

CLINICAL TRAINING & ACADEMIC COURSE CHANGES

Information Session — May 2026

Counseling Department

The Family Institute at Northwestern University



AGENDA



1. Clinical Training Changes Overview
2. The New Pre-Practicum Course
2. Pre-Practicum Course Content & Delivery
4. Clinical Training: What's Changing
5. Clinical Training: What's NOT Changing
6. Site Requirements & Hours
7. Academic Curriculum Changes
8. Course Renaming & New Courses
9. Overview of Curriculum Planning Changes

CLINICAL TRAINING CHANGES OVERVIEW



PRACTICUM RENAMING

Practicum-1 becomes
Pre-Practicum

Practicum-2 becomes
Practicum-1

Practicum-3 becomes
Practicum-2



NEW PRE- PRACTICUM COURSE

A new preparatory course
taken BEFORE starting
client work at sites.

Ensures clinical training
readiness.



2-QUARTER PRACTICUM

Starting Fall 2026

Students take:

Pre-Practicum

Practicum in CMHC I

Practicum in CMHC II

Course Delivery

- Asynchronous course with 2 Live Sessions
 - Live Sessions: Week 3 and Week 8
 - Thursdays 10:00 – 12:00 Central Time
 - Live sessions hosted by Clinical Training Directors

Course Requirements

- Asynchronous reflection prompts
- Quizzes
- Targeted trainings
- Licensure scavenger hunt

ABOUT THE PRE- PRACTICUM COURSE

Starting Fall 2026

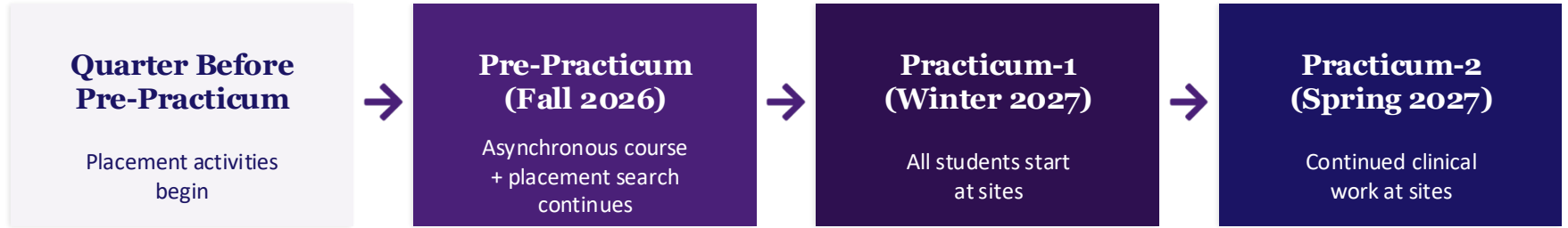
PRE-PRACTICUM COURSE CONTENT

Goal: Prepare students for clinical training and self-reflective practice

- ✓ Clinical Training Information & Fieldwork Handbook
- ✓ Introduction to Self-Reflective Practice (RPS prep)
- ✓ Boundaries & Communication with Clients
- ✓ Professional Disclosure Statements
- ✓ Legal, Ethics & Clinical Documentation
- ✓ State Licensure Processes
- ✓ HIPAA Training & Certification
- ✓ CALM Suicide Intervention Certification
- ✓ Psychological First Aid (PFA) Certification
- ✓ Telemental Health Best Practices
- ✓ Managing Grievances & Conflict Resolution
- ✓ All About Supervision

Note: No clinical training hours are earned in Pre-Practicum

CLINICAL TRAINING TIMELINE



Key Dates

Summer 2026: Students set to start clinical training in summer will complete practicum 1-3 as they expected.

Fall 2026: Pre-Practicum in CMHC launches as a pre-requisite (No practicum 1 offered)

Winter 2027: Practicum begins as a 2-quarter experience (Practicum in CMHC I offered)

Spring 2027: Practicum in CMHC II completes the clinical practicum sequence

PRACTICUM: CHANGES

Starting Fall 2026

Hours & Structure

- **Practicum will be a 2-quarter experience**
- **Hour requirement stays the same:**
 - 200 total hours
 - 50 direct client hours
 - 1 hr/week individual/triadic site supervision
 - 2 hrs/week RPS
- **Start Date:**
 - *Previously:* Rolling start dates
 - *Going forward:* First day of Practicum 1

Expected Site Activity

- **9–16 hours at the site per week**
(Previously 6–16 hours/week)
- **3–4 client sessions per week** *(Previously 2–3 sessions/week)*

Placement Activities

- Still begins the quarter prior to Pre-Practicum
- Continues through Pre-Practicum
- Placement process remains unchanged: continue to collaborate with CTD, SSA, and Placement specialist.

WHAT'S NOT CHANGING



Internship

Nothing is changing with the internship sequence. All internship requirements remain the same.



RPS Supervision

Reflective Practitioner Supervision continues with the same format and expectations (except 2 quarters instead of 3).



CCS Supervision

Clinical Consultation and Supervision remains unchanged throughout the clinical training experience.

ACADEMIC CURRICULUM CHANGES

New courses, renamed courses, and curriculum sequencing

NEW COURSE

Foundations of Clinical Mental Health Counseling

Replaces Professional Topics

Starts Fall 2026

Course Description

This course introduces students to the profession of clinical mental health counseling and the development of counselor professional identity.

Students will examine the historical, philosophical, and empirical foundations of the field, as well as the roles and functions of mental health counselors across contemporary practice settings.

Even if it is not taken at the very start of program, has valuable information for NCE and key aspects of professional identity

Who Takes This Course?

Students who are Pre-Clinical Training or in Practicum: Required: information is relevant to early program experience

Students in internship: Optional: may take as a 3rd elective but not required

Professional Topics: Will no longer be offered after Summer 2026

COURSE RENAMING & UPDATES

Research Methods

➔ Research Methods and Program Evaluation

Now includes program evaluation content to align with 2024 CACREP standards. Course covers qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research designs, basic statistics, needs assessment, and program evaluation.

Assignments are no longer connected to capstone. This means you can focus fully on building research skills and concepts without needing to fit your work into another project.

Research critiques, annotated bibliography, lit review, final project (research application or program eval infographic)

Methods 3

➔ Skills for Outreach, Prevention, and Intervention

Previously titled "Skills for Social Justice Advocacy, Outreach, and Prevention." The revised title better reflects the course content and scope of clinical practice.

CURRICULUM PLANS & SEQUENCING

- **Prescribed Course Sequence**

Students will follow a required course sequence with pre-requisites to progress through the curriculum.

- **Curriculum Plans at Entry**

Upon entry, students complete a curriculum plan designed to pace them through the program, accounting for pre-requisite skills, knowledge, and state licensure requirements.

- **Revised Curriculum Plans**

Curriculum plans will be updated and managed for all current students to ensure you meet all requirements during the transition.

Will not extend program (Additional credits are not required)

SUPPORT FOR CURRENT STUDENTS



Updated Curriculum Plans

Student Success Advisors will begin contacting all students in the coming weeks to review their updated curriculum plans. In the meantime, students should register for summer courses based on their current plans. Revised plans, along with additional communication from Student Success, will be shared before fall registration. Initial outreach will begin within the next couple of weeks.



Your Support Team

All students will be supported through these changes via program leadership, student success, and faculty advisors.

IMMERSION REQUIREMENTS

CACREP Policy A.2.e requires programs to assess students' dispositions and skills live at least twice during the program.

1 Foundations Immersion

- Replaces New Student Immersion (online) and Orientation (on-ground)
- Associated with the Foundations course
- **Must occur prior to Practicum**

2 Group Dynamics Immersion

- Remains as the 2nd required immersion
- Associated with Group Counseling course
- Updated to include assessment of group counseling skills and CMHC dispositions

Note: Orientation will now be online and asynchronous for both online and on-ground delivery methods.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

New requirements take effect Fall 2026 and beyond | Total course credits are NOT changing

Foundations of CMHC – Starting Fall 2026

New Students & Pre-Clinical Training / Practicum Students

Required to take Foundations of CMHC

This course prepares you for clinical training and replaces Professional Topics.

All Other Current Students

Can take Foundations as an elective or choose from:

- Human Sexuality
- Counseling Children and Adolescents
- Play Therapy Methods
- CBT
- Psychopharmacology
- Trauma

UPCOMING INFORMATION SESSIONS

Monthly sessions to cover changes in greater detail. Dates and Zoom info will be emailed.

MAY

Clinical Training
& Academic Courses

JUNE

Capstone Sunset
& Portfolio
Requirement

JULY

Immersion

AUG

Curriculum Planning
& FAQs

A specific FAQ document will be shared. A feedback/question form is available for ongoing questions.

7. FAQ & ANY ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

QR code to FAQ
document &
where to ask a
question



*Thank you for your engagement and flexibility
as we build an even stronger program together.*

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