

Northwestern University
Master of Arts in Counseling Program

Academic Program Manual
On-Campus Site
2025-2026

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 on-campus, in a brick-and-mortar site in Evanston, Illinois. The program is also delivered online via a digital learning platform. While guidelines and policies of the online and on-campus program sites are well aligned, there are nuances related to degree completion in a different learning environment and this is reflected in guidelines and expectations for students. *This handbook pertains to the program's on-campus site on the Northwestern campus.*

The policies and procedures 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 that manages the digital learning platform also informs some guidelines and requirements in this handbook. This is especially relevant for on-campus students taking online courses.

A. PROGRAM VISION, MISSION, AND OBJECTIVES

1. VISION

We are leaders in preparing psycho-dynamically-informed, culturally responsive, clinical mental health counselors to promote people's mental health and wellness.

2. MISSION

Our mission is to deliver innovative clinical mental health counselor training grounded in contemporary psychodynamic theory, best practices from multiple perspectives, and a multicultural worldview, preparing students to become competent counselors, mental health advocates, and leaders.

3. OBJECTIVES

On completing our graduate degree, students will:

- a. Possess an in-depth understanding of Clinical Mental Health Counseling.
- b. Demonstrate self-reflective counseling skills honed through extensive and closely supervised clinical practice.
- c. Demonstrate rich multicultural awareness that embraces and advances diversity and social justice values.
- d. Embody a professional counselor identity.
- e. Display a scientific mindset and an interest in scholarship and profession-centered activities.
- f. Understand strategies to integrate psychodynamic thought and emerging best practices into clinical work.

SECTION 2: GENERAL POLICIES

A. DEGREE TYPE

The Counseling Department offers a Master of Arts (MA) degree. On the student's transcript, 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 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. CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT IN OTHER DEGREE-GRANTING PROGRAMS

Students cannot be enrolled in another degree-granting program at Northwestern or any other academic institution *concurrently* with enrollment in the Counseling program.

3. 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.

4. CREDIT FOR COURSEWORK

With 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 courses. [Counseling coursework](#). See the Northwestern formula for credits here ([See NU coursework credit breakdown](#)). Also, see Appendix II for coursework details.

5. TUITION

The program has no say over what tuition the university charges. The tuition rate for each course is established by the University and may change each academic year. View tuition cost details ([Tuition Costs](#))

6. STEPS TO GRADUATE AND BE CONFERRED THE DEGREE

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, PY) 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. Complete the program's CAPSTONE requirement and earn a grade of Pass.
- g. See TGS graduation requirements link here ([TGS Master's Degree Requirements](#))

C. PROGRAM CURRICULA

1. OPTIONS SELECTED AT ENROLLMENT

The courses required for the Master of Arts in Counseling are reflective of the national counseling program standards. These courses are based on the 2024 Standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). See Appendix I and II for a full breakdown of all curricula and coursework requirements. Admitted students enroll in one of two curricula plans that determine the required number of courses taken to complete the degree.

- a. Standard or Core Curriculum – The Standard Curriculum is an intensive program for students entering the Counseling field with academic and experiential background in psychology or human services and prior clinical experiences. Immediately upon starting the program, the Practicum fieldwork experience begins at The Family Institute at Northwestern University. This first year is closely supervised experience of counseling clients while taking courses and participating in Reflective Practice Supervision. It is this closely supervised experience that allows students to participate in an immersive training model. Students in the Standard Curriculum attend the program full-time and complete 24 courses over two years. In the Practicum year, students enroll in the three-quarter Counseling Methods course along with two additional courses, meet weekly with a site supervisor and complete the Practicum at The Family Institute where a minimum of 50 hours of direct client contact is accrued. In the Internship year, students work at an external field site where a minimum of 600 hours are accrued of which 240 hours are spent in direct client contact. Electives are courses taken beyond the 24 required for the degree. Elective coursework is optional and incurs additional tuition payments.
- b. The 2-Plus Curriculum fondly called by its historical name on-campus still (same as “Bridge” online) is a special curriculum designed for qualified students entering the Counseling field for the first time following a career in another discipline and/or with minimal academic and experiential background in psychology or human services. It is unique to the Northwestern counseling program and reflects the program's appreciation of the value of a "second career" for those desiring it while recognizing the importance of adequate preparation for practice in this highly complex and challenging field. Students complete an accelerated summer of study doing two of the three introductory courses (479-1 & 2). They then transition into the standard program, completing the third introductory course 479-3 in the Fall quarter, as an overload. **Note:** *All three introductory courses require additional tuition.* Electives are courses taken beyond the 27 required for the degree. Elective coursework is optional and incurs additional tuition payments.

2.CHILD AND ADOLESCENT SPECIALIZATION

In the Standard or 2-Plus curriculum, 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 or core coursework with an emphasis on children and adolescents.

These courses include: COUN 413- Human Growth and Lifespan Development -2 (Child & Adolescent Focus), COUN 426-Assessment -2 (child/Adolescent Focus), COUN 436- Counseling Children and Adolescents, COUN 453-Evaluation and Treatment of Trauma -2 (Child & Adolescent Focus) and COUN 440- Play Therapy Methods.

In addition to required child/adolescent coursework, students must complete fieldwork experience related to this area of professional interest in working with youth. The student must communicate this by the end of the first quarter of studies, 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 22 (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 program leadership. 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.

D. REGISTRATION POLICIES

1. HOW TO REGISTER

To register for courses, see [The Graduate School's General Registration Policies](#). Any NU holds (financial or otherwise) must be cleared 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's policies (see [Changes in registration](#))

2. WHO CAN REGISTER FOR CLASSES

Only officially admitted, active students (i.e., students not on leave of absence, discontinued or withdrawn) 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.

3. ACCELERATING AND DECELERATING STUDIES

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

Acceleration and deceleration are likely only to 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 study's curriculum plan upheld. In such cases, to continue an existing study plan, students may take a leave of absence.

4. 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 and overall tuition costs.

5. AUDITING POLICY

Students will not be allowed to audit classes.

6. MAINTAINING CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION

All active students must register continuously in fall, winter, spring, (or summer term if relevant) until all degree requirements have been completed. Students approaching graduation who have incompletes in clinical training courses must consult their Clinical Training leaders to determine the appropriate registration (TGS 512) to fulfill the continuous registration policy. Incompletes in any course and a need to maintain continuing registration to

complete clinical training requirements impact students' capacity 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's correspondence, guidance, and messages to complete the actions that impact whether they have met conditions to earn their degree.*

7. STUDENTS 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 entirely. *Students must assume full responsibility for the impact of course changes, including tuition increases and time delays in degree completion.*

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 in which they are admitted 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 not officially started 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 faculty advisors and the Assistant Program Director or Department Chair 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* from the program. 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

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 Academic 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 Student and Alumni Affairs Manager for processing.

2. LEAVES 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 personnel, the Assistant Program Director, and 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.

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](#).

SECTION 3: CLASSROOM POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS

A. ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICY

All class sessions are extremely important, and students must attend them. To earn credit students must attend each class session to complete courses and the program does not distinguish between an excused and unexcused absence. The consequences of two (2) or fewer absences in class are governed by the course syllabus and the instructor and may vary from course to course. The consequence of three (3) absences is governed by departmental policy, *does not vary from course to course*, and will lead to an automatic failure of the course regardless of the student's standing in the program and course. **Note:** *Only extraordinary circumstances (e.g., serious illness of student or immediate family members some other debilitating experiences that prohibit the student's capacity to attend class) will qualify for exceptions to the three (3) absence/course failure policy. In the face of extraordinary circumstances (as determined by concrete evidence) the instructor, course leadership, and executive program leadership will determine the consequences of three (3) or more absences.*

B. IF TAKING A CLASS ONLINE, ATTEND CLASS USING BOTH VIDEO AND AUDIO ACCESS

Students must be visible and audible to instructors and other students, and webcams and phones should be in good working condition for class each meeting. *This expectation can be altered by a documented need for technological accommodation based on a plan determined by AccessibleNU.* Students are advised to troubleshoot technical concerns well before technological glitches are a barrier to participation and engagement. When technology issues become a regular obstacle to class participation, absence and tardiness policies will apply. In other words, a pattern of technology-related excuses for missing synchronous sessions, which negatively impacts the ability to attend class, will not be excused. Students are expected to have a "back-up" plan to address technological glitches.

C. SHOW UP TO CLASS ON TIME

Class will start promptly at the scheduled time. Students should show up 10 minutes before class to ensure they are prepared to join the in person (or online live session). Showing up either 15 minutes late or leaving 15 minutes early will be counted as a full absence. Accumulated absences can result in a failing grade in the class (see the attendance and absence policy in 3.A).

D. COME TO CLASS PREPARED

Each week, students should read, view, and participate in all required materials listed in the class syllabus and complete preparatory questions at the latest, 24 hours before class starts. Students should be prepared to discuss the current week's material even if they have considered it in advance. Students are expected to make a

reasonable contribution to class discussions and activities. Participation in class components will count towards the course grade.

E. REFRAIN FROM RECREATIONAL USE OF YOUR DEVICES DURING CLASS

Devices are a large part of contemporary lives, and it is hard to put them away. Computers or tablets should be used only for notetaking and attending live sessions. Texting, TikToking, Tweeting, Snapping, Instagramming, Facebooking, emailing, shopping, web-surfing, etc., are prohibited. At the instructor's discretion, there will be deductions from a student's final course points if on-screen behaviors during class interfere with participation or interrupt the learning environment. Students who use assistive technology for classes as part of approved accommodations by AccessibleNU should discuss the use of such devices with the instructor.

F. KEEP UP WITH DUE DATES/TIMES OF ALL ASSIGNMENTS

Specific due dates for assignments are provided by each instructor on course syllabi. *It is the student's responsibility to keep up with these deadlines.* Obtain further clarity on assignments before they are due. Students should communicate with instructors via email if they need help, so both have a record of the communication. Students are urged to communicate with their instructors proactively. Extensions may be granted at the instructor's discretion, provided the communication occurs BEFORE the due date, not after. Late submissions will incur a submission penalty as determined by the instructor. Students registered with AccessibleNU should discuss with the instructor approved accommodations that impact assignment submission dates/times.

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

Specifically, student conduct that persistently disrupts classes will be because of Remediation and Discipline, (Section 5: D-J). Also see the [NU Student Handbook](#)

1. CONDUCT YOURSELF ETHICALLY AND HONORABLY IN AND OUT OF THE IN-PERSON OR ONLINE CLASSROOM

- a. Do not recycle papers written in other classes for assignments in a course (self-plagiarism).
- b. Treat your classmate's disclosures with respect and a nonjudgmental stance.
- c. Do not smoke or vape while attending class or on the campus premises
- d. If online, attend class in a private setting to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) which forbids exposure of synchronous class sessions to anyone except the student.
- e. If online, use the Chat Box online to comment only on materials being discussed in class. Avoid excessive and inappropriate comments. Do not pause your camera, except in emergencies.
- f. If online, check with your instructor about eating in class. In some classes, this might be distracting to the learning process.
- g. If online, keep your visual area free from distractions, including children and pets.

H. 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 or delay graduation. Extenuating situations may arise that justify the need for an incomplete grade and the following policy must be followed.
- b. The student discusses with each instructor 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.*
- c. The course instructor seeks consultation with program leaders (as the situation may require) as to whether an incomplete should be approved or disallowed.
- d. At the earliest convenience, the instructor communicates a decision about the incomplete grade to the student, with clarity of why the incomplete is allowed or disallowed.
- e. If approved, the student and instructor will create a plan for completion of coursework that includes: a list of the outstanding course material, a timeline for completion, and clear consequences for not completing the coursework within that timeline. The plan needs to be realistic for both instructor and student and should aim to resolve the incomplete as soon as possible, preferably before mid-quarter immediately following the current quarter in which the incomplete stands.
- f. 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. *Note that a late class withdrawal will have tuition consequences.*
- g. Incomplete grades are time limited and require a clear plan for completion between the student and course instructor. Please follow these steps to request an incomplete grade:

3. PASS/NO PASS, NO CREDIT OPTION FOR SELECTED COURSES

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 drops 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 an Academic Probation, they are required to collaborate with the Assistant Program Director on an academic remediation process.

Since 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 AND CLINICAL TRAINING

In COUN 481-1, 481-2, or 481-3 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 the student provides the required documentation, a grade is assigned. When a student is unable to complete the requirements of practicum due to obtaining a placement late or is still acquiring the required clinical hours through no fault of their own, a grade of K (status in progress) is given until the hours or documentation is completed. When the student completes practicum requirements in its entirety a quality grade will be assigned (A, B, C, or F).

Similarly, in COUN 482-1, 482-2, or 482-3 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 the student provides the required documentation, a grade is assigned. When a student is unable to complete the requirements of Internship due to obtaining a placement late or is still acquiring the required clinical hours through no fault of their own, a grade of K (status in progress) is given until the hours or documentation is completed. When the student completes internship requirements in its entirety a quality grade will be assigned (A, B, C, or F).

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 here ([Academic Probation Policies](#)). 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 quarter is excluded from the academic probation requirement. Students on academic probation are required to meet with the Assistant Program Director for academic and curriculum coaching and remediation planning.

C. PROGRAM ACTION RELATED TO ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS

The Assistant Program Director or Department Chair monitors the student's experience from admission to graduation and is notified when a student repeats and fails a course a second time. Program leadership 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 are required to meet with program leadership 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 (instructor mentorship, [AccessibleNU](#), writing support, or consultations with faculty advisors or program leaders. Students may also be advised to work with the ADA to determine what disability accommodation they may need. Students in their second quarter of academic probation are required to meet

with a program leader to determine whether an extension of the student's academic probation is needed. Should program leaders 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 the 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 students who fail to meet the academic progress requirements. See a full description of exclusion policies ([TGS 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 emotion management, repair of relational ruptures, and emotional intelligence in dealing with others. Upsets with faculty, peers, administrators, or others, or frustration with program experiences are evitable. Becoming upset is understandable. How students deal with upsets is the target of this policy. We hold all members of the community, including students, accountable to abiding 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 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. This policy also includes a reasonable chain of escalation towards resolution, to any extent possible remaining open to effective repair. We require students to follow these principles in relation to any grievance 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 Assistant Program Director and inform their faculty advisor. If the instructor is the Assistant Program Director or if the issue the student may escalate their concern 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.6. The grievance process is designed to ensure that the student is treated fairly and that alternative resolutions can be formulated to resolve the dispute.

3. GENERAL GRIEVANCE (NOT- CLASSROOM RELATED)

Students should make a good faith effort to resolve non-class related difficulty 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 Assistant 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 formulated to resolve the dispute.

4. GRIEVANCES WITH CLINICAL TRAINING SITE PERSONNEL

Grievances in Clinical Training (e.g., with a clinical supervisor) can be just as important as those in other areas of the program. This responsibility is enhanced by students' engagement with real-world clients in a helping role. While flexibility is significant at all placement sites, students must make every effort to fulfill agreements outlined in the Clinical Training Agreement signed at the beginning of the Practicum and Internship experiences. 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 Assistant Program Director)
- b. If the Assistant Program Director is the person with which the student is aggrieved and there is no

resolution after providing feedback directly, the student should contact the Department Chair.

- c. The Chair will discuss steps to facilitate further resolution of this problem, which may include several processes or steps.
- d. In resolving escalated and complex disputes clinical training leaders will consult with the Department Chair to find resolutions
- 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 A7. The grievance process is designed to ensure that the student is treated fairly and that alternative resolutions can be formulated to resolve the dispute.

5. GRIEVANCES WITH UNIVERSITY SUPERVISORS (RPS or CCS)

The very nature of University Supervision groups is to process content regarding self as a counselor-in- training. Yet, even in this process, student-supervisor conflicts may arise. 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 Assistant Program Director to express concerns.
- c. The Assistant Program Director may discuss the matter with the Department Chair to if needed, to take steps to facilitate further resolution.
- d. 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 formulated to resolve the dispute.

IMPORTANT: Students are not permitted to switch university supervision groups (that is RPS and CCS). 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 should begin with their faculty advisors or the Co-Chair of the Department's Faculty DEI Committee who serves as the DEI advisor. Depending on the situation and in consultation with the Department Chair, faculty advisors or the Student Experience Advocate the DEI faculty co-chair may assist the student by providing consultation, coaching, mentorship, or various other means of support. Per 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 [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 Assistant 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 (e.g., with the intervention of program faculty, leaders, or the Department Chair) 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 of The Family Institute at Northwestern University, who oversees all education programs. Contact Dr. Anthony Chambers at achambers@family-institute.org. The matter will be reviewed by the CAO, who will then meet with the parties involved on one or more occasions in separate meetings or together. If this resolution supported by Dr. Chambers is accepted, the matter is resolved, and the student will be informed in writing of any action steps that will be implemented towards a resolution. The CAO also has the discretion to form a committee (drawing on any resource or individual within the program, the larger TFI or NU community) to study the matter further to create alternative solutions. The CAO may consult with The Graduate School as needed. If this process fails, the student may grieve the process to the University grievance process beginning with [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](#)).

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 the sexual misconduct or discrimination against members of a protected class are resolved through [Northwestern University's Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance](#). 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 process (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 Code of Ethics. When it is not clear which remediation or disciplinary procedures apply, the Assistant Program Director 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., clinical site supervisors) 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 process (see Section 5: D-J), which includes levels of intervention commensurate with the seriousness of the violations.

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 to 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:
- b. In the CACREP Standards (2024), KPD are defined as "The commitments, characteristics, values, beliefs, interpersonal functioning, and behaviors that influence the counselor's professional growth and interactions with clients and colleagues (page 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"* (Page 20).
- c. 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.
 - iv. 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.

- c. 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: OPERATIONALIZING OF KEY PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

Key Professional Dispositions	Specific 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. 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 Section 5: C-J (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](#))

- b. Each KPD is rated on a 3-point Likert scale with the following item indicators: 1 = Dispositional Concern, 2 = Appropriately Developing, 3 = Well-Developed

3. EFFORTS TO FACILITATE STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

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

- a. Step 1: On an ongoing basis and throughout the duration of the program, program personnel such as faculty, university, and site supervisors, and advisors will discuss with students their strengths and growth areas (deficiencies) as a developmental and systemic part of CACREP-endorsed education and training to become clinical mental health counselors. Student strengths and concerns will be discussed among faculty at program meetings and supervisors and group supervisors during supervisor and group supervisor meetings. Where there are concerns, faculty members, advisors, or clinical supervisors will first attempt to discuss their concerns directly with the student. This is the first basic level of advising and coaching, some informally.

The first level of advising and coaching will be advisory and will be facilitative of change. Feedback to students about their conduct and/or dispositions will be developmental in focus and linked to education and training missions related to clinical mental health practice. The hope is that many deficiencies will be resolved at this level. Additionally, practicum and internship supervisors will hold regular reviews with the Clinical Training team, and evaluations from site supervisors will be recorded in the online student database, TEVERA. Ideally, fieldwork deficiencies will be resolved at this level. Supervisors, group supervisors, and faculty will inform the Assistant Program Directors of any student concerns and resolutions at this level.

- b. Step 2: Any teaching or training faculty or personnel who believes that a student continues to display a deficiency not resolved at a first level will make a referral to the Student Support Advocate indicating a need for Level 2 coaching. When this happens, the Student Support Advocate will evaluate concerns about the student, seeking additional information as needed from the referring party. If the Student Support Advocate 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 Student Support Advocate will set up a coaching meeting with the student. 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 requested to attend a "coaching" meeting, the student is required to show up at the designed time and virtual location. If the student is unresponsive to Step 2 coaching and remedial strategies, and if a student's disposition or conduct does not improve and deficiencies persist, the Student Support Advocate, in consultation with the students' faculty advisor, will refer the student to Step 3. In the instance when the Student Support Advocate may have a conflicting role with the student, another faculty member or the Assistant Program Director will conduct the coaching meeting or make an assessment to address.

- c. Step 3: If remediation fails at steps 1 and 2, in consultation with the Department Chair and the Assistant Program Director, the Student Support Advocate will initiate Step 3. At step 3, students will be referred to a designated committee of the program, the Student Review Committee (SRC), who will assess students' concerns 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, egregious professional competence breaches as determined by the Assistant Program Director or Department Chair, remediation will begin at Step 3.

- d. Step 4: Students must demonstrate progress in all areas of academic performance, clinical skills, and professional conduct. Either egregious or unprofessional conduct that violates the ACA Code of Ethics, Northwestern Community Standards for example laid out in the Student Handbook or program policies will involve a disciplinary review at Step 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. Continued failing or marginal performances in multiple or repeated clinical training courses in one or more years will lead the consider SRC or student appeal's committee recommendation for expulsion of a student. Expulsion will be based on the number and nature of conduct concerning failed training experiences in the absence of extenuating circumstances. If the Department Chair endorses a decision for expulsion, the student will be notified in writing via email/or by registered mail, and the decision will be final. Students expelled 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.

F. STUDENT REVIEW COMMITTEE, RATIONALE, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Student Review Committee (SRC) is an appointed body in the Counseling Department, to address dispositional and conduct concerns in the student body, which are in violation of standards established by Northwestern University, The Graduate School, The Family Institute, or the Program's leadership and core faculty (for example, as outlined in this handbook). In addition, as sections D.1 and D.2 describe, the program, through the work of the SRC, ensures that students abide by the Code of Ethics for the American Counseling Association (ACA) and requirements and expectations of the program's accreditation body, CACREP. The SRC's goal is to examine allegations of student violations, weight evidence related to alleged violations and where relevant or necessary, provide recommendations to the Department Chair on a course of remedial or disciplinary actions that might alleviate student concerns. In every instance and action, the SRC acts with care for the student's well-being and professional growth and with an eye to ensuring that students live up to the highest values and standards in conduct aligned with the profession of Counseling. Students should be aware that Section 5: D-J as discussed above, are enshrined in the [CACREP 2024 Standards](#)

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 renewal annually. To address scheduling conflicts and conflicts of interest on the part of permanent appointees, a roster of six (6) core faculty will also be appointed and trained to serve as SRC faculty alternates. Faculty SRC members will be selected from both on-campus and online sites of the program. **Note:** *In extremely rare circumstances, where 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.* This ensures that at least two (2) core faculty are present for each SRC hearing. One faculty member will be appointed SRC Chair by the Department Chair on an annual basis. SRC faculty will be deeply familiar with coursework, clinical training, and competence standards in the counseling profession.

2. STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

The SRC committee will also include two (2) student members appointed by the Department Chair. A roster of eight (8) students will be appointed and trained to serve as SRC student alternates. Students SRC members will be selected from both sites of the program. This addresses scheduling conflicts and conflicts of interest on the

part of student appointees. At least two (2) student members will be present for each SRC hearing. **Note:** *In extremely rare circumstances, when there is difficulty scheduling two (2) 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 Assistant Program Director (on-campus); the Assistant Program Directors (online), the Student Experience Advocate (On-campus) 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 the Department Chair) or Core faculty will refer to the SRC if Steps 1 and 2 of remediation fail (See Section 5: E and F). In addition, the seriousness and/or impact of some student dispositions or conduct will automatically lead them to refer a student to the SRC for initiation of remediation at Step 3.

4. SETTING UP SRC HEARINGS

In the event of allegations of unprofessional behaviors in violation of existing university or Departmental policies, the SRC shall determine the appropriate action. A student who faces potential remediation discipline will be given written notice of the policy they are accused of violating and an explanation of the conduct alleged to have broken the rule (SRC referral). Notification of specific grounds and the related hearing's time and place will be delivered by email to the student(s). Students who are requested to attend an SRC hearing should be present at the time and location noted in the meeting request. Should a student be absent for the requested hearing, the meeting will still proceed.

5. SRC HEARING LOGISTICS

Student Review Committee (SRC) hearings will be held in a private virtual meeting room in the learning management system and include the committee and student and other approved personnel.

6. PROCEDURES DURING SRC HEARINGS

During the SRC hearing, the student will be allowed to hear the allegations brought against them again and can fully respond to these allegations, including explaining and offering evidence in support of their position. These hearings will be closed, attended only by SRC members and the student(s) in question and approved support person. Program personnel who refer to a student or the student may request witnesses, and the SRC shall decide what witnesses, if any, may appear. Witnesses are present only during their own testimony and any subsequent questioning by the committee.

7. SCOPE OF SRC DECISION MAKING

The SRC's scope of oversight includes: 1) deciding whether concerns require SRC involvement; 2) working with the student 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 will convene at least once monthly or as needed to adjudicate student concerns. At the beginning of any SRC hearing, all members will be asked to declare any conflicts with students who appear. Members with conflicts will step out of the meeting prior to any student discussion and not return until final committee actions. A majority vote will make decisions of the SRC, 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 to the student sent via the student's official university-approved 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 the Department, a program affiliated institution, The Family Institute, or Northwestern University community, such as a trusted mentor. **Note.** *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 emotional support at the hearing but cannot address the SRC or otherwise participate in or interfere with the hearing process. Disciplinary hearings will not be recorded.

9. SRC ACTIONS FOLLOWING HEARING

Following the SRC hearing, the SRC chair will communicate in writing the Department chair, the committee's assessment, and recommendations. The SRC chair's communication will indicate a determination as to whether the student is held accountable for the violations(s) and recommended remedial actions that may 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 student's 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 university's dean of student's office
- g. Probation
- h. Suspension
- i. Expulsion
- 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 liable 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 and if needed, on 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's 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. Program personnel who need to be aware of the remedial plan
- i. Deadlines for the achievement of requirements
- j. Consequences for failing to fulfill requirements of the Remediation Plan within the stipulated timeline.
- k. 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), then 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.

G. STUDENT REVIEW COMMITTEE ACTION RELATED TO PERSISTENT DISPOSITIONAL DEFICIENCIES

1. DISPOSITIONAL REMEDIATION

- a. Any student receiving an overall KPD rated as "1" or 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" (needing improvement) will be referred to the Director of Student Support for professional coaching. This procedure corresponds to Step 2 in Section 5: C-J. In consultation with the Assistant 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 Step 3.
- b. 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 in consultation 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:
 - i. Repetition of a course or other program requirement
 - ii. Reduced practicum or course load
 - iii. Recommendation to take a Leave of Absence
 - iv. Consultation with Accessible the program's ADA advisor for documentation of disability-related information
 - v. Additional practice experience
 - vi. Increased supervision provided by a core program faculty member.
 - vii. Frequent and regularly scheduled meetings with specific program faculty members or other relevant program personnel, adherence to stated deadlines.
 - viii. Restriction of participation in professional/program activities and other modifications or
 - ix. accommodations as appropriate.

- c. The remediation plan will contain specific details. Following the end of the remediation plan timeline, program leadership review the student's progress and consult 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.

H. 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 lying or falsifying records.
- b. Violations of the ACA Code 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 (i.e., Student Success or Placement Specialists)
- 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 liveclasses.
- 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:

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. Theft of or damage to property on Northwestern University premises, field sites facilities, or at program events
- d. Obstruction or disruption of teaching, research, administration, hearing procedures, or other authorized activities in Northwestern University, the digital learning community, or affiliate field sites
- e. Forgery, alteration, or misuse of Northwestern University or program documents, records, or identification or knowingly furnishing false information to the university or program.
- f. Impeding or misguiding a remediation process on a conduct violation.
- g. 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:

- a. 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.
- b. Giving, receiving, or utilizing unauthorized aid on examinations or assignments
- c. Plagiarism, misrepresenting the source of academic work, or falsifying attendance or clinical records.
- d. Knowingly and intentionally falsifying or manufacturing scientific, educational, or clinical data and representing them as the result of scholarly research or client assessment
- e. 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
- f. Misusing institutional documents or instruments of identification to defraud
- g. Identifying oneself as someone other than a counseling student and student clinician-in-training.
- h. Misusing the computing and network resources of the university, program, its affiliated institutions.
- i. Being arrested and charged
- j. Participating in academic or clinical endeavors of the University, program, or its affiliated institutions while under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance
- k. Placing a client in needless jeopardy
- l. Disclosing privileged information about a client or fellow student
- m. 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.
- n. Refusing to provide care for a client in a supervised experience.

I. 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 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.

J. STUDENT APPEALS COMMITTEE

1. RIGHT OF APPEAL OF SRC RECOMMENDATIONS

A student subject to the SRC/Program remediation requirements shall have the right to a hearing with a Students 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 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 theth 10 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 of the *ad hoc* student appeal committee. The appeal committee will include one student member of a program-endorsed student group. Appointed by the Department Chair. 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 of two (2) members. Following the Student Appeals Committee's analysis, it may recommend to the Department Chair:

- a. Uphold the SRC's recommendations discussed in the Student Remediation Plan (that is deny the appeal)
- b. Modification of the Student Remediation Plan
- c. Other appropriate action

In considering the recommendations of the Student Appeal Committee to modify a Student Remediation Plan, the Department Chair may wish to meet the committee (without the student) to understand the basis of its decision. The Department Chair will notify the students of the Student Appeal's Committee's decision in writing via email/or by registered mail. 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

The Counseling Program, with online and on-campus sites, 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. They will be endorsed to practice in multiple settings focused on the mental, emotional, and behavioral health of individuals, couples, and families from all backgrounds. When non-counseling work settings are a good match for students' interests and abilities, they will be encouraged to pursue training in such environments. However, students who wish to focus on alternative counseling-oriented work settings or gain specialties other than in the clinical mental health setting will be encouraged to obtain additional training outside of the program's CMHC's orientation.

B. STUDENT LIABILITY INSURANCE POLICY

Counseling students registering for any fieldwork or clinical experience 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 Counselor's Association (AMHCA) [Join AMHCA here](#). Students must submit a copy of the insurance certificate to the Clinical Training team before they can begin any fieldwork or clinical experience.

C. COUNSELING PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE POLICY

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

D. DUAL RELATIONSHIP POLICY

Current students 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

The use of technology is governed by the policies of Northwestern University information Technology (NUIT). NUIT policies can be found here [NUIT Policies](#). The rights and responsibilities for the use of network and computing resources at Northwestern University are summarized [NUIT Guidelines](#). Students are also accountable to follow the guidelines of the Family Institute especially as it relates to the HIPAA protections of clients. These policies are discussed below.

F. GUIDELINES—ELECTRONIC MEDIA, SOCIAL MEDIA, EMAIL

1. ELECTRONIC AND SOCIAL MEDIA

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). Especially for work in the Bette D. Harris Clinic, The Family Institute gives each student an additional email account with necessary encryption as it is important to respect the privacy and confidentiality of clients per HIPAA guidelines. Students are required to use their TFI email accounts for all clinic or client related matters. At no time should PHI be downloaded to a personal computer, tablet, smartphone, or other mobile devices, nor portable mass storage devices (Hard disks, USB Flash Drives, etc.). Doing so is a violation of TFI policies and HIPAA and is grounds for remedial action at Step 3 (see Section 5: C-J)). If students have any issues or questions that are electronic email- related, please contact [The Family Institute's Help Desk](#).

Students' primary NU e-mail addresses end with the following domain: @northwestern.edu. The use of this

account is mandated for communication with faculty, administration, and the professional staff on matters related to coursework and other non-client communications. All official information and announcements from Northwestern will be delivered to this account.

Students will receive TFI related business through their TFI emails. Students are expected to read and respond to emails sent from the school and keep their family- institute.org email address active. Messages sent to students' primary Northwestern e-mail addresses will deliver mail to their Microsoft Exchange mailbox. A variety of resources are available to assist in setting up computers and mobile devices. Please see additional information here [NUIT Infrastructure](#). Students are required to continue to use the Northwestern University's Exchange account as their primary academic email location on internship. The @northwestern.edu email is not to be forwarded to any Google account or third- party email system.

G. LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS - 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; and
- d. Why it is suspicious.

If there is an emergency, call 911.

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

A. CLINICAL TRAINING DEPARTMENT

A deeply experienced clinical training team, consisting of the Assistant Program Director and the Clinical Training Director and clinical supervisors and facilitators oversee the depth, breadth, and quality of student clinical training experiences. They assist students throughout the internship site selection process: from selection of site, through the interviewing process and formal acceptance of training opportunities. During Practicum, students train at The Family Institute clinic, across several sites, which serve as their *field site*. In addition, students are assigned in small groups of 5 with a University Supervisor, who provides Reflective Practice Supervision. In the Internship year, students are assigned a clinical supervisor at their field site. In addition, they meet weekly with a University Supervisor who provides Case Conference Supervision (CCS) in groups of no more than twelve students.

B. CLINICAL TRAINING SUPPORT STRUCTURE ON-CAMPUS

1. Clinical Training core leaders - The Assistant Program Director and Clinical Training Director are core faculty members who oversee various components of supervised professional practice, maintaining close contact with students, supervisors, sites, etc. The Director and Coordinator of the Bette D. Harris Clinic also functions as training faculty in overseeing client assignments and concerns. These faculty and staff are the first layer of troubleshooting of any concerns about the clinical training experience.
2. Site supervisors. Each student practices under the guidance, training, and mentorship of a designed site supervisor during every stage of Practicum and Internship. During the Practicum experience students train at The Family Institute and receive triadic supervision onsite (i.e., two students and one supervisor meeting together). During internship students train at community field sites and receive individual supervision from one or more site supervisors. Students may also receive additional supervision during their training experiences (e.g., group or team supervision).
3. University supervisors. University supervisors (distinct from site supervisors) are those who provide oversight of clinical training at the program level. University supervisors work with students in Reflective Practice Supervision groups during the Practicum year and Case Conference Supervision (CCS) groups during Internship. University supervisors meet regularly with core faculty responsible for clinical training, individually, and collectively.
4. Documentation manager. The on-campus program's educational coordinator also serves as documentation manager overseeing student records and documentation of clinical training experiences. Clinical training activities are documented in a tracking system called TEVERA. Students, field supervisors, university supervisors, and Clinical Training leaders work together to ensure successful attainment of clinical training experiences.
5. Other faculty. Clinical training faculty work alongside the faculty of the three courses in counseling methods to ensure transcription requirements are met for students to proceed into Internship. An incomplete grade in any Methods course precludes a student from moving onto the next level of training.

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. PRACTICUM PLACEMENT

The Practicum courses, COUN 481-1, 481-2, 481-3, Supervised Practicum in Counseling occur within the overall developmental training model. Practicum accommodates the student's initial level of professional development, to promote counselor identity, self-awareness, multicultural awareness, and the development of clinical skills. Practicum serves primarily to introduce students to clinical work, professional and clinical roles, a diverse range of clients, the counseling process and professional practice, supervision, and the supervisory relationship.

Practicum students on-campus train in the [Bette D. Harris Clinical at The Family Institute](#). Students are required to accrue 200 hours of supervised fieldwork, 50 of which are in direct face-to-face contact with clients. Direct contact hours with clients are defined by face-to-face contact or one-to-one virtual sessions with clients in the same physical room alone or with a supervisor. Students can expect to spend about 10 hours per week at the clinic for a minimum of 3 quarters. Site supervisors are selected and trained for triadic supervision, by the clinical training leadership. Prior to orientation week, students will be emailed their supervisor assignments and triadic teams. Hours for practicum can only be counted toward the required direct and indirect hour totals when enrolled in a practicum course. Thus, any observation or pre-authorized experiences before the start of practicum will not count toward required practicum hours. Accrual of face-to-face client hours will be closely tracked by the triadic supervisor in conjunction with the Clinical Training Director and the Assistant Program Director. The numbers will be monitored at the end of each month at the Triadic Supervisor Meetings. The following guidelines have been suggested to help students stay on track to meet the 50-hour requirement:

- a. Accrue 15 Face-to-Face Client Hours by end of December 2024 (before the start of Winter Break)
- b. Accrue 35 Face-to-Face Client Hours by March 2025 (the start of Spring Break)
- c. REQUIRED to accrue 50 Face-to-Face Client Hours by the end of May 2025 (Or students will continue into Summer Quarter)

NOTE: The above will determine the recommended number of sessions per week that students should have to reach the 50-hour requirement. Triadic supervisors work with each student to ensure that hours are met and will help if there are problems.

3. INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT

The internship courses, COUN 482-1, 482-2, 482-3, Supervised Internship equip students with 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. The selection of a specific internship site is coordinated between the student and the Assistant Program Director and Clinical Training Director.

Internship students are required to accrue 600 hours of supervised fieldwork, of which, 240 hours must be Face-to-Face and the remaining 360 hours will be acquired through additional clinical work, indirect hours, and supervision hours. Students spend a minimum of 15-20 hours per week with the site for a minimum of 3 quarters. Many internships begin over the summer months. Hours for the internship can only be counted toward the required direct and indirect hour totals when enrolled in the internship course (482-0).

4. INTERNSHIP PROCEDURES

- a. **Getting started** - Students begin the process by completing a Fieldwork Placement form requesting information about clinical interests, specialty areas of training, other preferences, logistics and constraints. This form serves as the basis for discussion at individual Internship meetings where Internship placements are identified. The Placement process begins once these documents are submitted and the student signs up for a selection meeting. Throughout the selection process, students should stay in close communication with the Assistant Program Director and Clinical Training Director. All placement communication will be sent to student's Northwestern email account. Students are expected to respond promptly to ensure the process moves along smoothly.
- b. **Securing a site** - Most internship training sites occur in placements external to The Family Institute and require interviews before being placed. Students work closely with the Assistant Program Director Clinical Training Director who has established relationships with settings. They contact field site directors and provide students with contact information, timelines, and other necessary information so students can arrange interviews accordingly. Due to the highly competitive clinical training context in Chicago, students are encouraged to apply and interview at *several thoughtfully selected* sites. Students are encouraged to accept an offer if one is extended, consulting Clinical Training leadership in doing so. They also must withdraw their applications from other placements once they have officially accepted an internship. Once students are placed at an internship site, they are expected to maintain the policies and procedures of that site as outlined. However, should challenges arise, students should follow the conflict resolution procedure described in this student handbook. Should this conflict resolution procedure not produce meaningful change and the site not meet expectations to help the student meet program demands towards graduation, students should consult with the Assistant Program Director. Every effort will be made to resolve problems at the Internship site between the intern and the supervisor/ agency. Only if the Assistant Program Director deems it necessary, a supplemental or alternative placement site may be pursued to fulfill requirements. In very rare instances, a replacement site will be suggested, and site termination will be initiated with the original site. **Note.** *Clinical training leadership must approve supplemental, and replacement sites, which can only be pursued at the discretion of the Assistant Program Director.*

5. DECLINING AN INTERNSHIP SITE

Significant program resources are dedicated to identifying premier training sites and developing relationships with training directors throughout the city of Chicago and its suburbs. Students are involved in the process of identifying areas of clinical interest and engaging in discussion with the Assistant Program Director and Clinical Training Director throughout the placement process. Every effort is made to identify sites which align with students' clinical interests. By formally applying to a site, students are exercising their own choice and interests. Once they apply to sites, students are strongly encouraged to review and accept clinical training offers and they should work closely and communicate directly with the clinical training leaders around their choice and through each phase of this process.

Declining two sites or more, without significant extenuating circumstances or prior approval may result in remediation and Discipline

D. PLACEMENT PROFESSIONALISM EXPECTATIONS

1. SCHEDULING

As clinical mental health counselors-in-training, students are required to adjust their schedules to those of their sites, supervisors, and clients to complete the required training hours. Additionally, students must be available during regular business hours on training dates when classes are not in session (e.g., 8am-8pm). *When there is a scheduling conflict between site requirements and classes, students must prioritize attending classes.*

2. CODE OF ETHICS

Students must meet and maintain the academic, ethical, and professional competencies and standards related to clinical training. Students are expected to comport themselves professionally at their internship training site. This includes regular and on-time attendance, adherence to clinical site expectations, upholding Northwestern University's Code of Conduct the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics, and Counseling-On campus's student handbook policies. Professional comportment also relates to following the site's dress code and professional expectations for personal grooming.

3. AREA OF INTEREST POLICY

The primary goal of the placement process is to assist students in their efforts to secure placements that help the student develop their area of clinical interests, align with their professional training goals, and meet graduation requirements.

4. FAILURE TO SECURE AN INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT

The program recommends supervisors and clinical sites based on students' areas of clinical interest and preferences (e.g., location). The clinical training team makes concerted efforts to identify highly skilled and top tiered placements and supervisors throughout the city of Chicago. Although every attempt is made to assist students in their efforts to secure an appropriate clinical setting in a time frame that is conducive to completing the program on the student's desired schedule. The program cannot guarantee timely placement, though this is rarely a problem.

5. DENIED PLACEMENT AFTER INTERVIEW

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

- a. Alert the Assistant Program Director to the denied placement after interview
- b. The Assistant Program Director will obtain clarification regarding the denial of placement from the site interviewer
- c. The Assistant Program Director will debrief with the student the site's feedback and assess areas for potential growth (i.e., interview skills, disposition, experience, professionalism, other limitations,
- d. If coaching is necessary, based on the Assistant Program Director's assessment or student request, the Director will work with the student to support growth in areas to succeed in interviewing.
- e. A student may proceed to other placement interviews, once other sites indicate interest
- f. If a student is not placed after one or more interviews, the same process will resume from the first step.

If a student is denied placements after all interviews, the Assistant Program Director will decide if the student is placed in the program's remediation and discipline process (see Section 5: C-J). Important to this decision will be

the student's personal and professional capacity to complete the required clinical training components of the degree program.

E. PRACTICUM AND INTERNSHIP OVERALL REQUIREMENTS

The following process is part of the clinical training experience.

- a. Students are expected to join the American Counseling Association (ACA), American Mental Health Counseling Association (AMHCA), or the Illinois Counseling Association as a student member, where they will secure membership and Professional Liability Insurance. Failure to do so may result in suspension from the clinical training site until insurance is valid. Proof of this insurance must be submitted to the Assistant Program Director via Tevera prior to participating in clinical training.
- b. Proof of professional liability insurance will be required at the beginning of each training experience (Practicum or Internship) usually in the fall.
- c. A Fieldwork contract, that documents the nature and parameters of the experience, must be completed with the student's site supervisor before beginning internship experience. Students are advised to discuss a maximum of 3 weeks off (including between quarters)
- d. Students are required to complete monthly Time Logs that document their direct service, indirect service, and supervision hours in TEVERA. Students must have them electronically approved by the site supervisor, and turn them in every month, by the 5th of each month (CACREP required). Students must take great care to confirm they are entering hours under the correct Quarter (Fall, Winter, Spring), and the right course (Practicum or Internship 1, 2, or 3). Failure to complete Time logs promptly will incur grade and/or disciplinary action/sanctions. Timely completion of logs affords appropriate programmatic monitoring of the experience.
- e. Practicum and Internship students are required to attend weekly triadic or individual site supervision for at least one hour per week (triadic supervisions is 1.5 hours), where they will experience personal clinical supervision to discuss cases, develop skills, understand different professional expectations in their region, and develop a greater clinical counselor identity.
- f. Practicum and Internship students are required to meet weekly in a university supervision group. Practicum students attend the Reflective Practice Supervision (RPS) group to develop areas of professionalism, self-awareness, and group engagement in conjunction with emerging counseling skills (required participation verified at the end of the quarter). An RPS/University 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 with a Case Conference supervision (CCS) group to develop areas of professionalism, self-awareness, group engagement, and clinical skill development. CCS/University Supervisors will provide discussion for intensive, individualized practice of clinical skills and professional development (required participation verified at the end of the quarter).
- g. Students are required to adhere to The Family Institute's and clinical site's policies and procedures and represent themselves and the profession well by following all ethical guidelines of the American Counseling Association, their local, state, and Counseling- On-campus student handbook.
- h. During practicum students will attend Clinical Readiness meetings to support and aid in preparation for

clinical practice. Four meetings will take place during the fall term; these meetings will help students to prepare for working with clients and determine their level of readiness to engage in individual counseling. Once Clinical Readiness is successfully evaluated, students will be released to begin scheduling clients through the clinic.

F. CLINICAL TRAINING HOURLY REQUIREMENTS

1. ABSENCES FROM CLINICAL TRAINING

On occasion, a student may be unable to attend a required experience related to the Practicum or Internship such as attendance at supervision. The student must contact the supervisor as soon as possible to explain why the experience will be/was missed. Students with extenuating circumstances will be excused from attendance by the supervisor on a case-by-case basis. Failure to contact the supervisor will result in an unexcused absence. More than one unexcused **absence** from RPS, CCS, or Triadic supervision may result in sanctions (inability to take new clients) or a grading delay or reduction. Students with excessive excused or unexcused absences in clinical training must make-up the required hours or risk a failure of the Practicum or Internship Coursework. **Note:** *A student will not be excused from accruing the total required direct and indirect hours, despite extenuating circumstances that affect a capacity to attend supervision meetings.*

2. LOGGING CLINICAL TRAINING HOURS

Students in Practicum and Internship log all hours through TEVERA. Both students and supervisors are provided with technical assistance in setting up their TEVERA accounts. All hours are submitted in TEVERA and are reviewed by the site supervisor. Both students and site supervisors are expected to complete monthly time logs no later than the 5th of the following month. Note, hours documented in TEVERA are a permanent record that can be accessed post-graduation as students seek licensure.

3. K AND Y GRADE RATIONALE

A Y grade in practicum (COUN 481-1, 481-2, or 481-3) or internship (COUN 482-1, 482-2, or 482-3) indicates that requirements of the clinical training experience are incomplete. For example, if a student misses 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 grade is assigned. A K grade in practicum (COUN 481-1, 481-2, or 481-3) or internship (COUN 482-1, 482-2, or 482-3) 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 obtaining a placement late or is still acquiring the required clinical hours through no fault of their own, a grade of K (status in progress) is given until the hours or documentation is completed. When the student completes the assignments for practicum or internship or fails to complete assignments for practicum or internship a quality grade will be assigned (A, B, C, or F).

4. LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM CLINICAL TRAINING

A student's leave of absence from the training site and experience must follow a meticulous process to ensure proper care of clients. Any student needing a leave of absence must work closely with the Assistant Program Director to create a clear plan that will support the needs of the clients, site, and trainee. To every extent possible, advanced planning is highly recommended. For ANY leave of absence (unless emergencies in which a student should follow emergency site protocols or ensure their safety), the student must take the following steps:

- a. Meet with the Clinical Training Director (DCT) to discuss the nature of the need for leave.
- b. Partner with Assistant Program 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 the Assistant Program Director of their intent to return from leave (even though they may have also contacted the program or graduate school to take necessary steps). Telling the Assistant Program Director is key to re- establishing training linkages.
- e. The Assistant Program Director will decide the time frame by which the student will return to a field site. The Director will also assess the student's readiness to continue seeing clients (with consultation as needed)
- f. The Assistant Program Director will liaise with the site to support the student's re- entry to the clinical training experience.
- g. If the initial site cannot accommodate the students return after a leave of absence, the Assistant Program Director will decide what options may be possible, such as finding a new site (**Note: students must expect delays in being placed into another site**)

5. CONTINUING FIELD TRAINING BETWEEN TERMS

Students must consult with Clinical Training faculty to be approved to see clients at the Bette. D. Harris clinic after completing Practicum. Client contact hours after practicum will not count toward Internship until the quarter in which the student is officially enrolled in the Internship experience (including 482-0). If student's complete practicum and begin the internship experience in summer quarter prior to September 1 (before the official start of the academic year), the student will register in COUN 482-0 (a noncredit-bearing, zero-tuition course option) to log hours.

6. COUNTING HOURS IN PRACTICUM VERSUS INTERNSHIP

Clinical training hours earned when enrolled in a Practicum course will only be credited to Practicum requirements. There is NO procedure to roll over Practicum clinical training hours to meet Internship requirements. Completion of the practicum level of training is about more than meeting hourly requirements. Practicum training is designed to give students foundational clinical competency, leading to a strong counselor identity in the program's integrated model of coursework, supervision, and other program elements (e.g., course prerequisites). Once students achieve the required number of hours for Practicum, additional hours are not wasted, in that they serve to strengthen counseling skills and capacities.

7. COMPLETING INTERNSHIP, CONFERRING DEGREE

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 Internship, several considerations will be necessary:

- a. Students still working to complete hours for Internship after the quarter has ended must enroll in the following quarter in TGS-512, which currently costs \$100/quarter ([See here for Continuous Registration Policy](#))
- 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.
- c. Students with an incomplete Internship course (Y or K grade) who are still accruing hours must continue in TGS-512 until all clinical training requirements are met.

8. STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN UNIVERSITY SUPERVISION GROUPS

Participation in university supervision groups (RPS and CCS) is required for both Practicum and Internship and students are expected to attend all sessions. With well documented extenuating circumstances, students may be excused from attendance by the supervisor on a case-by-case basis. Failure to contact the University

Supervisor will result in an 'Unexcused' absence. Missing two or **more** university supervision sessions for any reason, unapproved absence may result in a failing grade for Practicum or Internship that quarter. Failing supervision expectations for one quarter may require the student to repeat the experience to ensure that the practicum or internship supervision is completed for three full quarters. Students unable to finish Practicum requirements after taking the last quarter of Practicum will receive an incomplete grade until all requirements for Practicum are completed. At the program's discretion, students may be allowed to make up unavoidable absences.

G. SITE SUPERVISORS

1. QUALIFICATIONS

Site supervisors must meet the requirements outlined in CACREP standards. These include:

- 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. A minimum of two years pertinent professional experience in the program area in which the student is enrolled
- d. Knowledge of the program's expectations, requirements, and evaluation procedures for students
- e. Relevant training in clinical supervision.

2. SITE SUPERVISION

Site supervision both at The Family Institute during the Practicum year and at field sites during Internship, includes both clinical supervision and administrative supervision. For example, Clinical supervision may be considered a process, or interventions 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 professional functioning of the junior colleague. Supervision also involves monitoring the quality of professional services offered to the clients and serving as a gatekeeper for those who are to enter the profession. Administrative supervision ensures that the junior professional fully understands the training context, climate, and culture such as the site's mission and vision and operations and infrastructure, schedule, paperwork, evaluations, and the like. There will be an overlap between clinical supervision and administrative supervision. Site supervision is continuous, mostly face-to-face or virtual, and examines the interface between life experiences and clinical practice. Best practices with site supervision and university supervision modalities are modeling, role-reversal, and reviewing audio or videotapes.

3. STUDENT SAFETY

The Family Institute Bette. D. Harris clinic and other placement sites are responsible and accountable for ensuring the safety of students at their places of practice. While some risk to safety is reasonably expected with any educational experience, site supervisors and sites agree to provide safety supports, standards, and protocols that address the physical, emotional, and psychological needs of the student placed in practicum or internship. Whenever any concerns arise around student safety, the Assistant Program Director must be notified immediately so an appropriate plan can be established. Students who believe that safety standards or well-being are compromised might first attempt to address concerns directly with site supervisors (unless this further endangers the student). While many situations will likely be resolved satisfactorily, student safety is paramount, in some situations, Counseling On-campus will summarily terminate a site/student relationship to protect student's wellbeing. If a site supervisor is not available physically or virtually (e.g., by phone) the student must have a clearly outlined 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 are to inform their RPS or CCS or Assistant Program Director to facilitate the resolution of this issue.

4. CLINICAL TRAINING ONLINE PLATFORMS –TEVERA

The program strives to use the best student-friendly resources to support the clinical experience. Students are expected to maintain proper documentation in Tevera for Practicum and Internship. Students will be trained in using this system and are advised to follow the instructions very carefully to avoid a loss of points for turning in hours or documents late.

IMPORTANT: Students are not permitted to end the relationship with a site or site supervisor during Practicum at The Family Institute or during Internships at field sites before following the steps described above, 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 all site communications related to such termination actions.

H. STUDENT CLINICAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

1. TIMING OF EVALUATIONS

Students are formally evaluated quarterly by their site supervisors. Evaluations will be sent to supervisors electronically. After completing the evaluation, the supervisor will review the evaluation with the trainee, and it will be available to the student. Once the student reviews and approves the evaluation it will be received and reviewed by the Director of Clinical Training. The supervisor's fieldwork evaluation helps to determine the course grade.

If a supervisor has concerns about a student's clinical competence or interpersonal limitations (beyond a typical developmental trajectory for psychotherapy training) during any phase of fieldwork or clinical experience, the site supervisor will first address the matter directly with the student and in a timely fashion. Such conversations will involve devising an action plan to address the deficiencies. All reasonable efforts will be made to assist the student to acquire the necessary skills to be competent and capable as a professional counselor. In the event those efforts fail, and severe concerns persist, the student will be referred to Assistant Program Director for coaching and/or Remediation and Discipline (Section 5: C-J).

2. EVALUATION IN METHOD COURSES

Students' clinical skills are also evaluated in Methods courses (1, 2, and 3) in conjunction with the Practicum courses. Students are required to complete all transcriptions/recordings and requirements in Methods 1-3 before they are permitted to proceed to Internship. In cases where students have not turned in a transcription but have finished practicum hours; they still will not be permitted to register for/ begin internship until those assignments are completed. The Clinical Training team will work closely with the methods instructors to ensure clarity and support throughout the process of securing missing assignments necessary for advancement.

3. REMOVAL FROM A FIELDWORK PLACEMENT SITE

Students must be able to complete their required hours within their fieldwork placements at The Family Institute for Practicum and at community sites for Internship. Students must satisfactorily follow all the policies and procedures required by their site. To be in good standing in the program, a student must remain in good standing with the policies of the clinical training coursework and sites. This includes, at the end of the clinical training experience, appropriate termination with clients and successful completion of all paperwork. 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 Steps 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.

4. 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:

- 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

I. OBSERVATION HOURS

Observation hours include students’ non-direct participation in therapeutic interactions. Observation hours are logged as indirect clinical training experience (e.g., indirect hours or personal growth) in either the Practicum or Internship experience. Observation hours MAY include observing individual sessions with adults or youth, couples counseling, family counseling, or group counseling viewing a counseling session from behind a 2-way mirror, viewing a live counseling session over video, or any other time when the student is not directly interacting with the client. Practicum or Internship students who participate in Project Strengthen and conduct co-therapy will log their Project Strengthen hours as direct client contact hours.

J. OFF-SITE COUNSELING

On occasion, students may be required to participate in clinical training experiences away from The Family Institute or the designated clinical training site, also known as supplemental training. All off-site supplemental training sites will require special arrangements from the Assistant Program Director before participating.

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

1. DOING TELEMENTAL HEALTH

Some clinical training sites may offer clients the opportunity to receive services via tele-mental health (TMH) platforms. Ultimately, the use of such modalities is subject to the approval of the Clinical Training team and site supervisor during the placement vetting process. The following are guidelines for students and sites to ensure that hours and experiences will fulfill academic requirements:

- a. TMH must be done with video and audio – no phone-only or text-message counseling (unless there is an extenuating circumstance for a client that has been approved by the site supervisor)
- b. Clients and counseling students are strongly encouraged to meet in person before starting TMH.
- c. Once approved for practicum or internship, appropriate training on the online counseling platform and

TMH is required.

- d. HIPAA compliance must be attested to by the site (an email from the site supervisor to the assigned Clinical Training Director)
- e. Counseling must adhere to state and local laws regarding TMH or online counseling and online supervision
- f. Face to face supervision between student and supervisor is preferred but student and supervisor may engage in online supervision
- g. Clinical hours obtained via TMH must be tagged in TEVERA as TMH

L. PRACTICUM COMPLETION AND INTERNSHIP

1. PRACTICUM AND METHODS SEQUENCE OF COURSES

The full Practicum sequence (quarter 1, 2, and 3) 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 complete Practicum and move onto Internship when any of the following circumstances are present:

- a. The student has not completed the required clinical training hours for practicum
- 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, 2, or 3 or a failing grade in Methods 1, 2, or 3
- d. Students has an incomplete grade in Practicum 3 but are still accruing hours for supervision until Practicum clinical training hours are completed

M. 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 standards of authenticity and accuracy. Misrepresenting or falsifying clinical training experiences violates the academic integrity policy of Counseling- On-campus and will result in immediate discipline at Steps 3 (see Section 5: C-J).

N. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The program welcomes 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 accommodations. Accommodations do not change the number of hours required to complete Practicum or Internship, nor do they change the required documentation indicated in each course. Students are encouraged to work closely with the Assistant Program Director to determine what disability accommodations they may need to address their unique needs with clinical fieldwork placement.

O. 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 site requests for a criminal background check. Students

should be prepared to transparently address any issues with their criminal background with their site supervisor and program leadership. Note, sites have the right to refuse training to a student with a documented criminal background. Further, the program has 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 strictly prohibited from misusing controlled substances, intoxicants, alcohol, and prescription drugs that cause in toxify while working, engaging in the classroom, attending group immersion or capstone, other university-sponsored events, and all field training site experiences. In accordance with 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, that leads to professional misconduct. Students in violation of this drug and alcohol policy will be subject to Section 5: C-J and also Northwestern University.

3. ETHICAL CODE OF CONDUCT

The program adheres to the code of ethics of the American Counseling Association ([ACA Code of Ethics](#)). 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 the ethical codes of ACA 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 Code of Ethics will result in remedial and disciplinary action (see Section 5: C-J).

P. STATE LICENSURE AND ACCREDITATION

The program adheres to CACREP requirements for all clinical training procedures which should privilege students to become licensed in any state of their choosing. However, some states go beyond CACREP requirements in their requirements and standards for obtaining a professional counseling or a mental health license. To the extent possible, the Department will support students to acquire the necessary experiences to maximize their chances of getting licensed in the states in which they want to reside post- graduation. Students are encouraged to work closely with their teaching and training faculty and regularly check state licensure requirements to remain abreast on 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 (insert licensure link here). Students needing documentation regarding degree or clinical training hours completion may contact the on-campus site's Education Program coordinators.

Q. POLICY ON DISCRIMINATION, SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND HARASSMENT

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, 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 accommodations 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 accommodations should be directed to Northwestern's Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance (<https://www.northwestern.edu/civil-rights-office>), 1800 Sherman Avenue, Suite 4- 500, Evanston, Illinois 60208, 847-467-6165.

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 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.

Note: *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. COURSE EVALUATIONS (BY THE COURSE AND TEACHER EVALUATION COUNCIL-CTEC)

Students are strongly urged to evaluate each course and instructor at mid quarter and at the end of every quarter utilizing the program's evaluation as well as 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.

B. EXIT INTERVIEWS & EXIT SURVEYS

Before graduation, all students on the ground will also be required to complete the COUN 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. Also, all students must meet with program leadership for an exit interview to provide feedback, reflection, and recommendations regarding all aspects of the program. Results from the Exit Survey (and Exit Interviews, where relevant) are used to improve the program. Results from the Exit Survey and Exit Interviews 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.

C. EXAMINATIONS

1. NATIONAL COUNSELOR EXAMINATION FOR LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION

a. EXAMINATION OVERVIEW

The National Board offers the National Counselor Examination for Licensure and Certification (NCE) for Certified Counselors (NBCC). The primary national certification offered by NBCC is the NCC (National Certified Counselor). The NCC is a master's level, a voluntary credential held by many counselors and their state licensure.

b. EXAMINATION PROCESS

At a stipulated time in the internship year, students can 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 the Fall Quarter, interns will receive information regarding the application, preparation, and examination process.

c. CAPSTONE RESEARCH PRESENTATION

In their last quarter of studies, students are required to give an in-person 45-minute oral presentation with supporting PowerPoint and handout at Capstone. The audience will be the Counseling Program community of faculty, mentors, and students. The presentation, directed at an area/topic of study, should demonstrate a) integration of various aspects of training (e.g., theory, science, practice), and b) novel work or ideas in this area. Rather than merely reviewing or regurgitating well-established scholarship, the Capstone project should build upon the knowledge students have learned throughout the program, applying existing knowledge to new areas, in new ways, or even creating something new altogether. Students are encouraged to reflect upon their time as a student and create a presentation that taps into their strengths, passion, creativity, and growing identity as a professional counselor. This project could take many forms: clinical intervention development or assessment, evidence-based practices in an area of specialty, case study, a formal research presentation. Students receive additional information and guidance in the process of selecting and preparing a Capstone. **Note:** *Students will be required to enroll in the program's Capstone course (a non-credit, zero tuition course) in the quarter of completing Capstone.*

SECTION 9: SUPPORT SERVICES

A. GRADUATE WRITING PLACE

The Graduate Writing Place provides individual writing consultations with Graduate Writing Fellows (Ph.D. candidates at Northwestern) 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, Skype, or chat, and the student should attach their writing to the appointment block within the system beforehand. In rare instances (generally due to time 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. Clients should also note that writing consultants will not perform grammatical line editing during such meetings. For more information on Writing Place policies, please visit [Writing Place Policies](#)

B. 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 [Disability Accommodations Policies](#)

C. 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](#).

D. STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: NU COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES - 1-847-491-2151

If students find themselves struggling with mental, emotional, or physical health issues, approach the instructor or advisor to discuss options. Be aware that even though instructors are trained therapists they cannot provide students with therapeutic support, as that constitutes dual relationships and violations of ethical counseling practices. [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS) Northwestern CAPS is fully committed to providing services that affirm the dignity, worth, and value of all individuals. We believe in creating an atmosphere of openness, trust, respect, and safety where diverse attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors can be explored and discussed. We seek to understand and honor individual differences, including but not limited to experiences related to race, ethnicity, national origin, religious and spiritual beliefs, gender, sexuality, physical and mental abilities, size and appearance, and socio-economic status.

E. CAREER ADVANCEMENT COUNSELING

The mission of Northwestern Career Advancement (NCA) is to foster excellence in career development, preparation, and professional opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students and alumni by providing comprehensive services and programming and by promoting strong partnerships with employers, academic departments, and the university community. Students desiring career development information should see the [Career Development Office](#)

F. SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND PREVENTION

Northwestern University is committed to fostering an environment in which all members of the campus community 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 Counseling- On-campus students for on-campus events such as Group immersion weekends and other program events. See [Get Help for Sexual Misconduct](#).

G. PROGRAM EVENTS

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

1. PERSONAL/PROFESSION WELLNESS AND GROWTH WORKSHOP SERIES

The Personal and Professional Wellness and Growth series is a co-curricular opportunity designed to help Counseling students to explore and embrace knowledge and skills consistent with a professional counseling career. In a series of workshops, offered throughout the academic year, students will participate in a variety of activities directly and linked to their growth and wellbeing. Entities closely associated with the program (Alumni Association, Northwestern University offices such Career Services, Student organizations or other local interest groups will offer students the support needed for transition from graduate studies to the workplace. Students will find event dates in the program calendar. In addition, all activities will be well advertised to engage student participation.

2. GROUP DYNAMICS IMMERSION

The Group Dynamics Immersion (GDI) takes place in the Spring quarter of Practicum training year when COUN 412 – the group coursework is taught. The GDI is a three-day experience held at The Family Institute or campus location from Thursday through Saturday. The conference is guided by a team of seasoned practitioners, and it is a living laboratory in which students experience and examine group, institutional and diverse dynamics. Integrated with the group course, the GDI generates powerful experiential learning. The process unfolds throughout the program, as knowledge of the unconscious and covert processes that are active in groups and

organizations, is applied to the students' therapeutic work. Extensive planning undergirds the GDI, and students will be provided with thorough detail related to attendance and participation. **Note:** *The GDI event is mandatory curricula event for all practicum students*

3. SUPERVISOR LUNCHEON AND COLLOQUIUM

The Annual Supervisor Luncheon and Colloquium is a time-honored tradition for over three decades in the Program where supervisors are recognized for their contributions to the development of student trainees. The event includes a luncheon, award ceremony and professional continuing education presentation by a notable speaker in the supervision field. The event is attended by program staff, supervisors, students, faculty, and preceptors. The Supervisor Luncheon and Colloquium is an event to honor the work of supervisors and to show gratitude for the mentorship of students. **Note:** *This event is mandatory for all active students in the program.*

4. CAREERS NIGHT

Students spend an exciting and informative evening with program alumni as they share their wisdom and experience regarding professional opportunities in the counseling field. Panel members represent a wide range of settings and professional specialties. As such, they discuss their career paths, highlight career opportunities and hiring trends for counselors and offer career planning suggestions and advice on conducting a successful job search. A networking reception follows the panel discussion.

5. STUDENT MENTORING PROGRAM

TFI Alumni Association and other entities offer an Alumni Mentoring Program that students are encouraged to pursue. This program matches students with TFI alumni who have graduated from either the COUN or MFT programs. These alumni work with students on professional development tasks including understanding the specific mental health setting a student might wish to enter (private practice, agency), networking, and/or other specific job search tasks. Attempts are made to match Alumni and students with similar interests and geographic locations.

6. GRAND ROUNDS AND RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

TFI sponsors several postdoctoral clinical research fellowships. Fellows participate in monthly grand rounds meetings, during which a clinical case or intervention topic is presented and discussed in a theoretical or empirical context. Each Fellow is required to conduct one presentation per year. Counseling students are invited to attend these presentations. Students can learn about current advancements therapeutic fields and, as well, Fellow's act as research models/mentors.

7. CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

Students are encouraged to attend workshops offered by the professional Counseling community. These include the Illinois Counseling Association conference, the Illinois Mental Health Counseling conference, and the American Mental Health Counseling conferences. In addition to attending the conferences, Students are also encouraged to seek out and attend conferences related to their own individual counseling interests. Counseling students are also encouraged to partner with Counseling faculty, staff, supervisors, and other students to submit poster and presentation proposals. Financial support may be available to students who present at conferences. Student should consult their faculty advisors to learn more about presenting and attending.

SECTION 10: PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR COUNSELING STUDENTS

A. CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

Students are encouraged to join professional Counseling organizations such the American Counseling

Association, the American Mental Health Counseling Association, 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 counseling faculty, staff, supervisors, and other students to submit posters and presentation proposals. Students should consult their faculty advisors around attending or presenting

The professional organizations below are appropriate for graduate students in Counseling. Joining one or more of them is a great way to become informed about what is happening in the counseling field, have opportunities for networking with other professionals, 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	
American Counseling Association (ACA) 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
American Mental Health Counseling Association (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
Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (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

Students are encouraged to participate in several students led organizations or initiatives for scholarly and professional development and to advance their interest in counseling related professional activities and scholarship

1. 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.

2. Counseling Students for the Global Majority

Counseling Students for the Global majority is a student-initiated and student- led group designed to advance diversity, equality and inclusion climate and culture in the Counseling program and within The Family Institute. The CSGM is a fully endorsed student program and receives guidance of a core faculty member. Information will be disseminated about the CGGM leadership and organization during orientation events and periodically

3. Child/Adolescent Interest Group

The Counseling Department sponsors a Child/Adolescent Interest group for students pursuing the child/adolescent specialization. Students will be informed of specifics involved in this interest network and to attend sponsored events. Consult faculty advisors about the Child/Adolescent Interest Group participation.

4. Emerging Scholar Program

The program will offer small tuition stipends to students seeking to engage in scholarly and professional activities with core faculty. Relevant announcements will be disseminated to all students quarterly to apply.

5. Research laboratories led by Counseling Faculty Various faculty members may sponsor research laboratories around their clinical research and professional interests. Students will be well apprised of opportunities to volunteer for these experiences that can enhance their body of work.

APPENDIX I: PROGRAM CURRICULA

1. CORE OR STANDARD CURRICULUM

The Standard or 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](#). 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 Standard curriculum includes 24 courses required to complete the Master of Arts degree in Counseling. The 2Plus curriculum includes 3 introductory courses in addition to the core curricula plan for a total of 27 courses towards the degree. The 2Plus 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 2Plus program. Elective course options are courses taken beyond the 24 or 27 required for the degree. Elective coursework is an option and 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 Standard or 2 Plus 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 training post-graduate 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 board 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
- 436-6 Counseling Children and Adolescents
- 423-6 Assessment in Counseling-2
- 454-6 Evaluation and Treatment of Trauma-2
- 440-6 Play Therapy Methods

On-ground: All courses include child/adolescent emphases

- 413-0 - Human Growth and Lifespan Development-2
- 436-0 - Counseling Children and Adolescents
- 423-0- Assessment in Counseling -2
- 454-0 -Evaluation and Treatment of Trauma-2
- 440-0 - Play Therapy Methods

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 10% of direct hours (equivalent to 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.

In the Standard or 2-Plus curricula plan, 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. This specialization enables students to gain expertise in child/adolescent mental health and to increase their marketability as experts with this population. The declaration of interest in the child and the adolescent emphasis or specialization is made when the student applies. With acceptance, the curriculum plan is developed to include the required courses for child/adolescent practice and students must confirm and intent to complete the specialization by the end of the first quarter of study. To complete the specialization student must enroll in versions or core coursework with an emphasis on children and adolescents. These courses include: COUN 413-0 - Human Growth and Lifespan Development -2 (Child& Adolescent Focus), COUN 426-2 Assessment - 2(child/Adolescent Focus), and the therapy course, COUN 436-0 - Counseling Children and Adolescents. Students also complete COUN 453-0 Evaluation and Treatment of Trauma -2, focused on trauma in youth and COUN 440-0- Play Therapy. In addition to required child/adolescent coursework, students will complete fieldwork experience related to this area of professional interest in working with youth. The student must communicate this child/adolescent interest at admission so that appropriate fieldwork can be discussed and arranged. Students will be encouraged to seek and accept sites that offer child/adolescent focused practice and supervision, and these experiences will be a part of the program's records.

Students who desire exposure to child and adolescent coursework but do not want to declare a full specialization can work with their faculty advisors to choose one or two child and adolescent courses. Students who are unsure whether this specialization is right for them have many opportunities to discuss this with their faculty advisors before the end of their second quarter. Note that child/adolescent specialization will **NOT** be noted on the official transcript. Students in the specialization will receive a letter of completion on the program's letterhead.