship, nor do they change the required learning outcomes and objectives indicated in each course. The program will partner with ANU to determine the best accommodation that does not interfere with learning outcomes and objectives. Students are encouraged to work closely with the ANU Liaison to determine what disability accommodation they may need to address their unique needs with clinical fieldwork placement.



N. PERSONAL FITNESS FOR SITE PLACEMENT

1. CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

The Program requires a background check during the admissions process, well before students seek clinical fieldwork placements. However, placement sites may also require background checks before confirming students at a site. The program supports placement sites' requests for a criminal background check. Students should be prepared to address any issues with their criminal background transparently with their site supervisor and program leadership. Note, sites have the right to refuse training to a student with a documented criminal background. Further, program faculty and administration have little or no mediational role in assisting a student with a documented criminal record to become a fully licensed professional counselor in a specific state. Students are responsible for understanding the implications of having a criminal record when seeking future employment or in state licensure processes.

2. DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

The program, Northwestern University, and The Family Institute are drug-free environments. All students, professors, instructors, supervisors, and staff are prohibited from misusing controlled substances, intoxicants, alcohol, and prescription drugs while working, engaging in the online classroom, attending group immersion or capstone, other university-sponsored events, and all field training site experiences. Per Northwestern University's [Student Code of Conduct \(in Student Handbook\)](#), the program maintains and enforces a zero tolerance policy regarding substance use in program-related events and experiences leading to professional misconduct. Students in violation of this drug and alcohol policy will be subject to Remediation and Discipline (see Section 5.D-J) policies of Northwestern University and program.

3. ETHICAL CODE OF CONDUCT

The program adheres to the codes of ethics of the [American Counseling Association](#) (ACA) and the [American Mental Health Counselors Association](#) (AMHCA). The school has an ethical and professional responsibility to ensure all students enrolled in the counseling program display ethical, professional, and personal behaviors that comply with ACA's and AMHCA's ethical codes and given locals of which students are practicing. Students, supervisors, and professors all regularly engage in ethical decision making and the gatekeeping process. Failure to abide by the ACA and AMHCA Codes of Ethics will result in remedial and disciplinary action (see Remediation and Discipline).

O. STATE LICENSURE AND ACCREDITATION

The program adheres to CACREP requirements for all clinical training procedures. However, some state requirements exceed CACREP requirements to be granted a license for independent practice. The clinical training department may support students with needs that extend beyond the program. This will occur to the extent that students remain abreast of requirements or changes in local and state licensing laws that affect their ability to achieve licensure post-graduation. Towards that end, students are provided with detailed information related to pursuing licensure in every state in which they may wish to practice.



Students needing documentation regarding degree or clinical training hours completion may contact the Program Coordinator or the Director of Online Operations.

All states outline specific licensure requirements around curriculum, clinical training, and testing. The Counseling@Northwestern [licensure page](#) provides a state-by-state breakdown of counseling licenses, including a determination of eligibility for licensure. This information provided is designed as a baseline determination of whether the program meets individual state specific requirements and students are made aware of program's ability to ensure licensure eligibility at the time of enrollment per published information, intent to enroll documentation, and curriculum planning. Students should refer to the state they would like to be licensed in post-graduation when completing their curriculum plan to ensure they take the appropriate courses and electives.

To be endorsed for licensure by the program, the graduate must have successfully conferred their degree. Transcripts can be requested through the NU [Registrar office](#). Requests for paperwork to be completed by the program must be submitted [here](#). Due to the volume of licensure paperwork requests, the program requires 2-3 weeks to complete requests. Should a graduate require a recommendation, those are provided at the sole discretion of the recommender.

P. DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, SEXUAL HARASSMENT, AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICIES

1. POLICY ON DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

The program abides by The Graduate School's policies related to discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct and harassment (See [Northwestern University's student handbook](#)). Northwestern University does not discriminate or permit discrimination by any member of its community against any individual based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, parental status, marital status, age, disability, citizenship status, veteran status, genetic information, reproductive health decision making, or any other classification protected by law in matters of admissions, employment, housing, or services or in the educational programs or activities it operates.

Harassment, whether verbal, physical, or visual, is based on any of these characteristics, is a form of discrimination.

Northwestern University complies with federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination based on the protected categories listed above, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX requires educational institutions, such as Northwestern, to prohibit discrimination based on sex (including sexual harassment) in the University's educational programs and activities, including in matters of employment and admissions. In addition, Northwestern provides reasonable accommodation to qualified applicants, students, and employees with disabilities and to individuals who are pregnant. Any alleged violations of this policy or questions with respect to nondiscrimination or reasonable accommodation should be directed to Northwestern's Office of Equity, 1800 Sherman Avenue, Suite 4- 500, Evanston, Illinois 60208, 847-467-6165, [Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance](#)



Questions specific to sex discrimination (including sexual misconduct and sexual harassment) should be directed to Northwestern's Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equity, 1800 Sherman Avenue, Suite 4-500, Evanston, Illinois 60208, 847-467-6165, Emily.babb@northwestern.edu.

A person may also file a complaint with the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights regarding an alleged violation of Title IX by visiting <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html> or calling 800- 421-3481. Inquiries about the application of Title IX to Northwestern may be referred to Northwestern's Title IX Coordinator or the United States Department of Education's Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights or both.

Important: Northwestern University's policies on discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual misconduct apply to the conduct of the entire University community, including vendors, contractors, visitors, guests, and third parties.

SECTION 8: PROCEDURES FOR COURSE AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

A. MID-QUARTER EVALUATIONS (MQEs)

All students are requested by the program to complete one MQE for every course they take each quarter. The MQEs are available for students between weeks 4 and 5 each quarter and provide an opportunity to share feedback to help improve the course before the quarter ends.

B. COURSE EVALUATIONS (COURSE AND TEACHER EVALUATION COUNCIL — CTEC)

Students are urged to evaluate each course and instructors at the end of every quarter utilizing the University's online course evaluation system (CTEC). The University provides written feedback about the evaluations of the course instructor and program leadership. Course instructors will provide additional guidance on completing course evaluations.

C. EXIT SURVEYS

Before graduation, all students are asked to complete an exit survey to provide feedback, reflections, and recommendations regarding all aspects of the program. Such feedback includes but is not limited to admissions, curriculum, student advising, clinical training, comprehensive examinations, assistantships, program events, and climate. The results of the survey are anonymous to allow honest feedback. Results from the Exit Surveys are used to enhance the program. Also, as part of ongoing program evaluation activities, graduates will be asked to complete the triennial alumni survey following graduation from the program.

D. EXAMINATIONS

1. NATIONAL COUNSELOR EXAMINATION FOR LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION

a. EXAMINATION OVERVIEW



The National Board [for Certified Counselors](#) offer the National Counselor Examination (NCE) and the National Clinical Mental Health Counselor Examination (NCMHCE). Please refer to your state licensure website to determine which exam you will need for state licensure.

b. EXAMINATION PROCESS

In the Spring or Fall Quarter of the program's internship year, the program will endorse students to be able to register for the NCE. This is an opportunity for interns to begin the national certification application process while still enrolled in the COUN program. Taking the NCE before graduation may facilitate the student obtaining a state license. Starting early in Spring or Fall Quarter, interns who are eligible will be endorsed by the program to NBCC. NBCC will send information directly to the student regarding the application, preparation, registration, and examination process.

SECTION 9: SUPPORT SERVICES

A. 2NU TECHNICAL SUPPORT

For Northwestern University technological challenges related to the 2U Digital Campus (CANVAS), students should call (844) 684- 6222 or email studentsupport@counseling.northwestern.edu. Minimum Computer Equipment and Software See [Appendix IV](#)

B. GRADUATE WRITING PLACE

The Graduate Writing Place provides individual writing consultations with Graduate Writing Fellows to review various writing, including coursework papers. For graduate students at Northwestern who live outside the Chicago-area, online appointments may be more appropriate. These appointments take place via phone, videoconference, or chat, and the student should attach their writing to the appointment block within the system beforehand. In rare instances (due to time zone differences) it is impossible to conduct synchronous online appointments with students. In such cases, students should email writingplace@northwestern.edu to ask about setting up an asynchronous online appointment. Students should also note that writing consultants will not perform grammatical line editing during such meetings. For more information on Writing Place policies, please visit [This Site](#)

C. DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The program supports the needs of students with disabilities and follows the university's policies and procedures for those students' seeking accommodations. These policies and procedures can be found [here](#). For program support, students are also encouraged to work with the program's Student Liaison to AccessibleNU to determine what disability accommodations they may need in collaboration with AccessibleNU.

Please note ANU accommodations are not retroactively granted. Once students are approved for accommodations by Accessible NU, further students are responsible for ensuring quarter-to-quarter renewal. Failure to renew every quarter and inform their instructors may result in an inability to provide accommodations.



D. LIBRARY SUBJECT LEAD

The Northwestern Library collects commonly used reference materials in the counseling profession. Students can access various journals, research databases, books, and even videos of expert counselors and psychotherapists in action on this site. Click here for [Library Resources](#).

E. STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: UWill

[UWill](#) is a leading mental health and wellness solution that provides innovative technologies that facilitate best in-class video and message-based counseling within a secure environment. This free teletherapy platform enables students to receive real-time counseling online from a network of licensed mental health professionals for issues including depression, stress, anxiety, trauma, specific relationship problems, family concerns, academic performance difficulties, loneliness, and sleep disturbance, among others.

Once they set up a profile, students are almost immediately connected to a licensed mental health counselor based on their unique needs and preferences including presenting issue, gender, language, ethnicity. Students choose a time that fits their schedule (day, night, weekend availability), and choose the appointment type (video, phone, chat, message). [Uwill](#) provides 24x7 technical support by email support@uwill.com or phone 833.99U.Will (833.988.9455).

F. VIRTUAL CAREER CENTER

Students should review the Virtual Career Center, located within the [Canvas Digital Campus](#) for resources supporting ongoing career development and placement interview preparation. Within the Virtual Career Center, students can also find the Career Engagement Network (CEN), which offers career workshops, guides, and job boards.

G. PROGRAM EVENTS

See the full Academic Year calendar for program events. Concrete event details will be disseminated prior to activities.

1. FOUNDATIONS IMMERSION | BUILDING YOUR COUNSELOR IDENTITY

Foundations immersion supports your transition into counselor training and introduces you to the expectations, values, and professional responsibilities of the counseling profession. The Foundations Immersion occurs during week 4 of the term (Wednesday and Thursday) unless it is a holiday week.

During Foundations, you will engage in experiential activities focused on:

- Counselor identity and professional development
- Belonging, self-awareness, and interpersonal engagement
- Navigating feedback, conflict, and professional expectations
- Program resources, student support, and your educational journey
- Key Professional Dispositions (KPDs) and preparation for clinical training

The goal: Leave Foundations with a clearer understanding of who you are becoming as a counselor, what is expected throughout your training, and the resources available to support your success.



2. GROUP DYNAMICS IMMERSION (GDI) | PRACTICING GROUP COUNSELING SKILLS

GDI provides an intensive, experiential opportunity to develop and demonstrate foundational group counseling skills before applying these competencies within clinical training. GDI occurs week 4 of the term on Monday and Tuesday, unless it is a holiday week.

During GDI, you will:

- Participate actively as both a group member and developing counselor
- Practice group leadership and co-facilitation skills
- Experience group process and dynamics in real time
- Receive observation, supervision, and developmental feedback
- Practice responding to feedback, differences, and challenging group interactions
- Demonstrate professional dispositions and developing group counseling competencies

The goal: Move beyond learning about groups to experiencing and practicing the interpersonal, facilitation, and reflective skills necessary to work effectively with clients in group settings.

H. SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND PREVENTION

Northwestern University is committed to fostering an environment in which all campus community members are safe and free from sexual misconduct of any form. Please visit this website for additional resources and support. These policies are in place for all students, including on-campus events such as Group immersion weekends and Capstones. See [Get Help For Sexual Misconduct](#).

SECTION 10: PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INVOLVEMENT FOR STUDENTS

A. CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

Students are encouraged to join professional Counseling organizations such as the American Counseling Association, the American Mental Health Counselors Association, or the International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors. In addition to attending the meetings, students are also encouraged to seek out and attend conferences related to their counseling interests. Counseling students are also encouraged to partner with their faculty advisor, core faculty, affiliate faculty, staff, supervisors, and other students to submit poster and presentation proposals. The professional organizations below are appropriate for graduate students in Counseling. Joining one or more of these organizations is a great way to become informed about what is happening in the counseling field, have networking opportunities with other professionals, and receive continuing education such as podcasts, webinars, workshops, and conferences. The organizations offer liability insurance to students. Apart from national professional organizations, the student should also join their regional and state counseling associations.



National Professional Organizations for Masters-Level Counseling Students

<u>American Counseling Association (ACA)</u> The world's largest association representing 55,000 counselors from all specializations, including Clinical Mental Health Counseling	• Present/Do a Poster Session or volunteer at the ACA Annual Conference • Use ACA Career Center for job listings and career opportunities Join a division that welcomes graduate students to learn about a specialty area • Use ACA resources such as 24-hour access to our journals and Literature
<u>American Mental Health Counseling Association</u> (AMHCA) A community of 7,000 Community Mental Health Counselors	• Present/Do a Poster Session or volunteer at the AMHCA Annual Conference • Learn about how you can be part of advocacy initiatives in Congress
<u>Association for Counselor Education and Supervision</u> (ACES) Is the premier organization dedicated to quality education and supervision of counselors in all work settings. ACES members are counselors, supervisors, graduate students, and faculty members who strive to improve the teaching and supervision of counselors in training and practice.	• Present/Do a Poster Session or volunteer at the ACES Conference • Read the journal Assistant d with this association • Learn about task forces, interest networks, committees, and elected positions

B. STUDENT GROUPS AND SUPPORT INITIATIVES

Chi Sigma Iota (CSI)

The on-campus Chi Sigma Iota Chapter (NU Upsilon) is a student-led organization affiliated with its parent body, the national CSI honor society <https://www.csi-net.org/>. CSI NU Upsilon has an independent student leadership infrastructure and is supported by faculty sponsors. CSI offers a range of excellent support initiatives to students. CSI provides extensive information about membership and initiation into this body. Information will be disseminated about the CGGM leadership and organization during orientation events and periodically throughout studies.



APPENDIX I: CURRICULA PLANS & STUDY TIMELINES

1. CORE CURRICULUM

The core curriculum required for the Master of Arts in Counseling is reflective of national counseling program standards. See Appendix II for a full breakdown of all coursework. See coursework descriptions here: [Counseling coursework](#). Each course earns 1 unit or 4 quarter credit hours. These courses are based on the 2024 Standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

Admitted students enroll in one of two curricula plans that determine the number of courses taken to complete the degree. The core curriculum includes 24 courses required to complete the Master of Arts degree in Counseling. The Bridge curriculum includes 3 introductory courses in addition to the core curricula plan for a total of 27 courses towards the degree. The Bridge curriculum is recommended for students with no prior coursework or experience in human and social services. Applicants can also self-select to be in the Bridge program. Students have a variety of elective options that can be taken with the core and Bridge curricula plans. Electives are courses taken beyond the 24 or 27 required for the degree. Elective coursework is an option and will incur additional tuition payments. See Appendix II for a full breakdown of elective coursework, including those requiring the permission of the department.

2. CHILD AND ADOLESCENT SPECIALIZATION

In the Core or Bridge curricula, students can elect to study in the *child and adolescent specialization*. Students in the specialization take required core courses that include an emphasis on child/adolescent mental health. Prior to entering the program, students declare an interest in working with children and adolescents and are enrolled in child/adolescent version of courses.

Things to consider when deciding to study in the Child/Adolescent Specialization

- a. Students can work with anyone across the lifespan with either curriculum plan.
- b. Regardless of specialization, students will work with adults in the Practicum phase of clinical training.
- c. Additional post-graduate training will be necessary regardless of curriculum plan.
- d. Some jobs will advertise for generalists while others will advertise for specialists (in this case, the C&A track would help).
- e. Explore the courses you need on your transcript for your state licensure and/or any additional certifications you might pursue. (For instance, some credentials require a graduate level course rather than continuing education and some state licensing boards require electives that will not leave room for all the child and adolescent specialization). Priority to state licensure requirements should be given when curriculum planning.
- f. Students can register for some of the child and adolescent versions of the class without needing to complete the entire specialization.
- g. Decide what you would like to take while a student for graduate credit vs. what you would like to take via continuing education, workshops, etc. outside of the program.



Child/Adolescent Specialization Curriculum Requirements

Students that wish to complete the Child/Adolescent Specialization will need to take the following classes:

Online: All courses include child/adolescent emphases

- 413-6 Human Development-2 (replaces 414-6)
- 436-6 Counseling Children and Adolescents
- 423-6 Assessment in Counseling- 2 (replaces 426-6)
- 454-6 Evaluation and Treatment of Trauma-2
- 440-6 Play Therapy Methods (replaces 480-7 Methods 2)

Confirmation of Completing the Child/Adolescent Specialization

By the end of the first quarter of study, students are required to formally confirm their intention to complete the specialization by consulting with their designated student success advisor or faculty advisor. This confirmation will be done through a [Confirmation Form](#). (Click link to complete.) Specialization will be added to the curriculum plan. Students are responsible for registering for the correct versions of the Child and Adolescent classes when they are seeking the child and adolescent specialization.

Child/Adolescent Specialization Clinical Training Requirements

Students pursuing the Child and Adolescent Specialization are required to complete direct clinical training hours working with children and/or adolescents. To obtain the specialization, a minimum of 24 direct hours in *Internship* must be completed specifically with child and adolescent clients, either in individual or group settings

To ensure the availability of child and adolescent clients for fulfilling the clinical training requirements, students are advised to inquire with their placement site at the beginning of Practicum-2. If the site is unable to accommodate these requirements, the student should contact their Clinical Training Director (CTD) no later than week 7 of Practicum-2 to discuss potential alternatives. Options may include changing to a different site that offers access to the desired population or seeking a supplemental site that caters to children and adolescents. Alternatively, students may choose to remain at their current site, acknowledging that they will not be able to complete the mandatory direct clinical training hours with this population.

Note: *Failure to fulfill the requisite direct hours with children or adolescents will result in the student not receiving the letter of completion for the Child and Adolescent Specialization in program. Nonetheless, students still can enroll in child and adolescent courses, allowing them to acquire specialized training to enhance their readiness for post-graduate clinical experiences.*

Letter of Completion versus Transcript Entry

Note that child/adolescent specialization will **NOT** be noted on the official transcript. After graduation, if all coursework and clinical training requirements have been met for the Child/Adolescent Specialization, an official letter of completion will be emailed to the student's university email.



Degree Timelines

Students in the Core or Bridge curricula, with or without the specialization option, complete their degree on three timelines: Accelerated, Traditional, or Part-time. These timelines determine the timing and pacing of studies. Admission staff help students to determine the most appropriate timeline for studies based on availability and other demands (e.g., part-time employment). A description of the curricula and timelines can be found in Appendix I

- a. Accelerated timeline - Students complete core or specialization courses over six academic quarters or 18 months, in 4 classes per quarter. The Accelerated timeline is intensive, and students begin fieldwork in the first quarter of the program.
- b. Traditional timeline – Students complete core or specialization courses in 9 academic quarters or 24 months. Typically, students enroll in three courses per quarter. Clinical training is conducted in the last six quarters of the traditional track.
- c. Part-Time 12 timeline – Students complete core or specialization courses in 12 academic quarters or 3 years, taking 2 courses per quarter. Most academic courses are taken in advance of Counseling Methods, Research, Advanced Topics, and elective coursework per quarter. Practicum and Internship courses are done after most academic courses are completed. See Appendix I.



APPENDIX II: COURSE WORK

MASTER OF ARTS IN COUNSELING PROGRAM: CURRICULUM		
STANDARD CURRICULUM (24 REQUIRED COURSES); BRIDGE CURRICULUM (27 REQUIRED COURSES) ALL STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO TAKE THESE COURSES (*child/adolescent specialization course)		
Count	Course Number	Course Title
16	COUN 406-6	Research Methods in and Program Evaluation
	COUN 410-6	Foundations in Clinical Mental Health Counseling
	COUN 411-6	Psychodynamic Counseling: Individuals and Systems
	COUN 412-6	Group Counseling Theory and Practice
	COUN 415-6	Psychopathology and Diagnosis in Counseling
	COUN 416-6	Theories of Counseling and Psychotherapy
	COUN 422-6	Family, Marital, and Couple Counseling
	COUN 426-6	Assessment in Counseling OR
	COUN 427-6	Career Counseling
	COUN 452-6	Addictions Counseling
	COUN 480-6	Methods 1: Introductory Counseling Skills
	COUN 480-7	Methods 2: Advanced Counseling Skills OR
	COUN 480-8	Methods 3: Skills for Outreach, Prevention and Intervention
	COUN 483-6	Ethics and Legal Issues in Counseling
	COUN 483-7	Multicultural Counseling
	COUN 454-6	Evaluation and Treatment of Trauma-2* OR
ALL STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO TAKE THESE FIELDWORK COURSES (6 COURSES Required)		
6	COUN 481-4	Pre-Practicum in Clinical Mental Health Counseling
	COUN 481-5	Supervised Practicum in Counseling-1



	COUN 481-6	Supervised Practicum in Counseling-2
	COUN 482-6	Supervised Internship in Counseling-1
	COUN 482-7	Supervised Internship in Counseling-2
	COUN 482-8	Supervised Internship in Counseling-3* only required for students who are already in practicum or already took practicum
ALL STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO TAKE A DEVELOPMENT COURSE (1 Required)		
1	COUN 413-6*	Human Growth and Lifespan Development-2* OR
	COUN 414-6	Human Growth and Lifespan Development
ELECTIVE COURSES — GROUP 1 (2 courses required) Standard or Bridge students who are not taking the child specialization may take 1 elective in this category to complete the required 24 or 27 courses.		
2	COUN 417-6	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
	COUN 429-6	Human Sexuality
	COUN 455-6	Introduction to Psychopharmacology.
CHILD AND ADOLESCENT SPECIALIZATION COURSES (5 Required)		
5	COUN 423-6	Human Growth & Lifespan Development-2*
	COUN 426-6	Assessment in Counseling-2*
	COUN 454-6	Evaluation and Treatment of Trauma-2*
	COUN 436-6	Counseling Children and Adolescents*
	COUN 440-6	Play Therapy Methods* (taken in place of Methods 2 beginning Fall 2022)
BRIDGE COURSES — REQUIRED FOR ALL BRIDGE STUDENTS (3 Required)		
3	COUN 479-6	Preparing for Professional Degree Studies
	COUN 479-7	Introduction to the Helping Professions
	COUN 479-8	Introduction to Psychological Theories

*** = Child/Adolescent specialization course + = Generalist track can replace 453-6 with a Group 1 elective**



APPENDIX III: IMMERSION EXPERIENCES 2026-2027

Immersion	Required (Yes/No)	Student Expense	Mode / Timeline
Foundations Immersion	Yes	In-person = flight, transportation to Immersion facility, and some meals.	See program calendar for specific dates and location.
Group Dynamics Immersion	Yes	In-person = flight, transportation to the Immersion facility, and some meals.	Fall quarter of Internship year, concurrent with COUN 412.
Graduation / Convocation	Strongly encouraged, though not required	Flight, lodging, meals.	In-person (see program calendar for Spring dates).



APPENDIX IV: MINIMUM COMPUTER EQUIPMENT AND SOFTWARE

If your computer is close to the minimums listed, we strongly recommend you edit and save your work on your computer (rather than live in the course) before submitting it to prevent losing any work.

1. Browser Technical Requirements

- a. Latest versions of at least two browsers (we recommend Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox)
- b. Ensure that all browser settings are updated

2. Computer Technical Requirements

- a. At least 4 GB RAM (8GB RAM ideal)
- b. 2Ghz dual-core or faster processor
- c. **For Mac Users:** OS X 10.9 or higher
- d. **For PC Users:** Windows 7 or higher

3. Internet Connection

- a. Hardwired (ethernet) Internet connection, not Wi-Fi
- b. Speeds no less than 10 MB/s for download and 5 MB/s for upload

4. Mobile Technical Requirements

- a. Headset or headphones with speakers and microphone OR
- b. Wired headset with landing phone OR
- c. Mobile Device with earbuds
- d. No speakerphone
- e. Internal or external webcam