



Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling

Program Handbook

2025-2027

Department of Counseling

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WELCOME

Welcome to the University of Texas at San Antonio's Counseling Program! We hope your work with us will be fulfilling, growth-fostering, and meaningful. The program is thriving in depth and scope, and we are pleased to have you join us at this very exciting time in the program's development. In this handbook, you will find the information you need on program criteria, contact information, and expectations. We hope you will find it useful.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with basic information about program curricula, degree requirements, advising, and other related professional concerns. While this information is intended to facilitate smooth, orderly progress toward degree completion, the handbook is also subject to periodic revision. You are strongly advised to consult the program website and your MyUTSA e-mail account for updates on relevant changes in program and university policies.

INTRODUCTION

The Counseling Program is located in the Durango Building at the Downtown Campus (DB 4.122). The Master of Science degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling provides coursework leading to state-level counseling licensure (Licensed Professional Counselor). The Counseling Program also offers the Master of Education in School Counseling, leading to state certification (Certified School Counselor). The Doctor of Philosophy degree in Counselor Education and Supervision is also offered. This degree prepares you for advanced work as a practitioner, counselor educator, and/or supervisor. The focus of this manual is on the needs and requirements of students fulfilling a Master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Manuals outlining the requirements for the M.Ed. and doctoral programs can be found at the departmental office and on the departmental website.

Counseling Program Mission

The Department of Counseling at UTSA prepares ethically grounded, community-informed, and professionally competent clinical mental health counselors, school counselors, counselor educators, supervisors, and researchers with a strong professional counselor identity to serve in a global society. We are a proud Minority-Serving and Hispanic-Serving Institution, and as a Tier One Research University, we cultivate leaders and agents of change who embody our core values and are equipped with empirically supported practices. We are committed to innovation in training and practice, empowering our graduates to meet evolving professional demands and enriching the quality of people's lives.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Graduates of the UTSA counseling program will possess a basic knowledge foundation in the areas of legal, ethical, and professional issues in counseling, social and cultural foundations, human growth and development, career development, helping relationships, group work, appraisal, and research and program evaluation. In accordance with the UTSA Counseling department's mission and goals, graduates will also have a strong understanding of diversity issues and be able to address the needs of a rapidly growing, diverse population.

The program emphasizes and models creativity and diversity while fostering developmental and relational processes through its relationship with the community, other university programs, and its students. Furthermore, we strive to develop students' knowledge and commitment to the ethics of the profession and demonstrate application within multicultural and diverse populations.

Program Core Values

- **Professional Ethics & Innovation.** We uphold the highest ethical standards and are committed to the responsible integration of emerging technologies, such as telehealth and Artificial Intelligence (AI), to advance access and care.
- **Strength-Based, Wellness-Focused Approach.** We emphasize wellness, prevention, and resilience, integrating strength-based strategies alongside responsive intervention.
- **Community-Informed Advocacy.** We prepare counselors to be civically engaged, legislatively aware advocates who promote affirming communities and access to quality care as part of a global society.
- **Trauma-Informed Practice.** We embrace trauma-informed principles, research, and practices that create environments and approaches that prioritize safety, trust, empowerment, and collaboration.
- **Relational Learning & Creativity.** We value relational competence, creativity, critical thinking, and personal growth for faculty, students, and the communities we serve.
- **Collaboration & Mentorship.** We foster a student-centered culture of collaboration, mentorship, and mutual support that enhances professional development and leadership for our students and faculty.
- **Holistic, Systemic Perspective.** We recognize the complex, interconnected systems that impact individuals and families. We attend to cultural, social, and structural influences to provide holistic, context-sensitive care.

Department of Counseling Program Objectives

- Articulate a conceptualization of client/student presenting concerns from a strength-based perspective founded on contextual factors (e.g., developmental, relational, and multicultural)
- Describe how relational and diverse contextual factors may contribute to presenting problems
- Discuss how relational competencies (i.e., authenticity, mutuality, honesty, empathy) affect counselor/client/student development
- Describe how to creatively and effectively integrate contextual resources and client/student strengths during the counseling process

- Demonstrate inclusive communication when describing clients/students (e.g., understanding and appropriately using people/person-first language or identity-first language, avoiding labeling clients/students)
- Demonstrate the ability to convey to the client/student their counseling progress
- Demonstrate multicultural and social justice counseling competencies in the counseling process.

Innovative Programs

The Master of Science (M.S.) degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling offers the opportunity for advanced study and professional development in Clinical Mental Health, Neurofeedback, Play Therapy, Integrated Care, Bilingual Counseling, Addictions, Multicultural, and Marriage and Family. Students may earn credit toward a state-level counseling license to practice in clinical mental health settings (Licensed Professional Counselor).

- Bilingual Counseling Certificate
- Integrated Behavioral Healthcare
- Neurofeedback Training
- Study Abroad in Oaxaca, Mexico
- Strengths and Wellbeing: Innovation Research Lab
- Counselors Against Sex Trafficking Research Lab
- Play Therapy Courses

Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Objectives

In addition to the basic objectives listed above, students completing the program with a specialization in Clinical Mental Health Counseling will:

- Articulate a professional identity as clinical mental health counselors, school counselors, counselor educators, and supervisors.
- Articulate a conceptualization of individuals served from a strength-based perspective, grounded in contextual factors (e.g., cultural, developmental, systemic, relational) and empirically supported practices.
- Demonstrate responsiveness to evolving community needs while promoting advocacy in alignment with current professional standards and best practices.
- Demonstrate knowledge, attitudes, and skills in ethical, relational, and professional competencies.
- Critically analyze, conduct, and apply research to advance empirically supported, community-informed practices in counseling, counselor education, and supervision.

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Specialization

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling specialization trains counselors to deliver counseling, educational, and consultation services to public and private community-based agencies and organizations. This specialization also meets the educational requirements for the Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) credential in Texas. Please consult the Texas State Board of Professional Counselors in Austin, Texas, for further information on post-graduation LPC requirements at <https://www.bhec.texas.gov/texas-state-board-of-examiners-of-professiona-l-counselors/index.html>.

If you have a Master's degree in Counseling from another institution but have not completed the course requirements designated by the Examining Board, it is your responsibility to obtain the criteria from the board and to determine which courses you must take to complete these requirements. You may do this by contacting the Examining Board and comparing its requirements with your transcript.

Summary of Degree Specializations

Clinical Mental Health Counseling (60 credit hours)

- Core Coursework: 42 credit hours ([Appendix G](#))
- Clinical Coursework: 9 credit hours
- Electives: 9 credit hours

Job Outlook for Graduates

If you are interested in learning more about career opportunities in counseling, please consult the representatives at UTSA University Career Center. Their contact information includes:

Downtown Campus: 210-458-2910 or onsite at MNT 1.162 1604 Campus: 210-458-4589 or onsite at UC 2.02.04

Occupational Employment and Wages: <https://www.bls.gov/oes/2023/may/oes211018.htm>

ADMISSION STATUS

In accordance with the policies of the Office of Graduate Studies, students are admitted to the department as follows:

Admission

Applicants must hold a 3.0 overall GPA during their undergraduate studies to be eligible for admission to the counseling program. Three recommender ratings and a narrative statement of goals and the importance of multiculturalism are required. Interested persons should contact the Student Development Specialist for the Counseling program or check the website for more information. The number of students admitted to this program may be limited.

Orientation and Academic Advisement

New student orientation is offered in your first session of the Introduction to Clinical Mental Health Counseling Course.

Advising information will be posted on the departmental website and distributed through your MyUTSA email account. Please make sure to activate your account and check it regularly. You are responsible for becoming familiar with university and program requirements, meeting degree requirements, following policies and procedures, and meeting all deadlines. We encourage you to examine the graduate catalog, the Information Bulletin, and the Counseling Program website to learn more about program policies, procedures, and deadlines.

If you have consulted these resources and need further advising, please contact our Student Development Specialist, Jessica Gonzalez, at jessica.qonzalez5@utsa.edu. She can clarify questions related to admissions and other academic issues (i.e., degree requirements, policies and procedures, applications for practicum and internships, petitions for reinstatement, comprehensive examinations, course transfer information, and other academic advising issues). Please e-mail her with your questions. She will schedule an appointment to meet with you if needed.

You will also be assigned an academic advisor upon admission. Please e-mail your advisor to discuss such issues as course substitutions, petitioning, course transferability, etc. Please keep in mind that your advisor is a faculty member who teaches courses during the day and evening hours. Furthermore, faculty members work on a nine-month contract. Consequently, they are not always available during regular business hours, nor are they available after final examinations, during Christmas breaks, between semesters, or during summer sessions.

ENROLLING IN COURSES

How to Register for Courses

You may register for courses and check course schedules and grades using UTSA's student information system. You do so by accessing your myUTSA account at <http://my.utsa.edu>.

Graduate students who have been admitted to the program and are in good standing are eligible for registration. You may register for classes up to one year following your last semester of enrollment. Refer online to <https://onestop.utsa.edu/registration/register/> for registration procedures. Registration instructions are included in the Schedule of Classes each semester. Questions regarding registration should be directed to One Stop at (210) 458-8000.

Students are urged to set up Duo Two-Factor Authentication to use myUTSA as needed. Please contact Tech Cafe at (210)458- 5555 if you need assistance.

UTSA does not guarantee the availability of particular courses or sections. Furthermore, classes may be cancelled if the minimum number of seats in a class has not been filled. Also, classes have a maximum number of seats that can be filled per course. Please check ASAP to find the latest information on course availability.

Late Registration

Late registration information is available online each semester. Instructions for late registration are available at <http://www.utsa.edu> or the Office of the Registrar. Students are not permitted to register after the close of the late registration period.

When you register late, the course selection may be limited.

Adding Courses

You may add courses to your schedule for a limited time at the beginning of the semester. Refer to myUTSA (<http://my.utsa.edu/>) for adding procedures. You may not add courses after the Census Date.

The Fall and Spring Census Date is the 12th class day, while the Census Date for the Five and Ten Week Summer Sessions is the 4th class day.

The University Calendar, found in the Schedule of Classes, is available online each semester.

The calendar includes relevant information. It can be found at <http://asap.utsa.edu>.

Please remember that you will be assessed a processing fee for adding courses. You may wish to refer to the Schedule of Classes for information on the fee amount and the procedure for adding courses at (<http://asap.utsa.edu>).

Dropping Courses

You have a limited time each semester during which you may drop a course. Please refer to ASAP (<http://asap.utsa.edu>) for dropping procedures. The University Calendar in the Schedule of Classes lists drop dates for each semester.

Students who drop courses between the Census Date and the final withdrawal date will receive a “W”, which will be reflected on their transcripts. The final withdrawal date is the last day of the ninth week in the fall and spring semesters. Please note, however, that the final withdrawal date is the last day in the third week during a five-week summer term and the last day of the sixth week during a 10-week summer term.

The course change becomes official after it is processed by the Office of the Registrar.

IT IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO DROP A COURSE BY THE APPROPRIATE DEADLINE. FACULTY AND STAFF WILL NOT DROP A STUDENT FROM A COURSE FOR NONATTENDANCE; THE STUDENT MUST INITIATE THE PROCESS AND COMPLETE ANY NECESSARY STEPS TO ENSURE THAT THE CLASS IS DROPPED. IF A STUDENT FAILS TO DROP A COURSE, EVEN IF THE STUDENT DOES NOT ATTEND THE COURSE, SHE OR HE WILL RECEIVE AN "F" IN THE CLASS.

Courses officially dropped before the Census Date will not appear on your transcript. The Fall and Spring Semester Census Dates fall on the 12th class day, while the Census Date for the Five- and Ten-Week Summer Sessions is the 4th class day.

You may not drop a course after the Census Date unless you have the approval of the course instructor and the Dean of the college in which you are enrolled; and then, only for urgent and substantiated, non-academic reasons. If you are withdrawing from the University, please refer to the section entitled Withdrawal from UTSA in the Graduate Catalog (<http://www.utsa.edu/gcat>).

Cancellation of Enrollment

If you fail to fulfill admission, registration, or financial requirements, or if you otherwise fail to adhere to academic regulations or admission conditions, your enrollment for the semester may be canceled. You may apply for readmission in a subsequent semester provided you have resolved the cause of cancellation.

Withdrawal from UT San Antonio

If you find it necessary to withdraw from UTSA (drop all courses for which you are enrolled during a specific term), you must complete a Withdrawal Form in the Enrollment Services Center. Students who officially withdraw from UTSA during the regular drop period will receive a grade of "W" in all classes.

The drop period includes:

- The first nine weeks - fall and spring semesters
- The first three weeks - five-week summer term
- The first six weeks - 10-week summer term

Students who officially withdraw after the drop period receive a grade of "W" for each class they are passing at the time of withdrawal and a grade of "F" for each class they are not passing.

If you withdraw from all classes, you will be subject to the UTSA's academic probation and dismissal regulations. Please refer to the Graduate Catalog (<http://www.utsa.edu/gcat>) for the regulations on refunds of tuition and fees, readmission policies, and requirements for maintaining registration.

"Hold" on Registration

If you have a "hold" on your registration, you cannot complete the registration process until the hold is cleared. This hold may involve parking fines, library fines, outstanding tuition fees, student housing rent, or other fees or fines. This debt must be paid, and deferment must be received by the Office of Fiscal Services in order to process your registration.

Transferring Course Work

If you have any questions regarding transferring courses from another institution, you may consult with the Student Development Specialist. Transfer credits are also subject to approval by the academic advisor and the Office of Graduate Studies. Students may transfer up to 6 credit hours of coursework.

Special Graduate Students

A special graduate student is admitted to UTSA for the purpose of enrolling in master's level and/or undergraduate courses without currently entering a degree program. For additional information about special graduate student admissions, refer to the Graduate Catalog (<http://www.utsa.edu/gcat>). A maximum of 12 semester credit hours earned as a special graduate student may be applied toward a graduate degree. The department considers requests for special graduate student status on an individual basis.

For non-degree seeking student qualifications, refer to the Graduate Catalog (<http://www.utsa.edu/gcat>). Non-degree seeking graduate students may register for any graduate or undergraduate course for which they have the necessary prerequisites, provided space is available and they have the approval of the course instructor. If you wish to take a graduate course in another discipline, you must obtain the approval of an authorized representative from that discipline.

Procedure for COU 6973 Independent Study

COU 6953 Independent Study is offered for one or three hour credit. Independent studies should not be used as a substitute for class work, as the class process is generally necessary for satisfactory completion of course requirements.

Securing independent studies are not guaranteed. Faculty members must agree to participate in an independent study process, and do so given time availability and a match in their area of expertise. Securing an independent study during the summer term can potentially become problematic for a student because the faculty is not on contract during the summer. However, you may consult with a faculty member on their availability.

After making arrangements with a faculty member to conduct an independent study, you must complete an Independent Study Form (https://onestop.utsa.edu/wp-content/uploads/FORM_Independent-Study-Course-V2.pdf), and provide a syllabus for the course. The syllabus requires a description of the proposed topic to be studied, a description of the required work, and a schedule of events. The independent study form also requires the signatures of the student, instructor, Graduate Advisor, Department Chair, and Dean. Please return the completed form and syllabus to the Student Development Specialist.

Digital Delivery Technology Requirements and Support Services

Some courses in the program curriculum may utilize digital delivery (online) methods and tools. The courses may incorporate technology platforms (e.g., Zoom, Blackboard, Microsoft Office, Office 365). Students do not incur additional costs for using technology within the courses. Technical support services are offered to students through the University's Office of Digital Learning and Academic Innovation (<https://odl.utsa.edu/support/technical-support/>). During new student orientation, expectations for navigating digital course components are discussed, including the learning management system Canvas, myUTSA, setting up UTSA email, the authentication process, and the program website.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Students requiring special considerations due to a disability should contact the Office of Disability Services (MS 3.01.16, (210) 458 4157, <http://www.utsa.edu/disability>). The Office of Disability Services will provide the necessary documentation and support for the student through the program.

STUDENT EVALUATION OF FACULTY

We suggest that you communicate with your professors throughout your coursework on specific needs and concerns. In fact, the Student Fitness to Practice Policy includes your ability to address difficulties with your peers and professors as they arise. As a result, we do not recommend that you wait until the end of your semester to voice your concerns, nor do we suggest that you voice concerns anonymously. Becoming a counselor means you learn to negotiate concerns directly and appropriately. You will be evaluated on your ability to do so.

However, you will be offered an opportunity to formally evaluate courses and instructors at the end of each semester or session. We ask that your evaluations are objective and facilitative, and submitted with a spirit of constructive reflection. The evaluations are processed by a national firm, and the scores and comments are mailed back to individual faculty, the Department Chair, and the Dean.

Evaluations are anonymous, and instructors receive the compiled information on their courses after all grades are turned in. Student evaluations may be considered in evaluating professional competence when faculty members are reviewed for tenure, promotion, and merit distributions.

WRITTEN ENDORSEMENT POLICY

Permission should be sought and secured by students prior to formally identifying a faculty member as a reference. Counselors-in-training and graduates seeking endorsements, letters of recommendation or reference, credentialing, and/or employment letters should provide the respective faculty member(s) with two weeks' written notice. Students should provide faculty members with relevant information and documents regarding the endorsement, including, but not limited to, the job description, addressee, curriculum vitae, and enrolled courses.

The counseling faculty believes that it is their professional duty to endorse or recommend a student or graduate only for employment opportunities, licenses, certifications, and/or other credentials for which the individual is adequately prepared through knowledge, training, and experience. In other words, an individual should not expect any counseling faculty to recommend or verify training, experience, or expertise that the individual does not possess or to which the faculty does not have personal knowledge. However, counseling faculty will advise, teach, and supervise, and make every appropriate effort to help the student obtain the knowledge, skills, and experience that would be most beneficial to the student professionally. The faculty is also required to follow the procedures and agreements of the various licensing and certifying bodies (e.g., NBCC, Licensing boards). It is also expected that students and graduates become familiar with these procedures before requesting endorsement.

ETHICAL STANDARDS

You are expected to abide by the ethical standards associated with your field of practice. Ethical standards developed by the American Counseling Association (ACA) and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) are available online at:

- [ACA Code of Ethics](#)
- [ASCA Ethical Standard](#)

You are also responsible for adhering to the State of Texas' Educators' Code of Ethics and the University's Student Code of Conduct and the Student Rights and Responsibilities section of UTSA's Information Bulletin.

- [University's Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [Educator's Code of Ethics](#)

FITNESS TO PRACTICE POLICY

Fitness to practice is defined as a cluster of awareness, knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are necessary for program students to achieve to be successful professionals. Department of Counseling students are evaluated on their fitness to practice throughout the program in order to evaluate their readiness for practicum and internships, as well as to prepare them for their professional roles post-graduation. Fitness to practice is evaluated continuously by multiple evaluators throughout each student's program of study. Students must demonstrate success in all categories and, when applicable, meet minimum benchmarks. Where indicated (i.e., key performance indicators, professional dispositions, and skills acquisition), students are assessed developmentally.

Developmental Assessment and Expectations

The Department of Counseling is deeply committed to each student's development and providing the strongest learning environment possible. When students are evaluated, evaluators do so *developmentally* so students have opportunities to continue to grow and mature throughout their program of study. Additionally, aggregate student evaluation data are used to make program improvements.

Definition of Developmental Expectations

Developmental expectations denote the progress students are projected to make, within the spectrum of normal limits, on specific criteria based on how far they have progressed within their plan of study. For example, the developmental expectations for students who have completed 9 credits are different than for students who have completed 36 credits because students who have completed 36 credits will have more awareness, knowledge, and skills than students who have completed 9 credits. As such, developmental expectations change as students progress through their program and acquire more awareness, knowledge, and skills.

Faculty and supervisors understand developmental expectations through the frameworks of their ongoing experiences with students and trainees, clinical and educational expertise and judgment, professional literature, and ethical codes. Faculty and supervisors consult when they suspect developmental expectations may be shifting and assess students accordingly. Students are assessed using the following rubric.

Rubric Summary Table

Points	Category	Sub-Category
N	Not Observed/Unable to Assess	Not applicable

0	Does Not Meet Developmental Expectations	Not applicable.
1-2	Below Developmental Expectations	1 = Struggling to make progress to meet developmental expectations
		2 = Making progress to meet developmental expectations
3-4	Meets Developmental Expectations	3 = Recently met developmental expectations
		4 = Consistently meets developmental expectations

Rubric Descriptions

N = Not Observed/Unable to Assess.

The student did not have the opportunity to demonstrate the behaviors related to this assessment area or the assessor does not believe they have adequate information to assess this area.

0 = Does Not Meet Developmental Expectations.

Despite having the opportunity to demonstrate the behaviors for this area, the student did not demonstrate them in ways that meet developmental expectations relative to their developmental level in the program. This rating is appropriate to use if the student has received prior corrective feedback and has not taken steps toward improvement or change and/or has exhibited attitudes that do not show openness to improvement/change.

Below Developmental Expectations.

1 = Struggling to make progress to meet developmental expectations.

The student shows minimal progress toward meeting expectations relative to their developmental level in the program. They may not be integrating feedback, taking initiative to improve or to obtain support, or committing the necessary time needed to improve. They require additional opportunities, substantial support, and/or a stronger commitment to improvement in order to progress.

2 = Making progress to meet developmental expectations.

Based on their developmental level in the program, the student is progressing toward meeting the developmental expectations for this area. The student has been developing in this area and may exhibit some elements appropriately yet still needs support and continued effort to meet expectations. The student has taken initiative and has an attitude that is likely to result in meeting expectations with continued effort.

Meets Developmental Expectations.

3 = Recently met developmental expectations.

The student meets the expectations for this area relative to their developmental level in the program, though they have only recently met expectations and have not had the opportunity to consistently demonstrate mastery. It is appropriate for students to still be developing and receive this rating if their behaviors and attitudes related to the listed area are within normal limits and show promise for continued success.

4 = Consistently meets developmental expectations.

The student has met the developmental expectations for this area based on their developmental level in the program by regularly and predictably exhibiting the behaviors and attitudes associated with this area. They have demonstrated consistency over time and have demonstrated mastery congruent with their developmental level.

When Students are Assessed

Students are assessed at key points throughout their program of study on a regular schedule. In the next section, we describe the fitness to practice components and the regular assessment schedule for key performance indicators, professional dispositions, and skills acquisition. However, these fitness to practice components may be assessed outside of the regular assessment schedule when concerns about a student arises. This is referred to as off-time assessment

Off-time assessments occur because a student has demonstrated behaviors and/or attitudes that are maligned with the minimum expectations for students enrolled in a professional counseling program. Instances in which these behaviors and/or attitudes occur include, but are not limited to, class, extracurricular activities, social events, practicum, internship, and research activities. Faculty, staff, and university affiliates (e.g., site supervisors) complete off-time assessments. If you are concerned about the behavior of a classmate that you are unable to address yourself (see [Student Decision Making Model](#)), please discuss your concerns with your instructor or faculty advisor.

For all off-time assessments, the evaluator must complete a Fitness to Practice Evaluation (FTPE) Form (see [Appendix E](#)). The off-time assessment must accompany the FTPE Form and will be submitted to the Graduate Advisor of Record (GAR) of the program in which the student is enrolled. Following the procedures outlined in the [remediation and retention](#) policy, the GAR will review the FTPE Form and off-time assessment; they may consult with appropriate individuals (e.g., program faculty, student's advisor, legal counsel) to determine whether to refer the student to remediation and retention.

Fitness to Practice Components: Clinical Mental Health and School Counseling Programs

In this section, we name and define the Fitness to Practice components for the clinical mental health and school counseling programs. For all fitness to practice components, we indicate the ramifications when a student is not successful. The Counseling Program faculty work to identify concerns about students' fitness to practice as early as possible so concerns can be addressed and ideally, corrected. Faculty address concerns related to students' fitness to practice using the guidelines listed in the [remediation and retention](#) Policy.

Academic Success

Academic success is defined as meeting the minimum educational requirements for the UT San Antonio Graduate School and Department of Counseling.

In accordance with the [UT San Antonio Graduate School policies](#), students in all programs must maintain a minimum 3.0 grade point average and no student may earn a grade lower than a "C" in any non-clinical course. Additionally, the Department of Counseling does not permit a student to earn more than two "C" grades in non-clinical courses, and all grades earned in clinical courses must be a "B" or higher for students to continue to progress in their plan of study.

For the master's programs, the clinical courses are COU 5233, COU 5393, COU 5683, COU 5713, COU 5723, COU 5793, COU 5803, and COU 5813.

Per UT San Antonio [Graduate School policies](#), students will be placed on academic probation if they fall into one of the following categories:

- A student who fails to achieve a grade point average in any term at UT SAN ANTONIO of 3.0 or higher, irrespective of level of courses taken.
- A student who received a grade of “D+,” “D,” or “D-” in any course in a term and a grade point average of 3.0 or higher.
- A student who does not meet all requirements for unconditional or regular admission and who, by special action, is admitted on academic probation.
- A student who has been reinstated following academic dismissal.

Academic probation is cleared only when none of the above criteria apply and when the student achieves an overall grade point average of 3.0 as a graduate student at UT San Antonio. Students on academic probation are encouraged to discuss their status with their graduate advisor.

Students may receive academic dismissal:

- When a student at the graduate level earns a grade point average of less than 2.0 in any term.
- When a student at the graduate level earns a grade of “F” in any course.
- When a student at the graduate level is admitted on probation with conditions and fails to meet a condition.
- When a student at the graduate level who is on academic probation during a term would again be placed on academic probation under the provisions of academic probation set forth above. If, however, the student’s UT San Antonio grade point average for the term is at least 3.0, they will continue on academic probation.
- When a student at the graduate level is unable to pass an oral or written exam (such as the Comprehensive Examination or Qualifying Examination) required for the degree after the maximum of two attempts. Some programs may have more stringent requirements.
- When a student at the graduate level fails to make satisfactory progress toward the degree, as defined by UT San Antonio regulations and the regulations of the graduate program in which the student is enrolled.

Please see the [Graduate School website](#) above for information regarding graduate student reinstatement if academic dismissal occurs.

Please note, academic success indicators are regulated under the policies noted in this section and are not subject to remediation and retention plans like other fitness to practice components are.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPIs are essential, core practice areas named by our accreditor (i.e., CACREP) and defined by the faculty. There are eight KPIs that are consistent across the masters programs and one distinct KPI for each specialization. KPIs consist of knowledge and skill indicators, are evaluated on a regular schedule at least twice during students’ program of study, and have minimum benchmarks assigned.

Students are expected to meet minimum benchmarks set for KPIs throughout their programs. KPIs serve the purpose of individual student evaluation and program evaluation. KPIs are assessed regularly throughout the program in specified courses and specific assignments.

Core Masters Programs KPI Assessment.

KPI	Courses in which KPI is Assessed	Benchmark
Domain 1: Professional Counseling Orientation & Ethical Practice: Demonstrate knowledge and application of ethical principles, decision-making models, and professional codes of conduct to develop and maintain a strong counselor identity across diverse clinical settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COU 5113 • COU 5103/5203 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 3

<p>Domain 2: Social & Cultural Identities and Experiences: Assess how cultural, societal, and structural factors influence client identity and mental health, and demonstrate skills in providing culturally responsive, context-sensitive counseling interventions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COU 5283 • COU 5713/5723 (CMHC) • COU 5793/5803/5813 (School) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 3 • 3
<p>Domain 3: Lifespan Development: Apply theories of human development to assess and conceptualize client concerns across the lifespan, and demonstrate the ability to tailor counseling interventions to clients' developmental needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COU 6523 • EDP 5033 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 3
<p>Domain 4: Career Development: Demonstrate knowledge and application of career development theories, tools, and techniques to support clients' career decision-making, transitions, and vocational wellness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COU 6153 • COU 5223 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 3
<p>Domain 5: Counseling Practice & Relationships: Articulate and apply emerging theoretical orientations to clinical case conceptualization, treatment planning, and the development of effective counseling relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COU 5213 • COU 5713/5723 (CMHC) • COU 5793/5803/5813 (School) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 3 • 3
<p>Domain 6: Group Counseling & Group Work: Demonstrate knowledge and skills in planning, facilitating, and evaluating group counseling processes across diverse populations and clinical settings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COU 5233 • COU 5683 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 3
<p>Domain 7: Assessment & Diagnostic Processes: Demonstrate understanding and application when selecting, administering, and interpreting of culturally and developmentally appropriate assessments, diagnostic processes, and clinical interventions to effectively evaluate, diagnose, and treat a wide range of mental and emotional presenting concerns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COU 5223 • COU 6883 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 3
<p>Domain 8: Research & Program Evaluation: Demonstrate the ability to critically analyze and evaluate qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research findings as informed and discerning consumers of research.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDU 5003 • COU 5203 (CMHC) • COU 5103 (School) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 3 • 3

Specialty Masters Programs KPI Assessment.

KPI	Courses in which KPI is Assessed	Benchmark
<p>CMHC: Demonstrate the ability to apply evidence-based, culturally sustainable interventions and advocacy strategies to prevent and treat a broad range of mental health issues, through assessment, diagnoses and treatment plan development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COU 5243 • COU 5713/5723 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 3
<p>School: Implement comprehensive PK-12 school counseling models that integrate evidence-based, culturally sustaining interventions to advance academic achievement, career readiness,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COU 5253 • 5793/5803/5813 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 3

postsecondary transitions, and graduation rates through strategic advocacy, collaborative partnerships, program evaluation, and effective consultation.		
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All students' performance on KPIs are reviewed by faculty each semester. If a student earns ratings below the set benchmarks for KPIs in more than one course in a semester or in two courses across two consecutive semesters, the student's performance will be discussed by faculty and may be referred for [remediation and retention](#). If a student earns a rating of 1 or 2, indicating "below developmental expectations" for any KPI, the student's performance will be discussed by faculty and the student may be referred for [remediation and retention](#).

Program faculty monitor trends in students' KPI scores by program annually. The expected aggregate score for KPIs is a minimum of a 3 for 80% of the student body in each program. In the event the faculty identify that a significant percentage of student are struggling with specific KPIs, faculty make program improvements to ensure students are receiving necessary knowledge and skills to meet KPI minimums.

Professional Dispositions

Professional dispositions are attitudes, behaviors, and mindsets that contribute to a positive and productive professional environment and are essential for professional practice. Professional dispositions are assessed on an established schedule four times during each student's plan of study. At each assessment point, students are assessed developmentally and are expected to have an aggregate score of 3 on 80% of the assessed areas. Professional dispositions may be assessed outside of the established schedule if a concern arises.

As essential components of academic and professional growth, professional dispositions encompass attitudes, behaviors, and mindsets that contribute to a positive and productive professional environment for all and are essential for professional practice. By fostering a culture of respect, responsibility, collaboration, and perseverance, the UT San Antonio Counseling Program aims to prepare students not only for academic success but also for meaningful contributions to society. These expectations are designed to support students in developing professional counseling qualities and skills that align with shared values within the counseling profession, ensuring students can thrive as ethical, competent counselors while contributing to a respectful and inclusive community.

Students are assessed developmentally on the follow specific professional dispositions connected to four practice areas: (a) Professional Responsibilities and Ethics, (b) Interpersonal Communication and Self-Awareness, (c) Cultural and Advocacy Orientation, and (d) Work Habits.

Professional Responsibility and Ethics.

The ability to consistently demonstrate competence in adhering to ethical and legal standards required in the field of counseling, including accountability, integrity, and professional conduct.

- Knows and applies ethical and legal requirements relevant to practice.
- Dependable and consistent in meeting professional obligations and professional norms and guidelines.
- Follows professionally recognized conflict resolution processes, seeking to address concerns first with the individual(s) with whom the conflict arises, while actively examining and acknowledging one's own role in the conflict when appropriate.
- Understands and demonstrates appropriate professional boundaries.
- Prioritizes self-care and monitors for signs of physical, mental, and/or emotional impairment and seeks assistance so impairment does not negatively impact professional responsibilities and/or academic progress.

Interpersonal Communication and Self-Awareness.

The ability to exhibit behaviors and attitudes that promote effective, respectful, and professional interactions and communication in diverse settings.

- Expresses feelings effectively and appropriately and demonstrates self-regulation, self-control, and maturity.
- Recognizes how one's own words and actions impact others and demonstrates fairness, honesty, and respect.
- Responsive, open, and receptive to feedback, and incorporates feedback to enhance professional and personal development.
- Open to new ideas, manages ambiguity well, and demonstrates a tolerance to change.
- Is responsive, adaptable, and cooperative, and shows reasonable efforts to adjust behaviors in response to changes in professional and interpersonal contexts.
- Openly discusses, respects, and considers perspectives other than one's own.

Cultural and Advocacy Orientation.

The ability to demonstrate awareness, openness, and active engagement in personal and professional development and activities aligned with counseling standards and ethical codes related to culture and advocacy.

- Respects the fundamental rights, dignity, and worth of all people.
- Displays respect for cultural, individual, and role differences related to identities (e.g., age, gender, sex, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, social class, sexual/affectual orientation, disability, language).
- Demonstrates sensitivity to differences in power between themselves and others and does not exploit or mislead people.
- Demonstrates cultural and advocacy competencies, and the commitment aligned with professional counseling and documented in the professional counseling literature.
- Applies objective reasoning, ensuring personal perspectives do not interfere with professional responsibilities.
- Engages in cultural discussions with humility, genuineness, congruence, and respect.

Work Habits.

The ability to demonstrate attitudes, and skills for success in academic environments (e.g., classroom, labs, placement sites).

- Meets attendance requirements and notifies others in advance regarding tardiness and absences.
- Meets deadlines and satisfactorily completes obligations.
- Participates appropriately and compromises in cooperative activities.
- Demonstrates honesty and academic integrity.
- Participates fully in learning experiences.
- Demonstrates professionalism in written, oral, and electronic communication.

Professional Disposition Assessment Schedule

Assessment Point	Benchmark
COU 5203 Introduction to CMHC (clinical mental health students) COU 5013 Introduction to School Counseling (school counseling students)	3
COU 5233 Group Theory and Process	3
COU 5393 Development of Counseling Skills	3
COU 5683 Practicum in Counseling	3

Students' professional dispositions are regularly evaluated and students are expected to meet minimum benchmarks. At each assessment point, students are expected to have an aggregate score of 3 on 80% of the assessed areas. If a student earns a 1 or 2 rating of "below developmental expectations" in one or more disposition area, the student will be reviewed by faculty for possible [remediation and retention](#). If a student earns a 0 rating of "does not meet developmental expectations" in any disposition area, the student will be reviewed by faculty and be referred for remediation and retention.

Faculty review aggregate professional disposition ratings and monitor trends in students' professional disposition scores by program annually. For each disposition, the aggregate score should be a minimum of a 3 for 80% of the student body in each program. In the event the faculty identify that a significant percentage of student are struggling with specific professional dispositions, faculty make program improvements to ensure students are receiving necessary training to meet professional disposition minimums.

Skills Acquisition

Skills acquisition consists of developmental mastery of individual and group counseling skills. The Counseling Program has a Comprehensive Skills List ([see Appendix B](#)) as well as specific skill assessment for individual and group assessment ([see Appendix C](#) and [Appendix D](#)). Individual and group skills are each assessed twice on an established schedule during students' plan of study. Both evaluation points have minimum benchmarks assigned. Practicum and Internship mid-term and final supervisor evaluations also serve as skills acquisition assessment data. Skills acquisition may be assessed outside of the established schedule if a concern arises.

Skills acquisition is one of the corner stones of professional practice. Students are evaluated on their individual and group counseling skills at specific timepoints in the program.

Masters Programs Skills Acquisition Assessment

Skill	Courses in which Skills are Assessed	Benchmark
Individual Counseling Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COU 5393 • COU 5683 • COU 5713 (CMHC students) • COU 5793 (School students) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 3 • 3 • 3
Group Counseling Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COU 5233 • COU 5683 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 3

Students are expected to meet developmental expectations for at least 80% of the skills listed on the individual and group skills evaluations in order to proceed in their plan of study (i.e., students must pass COU 5393 prior to enrolling in COU 5683; must pass COU 5233 before enrolling in COU 5683; must pass COU 5683 prior to enrolling in COU 5713 or COU 5793). If students do not meet developmental expectations, a minimum of a "3" rating, for at least 80% of the skills on the individual or group skills assessment in a course listed above, they will not receive a passing grade in the course; the highest grade they can earn is a "C" and they must repeat the course as per the [Academic Success policy](#).

Program faculty review students' skill acquisition scores each semester. If a student earns a rating of 1 or 2, indicating "below developmental expectations" for more than a quarter of the skills on the assessment, the student's performance will be discussed by faculty and the student may be referred for [remediation and retention](#).

Program faculty monitor trends in students' skills acquisition scores by program annually. The expected aggregate score for both individual and group skills is a minimum of a 3 for 80% of the student body in each program. In the event the faculty identify that a significant percentage of student are struggling with specific skills, faculty make program improvements to ensure students are receiving necessary training to meet skill minimums.

Rules, Regulations, Policies, and Laws

Students follow the rules, regulations, and policies of the [Department of Counseling](#) (including the handbook specific to the student's degree), [College of Education and Human Development](#), and UT San Antonio, including the [Handbook of Operating Procedures](#) and [Student Conduct policies](#), as well as those of clinical and other placement sites; adheres to local, state, and federal laws. Additionally, students comply with Texas rules, statutes, and requirements for professional counseling licensure and/or school counselor certification.

Students must be able to comply with the laws set forth by the State of Texas for licensure as a professional counselor and/or certification as a school counselor. If an applicant or student plans to become licensed in another state, it is their responsibility to know the laws of that state and ensure they can meet them, including specific course requirements that may not be part of students' typical plan of study in the UT San Antonio Counseling Programs.

The Department of Counseling does not exclude applicants who have a legal history from applying to the program or accepted students from engaging in general course work. However, while a student's prior, current, or future legal interactions may have no bearing on their ability to practice, they are advised that there are background checks they must pass to participate in Practicum and Internship as well to obtain licensure/certification post-graduation. The Program recommends students to obtain a preliminary evaluation from the State of Texas as described below.

If a student encounters interactions with the legal system during their time in the program, the program recommends that the student consult with their legal counsel and request a preliminary background check as indicated in the information below. If a student is enrolled in practicum or internship and encounters interactions with the legal system that could impact their ability to perform counseling, legally or otherwise, students must inform their course instructor and site supervisor immediately so proper steps can be taken to ensure client care.

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Students.

- Per Texas State Rule [§882.2.a](#), individuals must provide:
 - (3) A fingerprint based criminal history record check through the Texas Department of Public Safety and the Federal Bureau of Investigation;
 - (4) A self-query report from the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) reflecting any disciplinary history or legal actions taken against the applicant. A self-query report must be submitted to the agency as a PDF that ensures the self-query is exactly as it was issued by the NPDB (i.e., a digitally certified self-query response) or in the sealed envelope in which it was received from the NPDB;
 - (5) Verification of the citizenship and immigration status information of non-citizen, naturalized, or derived U.S. citizen applicants through the DHS-USCIS Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements Program (SAVE). Applicants must submit the documentation and information required by the SAVE program to the Council.
- If you have a legal history that could permit you from becoming licensed as a counselor, Texas [Rule §882.41](#) allows you to have a preliminary evaluation to determine whether you will be eligible. You are encouraged to pursue this process prior to beginning the program.

School Counseling Students.

- Criminal Background Check

- A criminal background check including fingerprinting will be performed by the Texas Education Agency before a candidate will be allowed to certify or gain employment on a non-teacher certificate. TAC 227.1(b)(1)(2).
- Items on a candidate's criminal history report may render the candidate ineligible for Candidates may request a preliminary TEA background check for an evaluation of the criminal history.
- Please note that applicants may request a [preliminary TEA background](#) check for an opinion of charge prior to starting a program.
- English Language Proficiency
An applicant for certification in Texas must be able to communicate, listen, read, write, and comprehend the English language sufficiently to use it easily and readily in daily communication and teaching. English language proficiency shall be evidenced by ONE of the following:
 1. completion of an undergraduate or graduate degree at an accredited institution of higher education in the United States; OR
 2. verification of minimum scaled scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language internet- Based Test (TOEFL iBT) of 24 for speaking, 22 for listening, 22 for reading, and 21 for writing; (TOEFL scores must not be older than 2 years from date of application) OR
 3. if an undergraduate or graduate degree was earned at an institution of higher education in a country outside of the United States listed in TAC 230.11

Remediation and Retention Policy

The Counseling Program makes every effort to remediate and retain students, including students who are struggling to meet one or more fitness to practice components. Concurrently, the Counseling Program has a responsibility to the public and serves in a gatekeeping role, pursuant to local, state, and federal laws, and professional counseling ethical codes. The Program takes their roles as gatekeepers seriously and uses a variety of tools and methods to ensure students are acting in accordance with professional and developmental expectations, as well as practicing within their scope of competence throughout their program.

As outlined in the [fitness to practice components](#) section, students are evaluated regularly throughout the Program, known as *regular assessment*. Additionally, students may be evaluated at any time, outside of regular assessment; this is referred to as *off-time assessment*. Off-time assessment is used when concerns arise about a student's academic performance, skills, professional dispositions, behavior(s), and/or attitude(s) that do not comport with professional expectations, ethics, legal mandates, developmental expectations, and/or their behavior(s) and/or attitudes pose a risk to others. Department faculty, staff, and affiliates (e.g., site supervisors) use the Fitness to Practice Evaluation (FTPE) form (see [Appendix D](#)) to indicate the area(s) of concern that arise from either regular assessment or off-time assessment.

Student Support During Remediation and Retention Procedures

At all times, the Program encourages students to seek support for their wellbeing, both preventatively and as intervention when concerns arise. During any remediation and retention interventions, the program strongly encourages students to seek external support as appropriate, including but not limited to professional counseling, medical care, religious/spiritual supports, and social outlets (e.g., clubs, teams, relationships).

During intervention procedures, students may choose to have a support person present during committee intervention meetings or other interventions by request. The role of a support person is to be an encouraging presence for the student, not be an active participant in the meeting. The support person will not participate by speaking during any meeting. If a student chooses to have a support person present, they are advised to select that person carefully and ensure they are comfortable with them being privy to their private educational information.

To have a support person present in a meeting, the student must inform the committee in writing no less than three (3) business days prior to a scheduled meeting. To protect student privacy, the student must complete an agreement indicating they permit the support person to be present, and the support person must sign an agreement that is submitted to the committee chair no less than three (3) business days prior to the scheduled meeting ([see Appendix F](#)) If the support person the student selects is a lawyer/attorney, the committee reserves the right to have University legal counsel present as well.

Documentation

Student concerns and all remediation and retention efforts are documented and placed in the student's secure file.

Completing an FTPE Form

Any evaluator who completes an FTPE form must notify the student by email that they are completing an FTPE. The FTPE is completed in a timely fashion relative to when the concern(s) arose or an incident occurred; this time may vary based on what documentation needs to be gathered to complete the FTPE accurately but will not exceed fifteen (15) business days. The completed FTPE form is submitted to the Graduate Advisor of Record (GAR) of the program in which the student is enrolled (i.e., clinical mental health counseling, school counseling, or counselor education and supervision)

Once the evaluator emails the FTPE to the student, the student must sign the FTPE to acknowledge receipt and return it to the evaluator via email within three (3) business days. If the student does not return the signed FTPE within three (3) business days, the evaluator notifies the student via email that they will forward the FTPE without a signature to the GAR and documents that they did not sign the FTPE. If the GAR is the person initiating the FTPE, they will notify the department chair and follow the steps as outlined in the next section, *FTPE Next Steps*.

FTPE Next Steps

Once the *Completing an FTPE Form* process is finished, the evaluator sends the FTPE via email within three (3) business days to the GAR for the program in which the student is enrolled. If the GAR for the program in which the student is enrolled is the person initiating the FTPE, they will send the FTPE to another program GAR to complete the next steps for the FTPE. The purpose of this differential process is to ensure each FTPE is evaluated objectively.

Once the GAR receives the FTPE, they decide the appropriate next step(s) within ten (10) business days. The GAR may consult with other necessary parties (e.g., other GARs, advisor, pertinent faculty, legal counsel, individuals outside of UT San Antonio with expertise) to make decisions about next steps. Potential outcomes of an FTPE are:

- No action
- Faculty and/or advisor intervention
- Committee intervention
- Full faculty review, and/or
- Recommendation to dismiss the student from the program.

Each outcome is described in the next sections. Once the GAR makes a decision about the FTPE, they will contact the student via email regarding the decision. The student must confirm receipt of the decision within three (3) business days. If a student wishes to appeal the decision, the first step is to email their concerns to the GAR within five (5) business days of receiving the decision. If the student does not feel their concerns have been resolved, the next step is to email their concerns to the Chair of the Department of Counseling within five (5) business days of their concern not being resolved by the GAR. The Chair of the Department of Counseling or their designee will review the GAR's decision and process, consult with any necessary individuals, and email an outcome to the student within ten (10) business days.

Implications When an FTPE Form is Completed

When an evaluator completes an FTPE form, the student may continue to engage in all program activities until the GAR decides next steps, unless the student is notified differently by the GAR or the Chair of the Department of Counseling. If the GAR notifies the student that the outcome of the FTPE is a a) faculty and/or advisor intervention; b) committee intervention; c) fully faculty review; or d) recommendation to dismiss the student from the Program, the student may not engage in any extracurricular Program activities (e.g., CSI, research labs, program events) until the FTPE is resolved or the student is notified via email that they may resume extracurricular Program activities.

Additionally, students who have been notified that the FTPE outcome is a a) committee intervention; b) fully faculty review; or c) recommendation to dismiss the student from the program, may not apply for Practicum or Internship or contact any potential Practicum or Internship sites until they are expressly given permission to do so by the GAR and/or the Chair of the Department of Counseling. With FTPEs that are related to Practicum or Internship, the student will be notified via email whether they are permitted to continue going to the site and/or working with clients.

Students who violate any the terms outlined in this section may be recommended for immediate dismissal from the Counseling Program.

Remediation and Retention Interventions

Early Intervention

An early intervention (EI) is defined as actions an instructor, site supervisor, advisor, or other Program affiliate (henceforth referred to as *evaluator*) takes to correct a student's behavior(s) and/or attitude(s) without completing an FTPE form. With EI, the evaluator provides the student with formative feedback by clearly stating what needs to be corrected, and, when appropriate, provides resources for making corrections. To be considered an EI, the evaluator must meet with the student to discuss the formative feedback. EI may be supported by additional written or verbal feedback including but not limited to course assignments, through email, additional meetings, supervision, etc. Evaluators document all EI efforts as they occur and once the evaluator meets with the student, they provide their documentation to the GAR to be placed in the student's file. The evaluator updates the GAR with additional documentation as needed.

Students are encouraged to engage fully with EI and to take it seriously because it is an early corrective step intended to prevent future concerns. Students may ask their faculty advisor or other University resources to support their success during EI efforts.

EI is used whenever possible when minor concerns arise that the evaluator perceives can be corrected with minimal intervention. EI is not appropriate in all situations and is not required to be completed prior to other interventions. In some cases, EI interventions that are unsuccessful can serve as the basis for an FTPE.

Faculty and/or Advisor Intervention

A Faculty and/or Advisor Intervention (FAI) occurs when a plan has been devised for a student to work with one or more instructor and/or their advisor to improve their performance in one or more areas. The faculty and/or advisor works with the student one on one, gives ongoing feedback, highlights how the student is improving, and advises the student how they can improve. The faculty and/or advisor will set the meeting frequency and any specific tasks the student must complete to be successful. The student is expected to engage fully with the FAI and to make necessary modifications to their schedules and responsibilities when needed in order to do so.

An FAI may only be used once an FTPE has been completed. An FAI may be a) assigned directly by the GAR who evaluates the FTPE or, b) in instances in which a Committee Intervention is initiated, the committee may use an FAI as part of the student's remediation and retention action plan. FAI may be used after an early intervention has proved insufficient, though completing an early intervention is not necessary for an FAI to be initiated.

If the student does not comply with the FAI or complete it in its entirety, another FTPE form may be filed. If another FTPE form is filed, the GAR reviews it following the procedure stated in the [FTPE Next Steps](#) section; they may make new determinations regarding the student's interventions and will notify the student via email within ten (10) business days.

If the FAI is successful, the individuals involved in the FAI document this outcome and share it with the GAR, making any recommendations to support the student's ongoing development. The GAR notifies the student they have successfully completed the FAI, includes any pertinent information, and whether the FTPE is considered resolved or if it will continue to be monitored.

Committee Intervention

A Committee Intervention (CI) is a remediation action in which a committee of three (3) faculty members is formed to address concerns about a student's performance as documented on the FTPE. The CI is used in instances in which a student is struggling in multiple areas, the documented concerns warrant additional evaluation, and/or ongoing work with the student and/or monitoring is deemed to be necessary. While a CI is used most commonly when an EI and/or FAI have been completed and not been sufficient or successful, completing an EI and/or an FAI are not required for a CI to be assigned by the GAR.

The committee is comprised of three (3) Program faculty members assigned by the GAR, one of whom is designated as the committee chair. The evaluator who completes the FTPE form will not serve on the committee. Given the size of the Counseling Program faculty, the student may or may not know the faculty members who are assigned to their committee. All committee members are trained counselors who hold doctoral degrees in counselor education or a related field, and therefore are knowledgeable about professional counseling expectations, laws, ethics, student development, and how to engage in student success efforts. If the student has concerns about a faculty member(s) assigned to their committee (e.g., a conflict of interest), they may discuss these concerns with the GAR. The GAR may make changes to the committee membership if there is compelling reason to do so.

The committee works on the following timeline to ensure that the student receives a fair and timely process.

- The GAR sends an email to notify that faculty have been assigned to serve on a CI for a specific student and specifies who the committee chair will be. The GAR informs the student via email that a CI has been formed within ten (10) business days in compliance with the timeline stated in the [FTPE Next Steps](#) section.
- Within five (5) business days of the committee being formed, the committee contacts the student to schedule the initial meeting. The meeting will be scheduled within ten (10) business days of the committee contacting the

student during the regular year (i.e., Fall and Spring semester). During summer, the committee will make every effort to schedule the initial meeting within ten (10) business days, yet they may have to apply reasonable flexibility to account for committee members' summer schedule. The student must respond to committee email within three (3) business days and reasonably work with the dates and times the committee has provided to schedule a meeting.

If the student does not respond to the email, the committee chair will notify the GAR. The GAR will notify the student via email that they are not permitted to register for classes, apply for Practicum or Internship, contact any potential Practicum or Internship sites, or engage in any program activities until their FTPE is resolved. Unless otherwise indicated by the GAR or department chair, the student is permitted to complete the courses in which they are actively enrolled and participating in during the semester in which the FTPE occurs. When the FTPE is connected to a practicum or internship dismissal, the student is not permitted to contact any sites until they receive expressed written permission from the committee chair.

If the student fails to communicate with the committee chair or GAR by the end of the semester, the FTPE will go to full faculty for review and final decision.

- Prior to the initial meeting, committee members review all documentation they have received.
- In the initial meeting, the committee seeks to understand the student's perspective of the documented concerns, incidents that occurred, and the student's level of understanding and insight regarding the documented concerns in terms of professional practice.
- After the initial meeting, the committee discerns an outcome using a decision-making model. The committee reviews all information they have received and may seek additional information from pertinent individuals (e.g., instructors, site supervisors). When appropriate, the committee reviews professional literature, laws, ethics, handbooks (e.g., Program Handbook, Handbook of Operating Procedures), etc. to inform their decision-making process. The committee may seek consultation with other necessary professionals, keeping the student's identity confidential unless required by law to disclose ([Mandated and Selected Reporting](#) section). The committee may contact the student for more information if additional questions arise during this process.
- Within ten (10) business days, the committee contacts the student via email to inform them of the outcome. If there are extenuating circumstances in which the committee needs more time, they will email the student by the 10th business day and inform them of the reason for the delay and the anticipated date when they will receive the committee's decision.

Committee Decision

The committee has four decision options: no action, remediation and retention action plan, recommendation for full faculty review, and recommendation for dismissal. Each is outlined below. With all decision options, the student will receive an email from the committee chair documenting the decision, pertinent information, and any next steps.

- **No action.** The committee documents their decision-making process and the reason(s) no action will be taken at this time.
- **Remediation and retention action plan.** The committee creates an individualized remediation and retention action plan the student must complete with the intent of correcting the concerns outlined in the FTPE. The plan will include:
 - The purpose of the plan;
 - The areas of concern the student is working to address and the expected outcomes;
 - Specific requirements the student must complete to reach expected outcomes;
 - How the plan will be monitored until it is completed;
 - The deadlines by which plan components must be completed.

The student must complete the action plan in its entirety by the stated deadlines and make sufficient, developmental progress; failure to do so may result in recommendation for additional interventions and/or dismissal. Additionally, an action plan may be extended if the student, in good faith, has made developmental progress and needs more time to make sufficient progress. The committee makes all recommendations regarding when the plan is completed, whether the student requires additional monitoring after the plan is completed, and when to deem that the plan is completed or closed.

Students have the right to ask the committee questions about their plan. If a student has concerns about their remediation and retention plan, they must first address their concerns with the committee directly. If their concerns are not resolved, they may contact their program GAR to discuss it. The GAR may review the plan or ask faculty outside the committee to review the plan.

If a student takes a leave of absence from the Program before their remediation and retention action plan is completed, they must complete their action plan before they will be permitted to resume any participation in the Program (e.g., courses work, site placement processes, extracurricular activities, research labs). If a student withdraws or is academically dismissed from the Program before their remediation and retention action plan is completed, they must address their action plan in their application materials if they reapply to the Counseling Program. If the individual is accepted back into the Program, they will have to complete their action plan within the first semester they are enrolled and may only take two courses during that semester, none of which can be a Practicum or Internship course. If the student only has Practicum and/or Internship Courses remaining, the student may not enroll in these courses until the action plan is completed.

- **Recommendation for full faculty review.** If the committee or GAR discerns that the concerns and breadth of information they received regarding the FTPE requires input from the full faculty before making a decision, they will bring the concern to the Program faculty. This option may be used when the FTPE is received from the evaluator, if the student does not respond to contacts for meetings, after the initial committee meeting with the student, during the time in which the student is completing a remediation and retention action plan, or if an additional FTPE is filed.
- **Recommendation for dismissal.** The recommendation to dismiss a student from the Program is not a decision that is made lightly. Program Faculty use a decision-making model to assess each case and work earnestly to make the best decision for the student, Program, UT San Antonio community, clients, and the public.

While the Program makes reasonable attempts to remediate and retain students, there are instances in which remediation and retention are not possible because remediation and retention efforts have failed, a student's actions do not align with the Program's ability to remediate, or the student's behaviors pose a significant risk to others (e.g., clients, other students, the community, etc.). Instances that can lead to the recommendation to dismiss a student from the program include, but are not limited to:

- violation(s) of the University *Handbook of Operating Procedures*;
- ethical and/or legal violation(s) that pose a threat to clients, the UT San Antonio community, and/or the general public;
- behavior(s) and/or attitude(s) that threaten the safety of other students, clients, the UT San Antonio community, and/or the reputation of the Program or UT San Antonio;
- ongoing attempts to remediate behaviors have not been successful, that is, the student has not made sufficient improvements to continue in the Program.

Recommendation for dismissal may occur with or without intervention, depending on the severity of the student's behaviors. Any recommendation to dismiss without intervention will be reviewed, discussed, and voted on by program faculty.

Student Appeals of Committee Decision

If a student wishes to appeal the committee's decision, the first step is to email their concerns with the committee within five (5) business days of receiving the decision. If the student does not feel their concerns have been resolved, the next step is to email their concerns to the Chair of the Department of Counseling within five (5) business days of their concerns not being resolved with the committee. The Chair of the Department of Counseling or their designee will review the committee's decision and process, consult with any necessary individuals, and email an outcome to the student within ten (10) business days.

Practicum and Internship Review Procedures

The information below documents the policy and procedures for when a student is dismissed from a Practicum and/or Internship site to ensure accountability, support, and public wellbeing.

- If a student is dismissed from a clinical practicum or internship site, the student's practicum or internship course instructor will complete an FTPE and submit it following the procedures in the [Completing an FTPE](#) section. Because being dismissed from a practicum or internship site is a serious concern, the GAR will initiate a committee intervention or, in cases of dismissals for ethical or legal offenses, recommend the FTPE for full faculty review. The full faculty review may result in a recommendation for committee intervention or for dismissal from the program. Students who are dismissed from a site will not receive a passing grade for the practicum or internship course in which they are enrolled.

With either intervention, the outcomes may include the student completing an action plan, being required to delay practicum or internship for one or more semesters before being approved for another placement, or the recommendation for dismissal. If a student is permitted to return to a new placement, they will not be permitted to apply any of the hours they accrued during the semester in which they were dismissed.

- If a student is dismissed from a second clinical site, the student's practicum or internship course instructor will complete an FTPE and submit it following the procedures in the [Completing an FTPE](#) section. Given the seriousness of a dismissal from a second site, at minimum, the student will not be permitted to restart practicum or internship for at least one semester. The GAR may recommend a committee intervention or a full faculty review. If a committee intervention is recommended, the same committee members who worked with the student for the prior site dismissal will evaluate the pattern of concerns and determine the student's suitability for continued clinical training. Being dismissed from a site a second time may be grounds for immediate dismissal from the Counseling Program.

Recording Intervention Meetings

While Texas is currently a one-way recording state, any parties involved in any remediation and retention interventions demonstrate respect by disclosing if they plan to record the meeting. All parties must give consent and be given access to the recordings. This policy is congruent with the recording policy stated in all Program course syllabi.

Student Appeal Process for Dismissal Recommendations

When the recommendation to dismiss a student has been made, the recommending party (i.e., committee chair, GAR) sends their decision to the department chair. The department chair reviews the decision prior to submitting the recommendation to the Dean of the College of Education and Human Development. The student may submit an appeal to the Dean within ten (10) business days of receiving the notice of the recommendation for dismissal. The College Dean or their designee will review all pertinent documentation. The Dean will make the final decision.

Mandated and Selected Reporting

If a student discloses suspected abuse or neglect of a minor or vulnerable adult, suicidal ideation, or homicidal ideation, UT San Antonio employees are required by law to make a report to appropriate services to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those involved.

Additionally, if a student discloses an incident of sexual misconduct to any UT San Antonio employee (other than to a designated confidential employee such as mental health counselor or PEACE advocate, a UT San Antonio police officer using a pseudonym form or at a public awareness event), that information is not confidential; the UT San Antonio employee must report all known information to the UT San Antonio Office of Equal Opportunity Services. Employees may also report any concerns about the health and safety of students or others to other school officials and/or law enforcement. For a complete list of exceptions to FERPA, please see Student Catalog Annual FERPA Letter and HOP 5.01.

If a UT San Antonio employee has significant concerns about a student's wellness, they may select to contact the [UT San Antonio Behavioral Intervention Team \(BIT\)](#). The BIT is designed as a non-punitive intervention that can help the student identify resources and access support when they are experiencing struggles.

Addressing Concerns as a Counseling Department Student

Utilizing the American Counseling Association Ethical Decision-Making Model

As counseling students, you will inevitably face dilemmas and challenges that require careful analysis and decision-making. These challenges are not only part of the counseling process; they can arise in any setting, including within educational environments. As such, we want to normalize these instances and offer tools you can use to handle them professionally when they arise.

The American Counseling Association (ACA; 2014) has developed a structured Ethical Decision-Making Model to help professionals make ethical choices that align with the ACA *Code of Ethics* (Forester-Miller & Davis, 2016). Below, we outline the steps of the model and provide guidance on how to apply it effectively. When dealing with issues involving another professional (e.g., classmate, professor, supervisor), the *Code of Ethics* recommends addressing the concern directly with the individual as the first step before involving others. We acknowledge that this course of action may not be feasible in situations of power imbalance, threats, harassment, discrimination, retaliation, or other *legal concerns. Please consult your advisor or faculty if talking directly with another person may not seem like the best course of action.

At the student's discretion and if needed, with faculty guidance, students are encouraged to utilize the *American Counseling Association Ethical Decision-Making Model*.

Step 1: Identify the Problem

Clearly define the problem or dilemma by gathering all relevant facts. Consider the nature of the conflict, the people involved, and any legal or institutional policies that may apply.

Step 2: Apply the ACA Code of Ethics

Consult the ACA Code of Ethics to determine relevant ethical principles and standards. Identify any sections that specifically address the situation you are evaluating.

Step 3: Determine the Nature and Dimensions of the Dilemma

Examine the situation from multiple perspectives. Consider cultural, social, and contextual factors that may influence the problem and potential decisions. Seek guidance from ethical principles such as autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, veracity, justice, and fidelity.

Step 4: Generate Potential Courses of Action

Brainstorm possible actions you could take to resolve the dilemma. Consider the potential outcomes, benefits, and risks associated with each option.

Step 5: Consider the Potential Consequences

Evaluate the implications of each course of action on all parties involved. Predict both short-term and long-term consequences and weigh them against ethical principles.

Step 6: Choose an Action

Make a decision based on ethical guidelines, professional judgment, and any relevant consultation. Ensure that the chosen action upholds the values and principles outlined in the *ACA Code of Ethics*.

Step 7: Evaluate the Outcome

Reflect on the effectiveness of the decision and assess whether it aligns with ethical standards. Make adjustments to ensure the best possible outcome for all involved.

Step 8: Implement and Document the Decision

Carry out the chosen course of action while maintaining professionalism and integrity. Keep detailed records of the decision-making process and the rationale behind your choice for future reference and accountability.

Applying the ACA Ethical Decision-Making Model ensures that dilemmas and challenges are approached systematically and thoughtfully. As counseling students, practicing this model will strengthen your ability to navigate complex situations while upholding the highest standards of professional conduct.

*Please refer to policies on Equal Opportunity Services (EOS; <https://www.utsa.edu/eos/>), Wellbeing Services (<https://www.utsa.edu/students/wellbeing/>) and Ombuds services (<https://www.utsa.edu/ombuds/>).

References

American Counseling Association. (2014). *2014 ACA code of ethics*.

<https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/ethics/2014-aca-code-of-ethics.pdf>

Forester-Miller, H., & Davis, T. E. (2016). *Practitioner's guide to ethical decision making* (Rev.

ed.). <https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/ethics/practitioner-39-s-guide-to-ethical-decision-making.pdf?sfvrsn=10/1000>

GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS/FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Please refer to the Office of Financial Aid for Questions regarding scholarships and financial assistance.

Assistantships

Once an assistantship has been awarded, you will be asked to submit paperwork to Human Resources. Student employee paperwork can be retrieved online at <https://www.utsa.edu/people-excellence/>. Refer to the Handbook of

Operating Procedures for student employee regulations([https://www.utsa.edu/hop/ chapter4/4.09.html](https://www.utsa.edu/hop/chapter4/4.09.html)). To maintain an assistantship position, you must be enrolled in the fall or spring semester as a full-time student and in the summer at least part-time. Assistantships are limited. All graduate students are encouraged to apply. For more information, contact The College of Education and Human Development at (210) 458-4370.

Please note that the assistantships are competitive. You must work the designated hours to receive compensation. Failure to do so may result in the loss of your assistantship. Your immediate supervisor is responsible for reporting the hours you work. The reported hours must be accurate.

INFORMATION UPDATE

It is important to keep the department updated with any relevant changes in your contact information. Contact the department office at (210) 458-2600 to update name, address, email, and telephone number. You must also inform the Office of the Registrar of such changes (210) 458-8000.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Please refer to the current UT San Antonio Information Bulletin. The Student Code of Conduct can be found online at <https://catalog.utsa.edu/policies/administrativepoliciesandprocedures/studentcodeofconduct/>

ADVISING SHEETS

Advising sheets are available on the department website at <https://education.utsa.edu/counseling/resources.html>, in the department office (DB 4.122), and in [Appendix G](#). Students are responsible for the accuracy of their advising sheets and should check with the Student Development Specialist if they are uncertain about any program requirements. Failure to include all courses required for a particular area of study may delay your graduation or create licensure or certification problems.

Completing the advising sheet is an important initial step in seeking the master's degree. It is developed in consultation with an academic advisor. You must be admitted to the department before an advising sheet can be completed. Please keep a copy of your advising sheet and document as courses are completed.

I. Required courses (42 hours):

- COU 5203 Introduction to Clinical Mental Health Counseling
- COU 5213 Counseling Theories
- COU 5223 Clinical Assessment and Appraisal Strategies for Counselors
- COU 5233 Group Theory and Process
- COU 5243 Diagnosis in Counseling
- COU 5283 Counseling in Multicultural Settings
- COU 5393 Development of Counseling Skills
- COU 5683 Practicum in Counseling (100 hrs.)
- COU 5713 Clinical Mental Health Internship I (300 hrs)
- COU 5723 Clinical Mental Health Internship II (300 hrs)
- COU 6153 Career Development and Choice
- COU 5113 Ethical & Legal Issues in Counseling
- COU 5613 Biopsychosocial Aspects of Addiction
- COU 6523 Couples and Family Counseling
- COU 6883 Trauma, Crisis, and Grief
- EDU 5003 Research Methods in Education
- EDP 5033 Human Development across the Life Span

II. Elective courses (9 hours):

Please refer to the following <http://education.utsa.edu/counseling/> degree plan for additional information:

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling degree corresponds with the academic requirements of the Texas Licensed Professional Counselor core areas.

All Clinical Mental Health Counseling students will be required to complete a Basic and Advanced Portfolio during their Internship courses (COU 5713 and COU 5723). The purpose of the portfolio is to document student's work and achievements during their graduate counseling program experience.

Portfolio guidelines may be found in [Appendix A](#).

PRACTICUM AND INTERNSHIP

Educators realize that professional preparation requires an appropriate mix of classroom work and "hands-on" experience. Thus, the curriculum has been developed to provide a balance between "theory and practice classes" and practical training. Many courses offer opportunities to apply concepts in practical ways. For example, students studying psychological assessment may complete, score, and interpret their own results on assessment instruments. The counseling skills course makes extensive use of simulation activities. Such activities as role-playing may be used in these and other courses.

Toward the end of the program, students move from simulation exercises to contact with clients from the community by participating in the master's level practicum and internship courses. Enrollment in these courses requires prerequisites and an application initiated by the student.

Applications will be sent to students enrolled to their myUTSA e-mail. Applications must be turned in prior to the listed deadline.

Applicants are typically notified of their standing within two-three weeks after the application deadline, which is noted in the application email. A list of approved sites is available on the department website.

UTSA counseling students are expected to arrange their own placement from the department's list of approved affiliated clinical sites. For practicum, students complete their hours in the department's Sarabia Family Counseling Center or another approved affiliated practicum site. Students will be notified by email regarding practicum options each semester.

It is important that you select the best and most appropriate practicum or internship site for your interests and future professional goals. Care should be exercised to insure the "fit" between student and site. The prospective practicum student should become aware of expected duties and responsibilities of the position, as well as opportunities for education and growth. Each site must be approved by the Counseling Program Clinical Experience Committee. In addition, on-site supervisors must have a Master's degree in counseling or a related field and at least 2 years of clinical experience. For those doing their Practicum/Internship experience in a school setting, supervisors must be Texas State Certified as a Professional School Counselor as well as have 3 years of experience. No exceptions to this rule will be made.

*For more information about practicum and internship, please refer to the Clinical Experience Manual on the department website under Helpful Links.

Clinical Mental Health Time Requirements

The Counseling Program time requirements follow the recommendations set forth by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), which require a minimum of 700 hours in these courses.

Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Clinical mental health counseling practicum and internship requirements will consist of a 100-hour practicum and two 300-hour internships, both of which will be completed in a clinical mental health setting.

During your practicum class, you will participate in one hour of individual/triadic supervision at your site, and an average of 1-1/2 hours of university group supervision per week (class). During your internship courses, you will participate in one hour of individual/triadic supervision (on-site) and an average of 1-1/2 hours of university group supervision per week (class). This supervision is very important to your development as a counselor.

General Responsibilities of the Practicum & Internship Student

- General Responsibilities of the Practicum and Internship Student: Each student must:
- Complete criminal background checks as required by his/her practicum or internship site.
- Obtain and submit proof of student liability insurance.
- Maintain the highest ethical standards and adhere to the ACA ethical standards at all times. Ethical breaches may be grounds for dismissal from the counseling program.
- Comply with the Student Fitness to Practice in the College of Education and Human Development policy, available on the department website (<https://education.utsa.edu/documents/counseling/student-resources/forms/>)
- Improve performance in response to supervisors' feedback.
- Be consistent with the school or agency's customs regarding grooming, punctuality, dependability, etc.

The Sarabia Family Counseling Center (SFCC):

The Sarabia Family Counseling Center (SFCC) is located at the Downtown Campus on the third floor of the Durango Building (DB 3.304). Practicum students are eligible to complete their practicum hours at SFCC or at affiliated community agencies. For more information on how to complete a practicum at the SFCC, please contact the Student Development Specialist. The SFCC is currently providing services through three university-sponsored programs: (a) COEHD Student Success Center, providing services to undergraduate and graduate students in the Department of Educational Psychology and the Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching, (b) Practicum experience, providing services to undergraduate students in the Department of Counseling, and (c) Neurofeedback program, providing services to community members.

The SFCC is open to new partnerships. We continually work to develop relationships with other community advocates and agencies. We are currently exploring new partnerships and plan to expand in the Spring of 2023 to provide counseling services to new partners, including (a) the San Antonio Municipal Court (adjudicated youth and their families); (b) San Antonio Police and Fire Departments (first responders); and (c) The Pride Center (LGBTQ community members).

NATIONAL COUNSELOR EXAMINATION (NCE)

As a CACREP-accredited program, the Department of Counseling is eligible to offer the National Counselor Examination (NCE) to students. In order to be eligible to take the NCE, students must have completed all of their core coursework. Students must be well advanced in their program of study. At a minimum, they must have completed coursework in six of the eight required subject areas and be enrolled in the final two during the semester of the exam.

The exam consists of 200 multiple-choice questions covering each of the eight CACREP core areas. These core areas are: human growth and development, social and cultural foundations, helping relationships, group work, career and lifestyle development, appraisal, research and program evaluation, and professional orientation and ethics.

Taking the NCE is not a required program activity and will not impact your eligibility to graduate. Your Student Development Specialist will contact you throughout your time in the program with more updates and information as available about the NCE and our Participation Agreement with the NBCC. For more information on the benefits of the NCC credential, visit the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) website at <http://nbcc.org/>

LICENSING

The Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling Degree at UTSA is designed to meet educational licensure requirements in the state of Texas. The licensure boards rely on educational institutions to verify that applicants for licensure have met necessary educational requirements. The program promotes eligibility for licensure based on program requirements as outlined in the specialization advising sheets.

Criminal History Acknowledgement

Being a student in our program prepares you to apply for a professional license with the State of Texas. Therefore, you are required to acknowledge your understanding of the requirements set forth by the State of Texas regarding a criminal history that may prevent you from qualifying for a professional license. More information is included in this form that must be completed by at the start of your first semester. You may click the link below or scan the QR Code to complete this form. Failure to complete this may result in a hold on your registration for future semesters. https://utsa.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_aXHbQiYvUA8wBDv?Q_CHL=qr

Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)

Please note that the following information is subject to change. The clinical mental health counseling degree meets academic requirements for licensure as a Professional Counselor in the State of Texas. The Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors is charged with creating and implementing rules and regulations to govern the practice and licensing of professional counseling in Texas. Education and experience required for licensure include:

- A master's or doctoral degree in counseling or a counseling-related field from an accredited college or university.
- A planned graduate program in counseling or a counseling-related field of at least 60 graduate semester hours. Board rules specifically define "counseling-related field": §681.2. Definitions (9) Counseling-related field - A mental health discipline utilizing human development, psychotherapeutic, and mental health principles including, but not limited to, psychology, psychiatry, social work, marriage and family therapy, and guidance and counseling. Non-counseling related fields include, but are not limited to, sociology, education, administration, and theology.
- Applicants are responsible for obtaining coursework in and demonstrating competency in the following specific areas: normal human growth and development; abnormal human behavior; appraisal or assessment techniques; counseling theories; counseling methods or techniques; research; lifestyle and career development; social, cultural, and multicultural issues in counseling.

- As part of the graduate program, a supervised practicum experience that is primarily counseling in nature. The practicum should be at least 300 clock hours with at least 100 direct client contact hours. Academic credit for the practicum must appear on the applicant's transcript.
- After completion of the graduate degree and after an applicant has received a temporary LPC-Associate license from the Board, the applicant begins the supervised post-graduate counseling experience (internship); 3000 clock hours of internship with 1500 direct client hours under the supervision of a Board-approved supervisor is required. The 3000 clock hours may not be completed in a time period of less than 18 months.

For Additional and Most Up-To-Date Information:

Website: [Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors - Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council](http://www.tsbce.org)

National Certified Counselor (NCC)

The National Board for Certified Counselors, Inc. (NBCC), an independent not-for-profit credentialing body, was incorporated in 1982 to establish and monitor a national certification system, to identify for professionals and the public those counselors who have voluntarily sought and obtained certification, and to maintain a register of those counselors. For information regarding education and experience required for NBCC credentialing, refer to <http://www.nbcc.org/>.

For Additional Information:

National Board for Certified Counselors, Inc. 3 Terrace Way

Greensboro, NC 27403-3660 USA Web: <http://www.nbcc.org>

Email: nbcc@nbcc.org Telephone: (336) 547-0607

Fax: (336) 547-0017

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The department encourages you to obtain membership or affiliation in professional organizations available at national, state, and local levels. Affiliation with these organizations may enhance your professional development and provide important information and networking possibilities. Please note that the following information is subject to change. Some applications may be available in the department office.

National Organizations

Chi Sigma Iota

The international honor society of professional counseling, Chi Sigma Iota (<http://www.csi-net.org/>), has a local chapter, Sigma Alpha Chi, at The University of Texas at San Antonio. Chapter membership is open to students who have completed at least 9 semester hours of coursework in a counseling degree program. Students must also have attained a 3.5 GPA at the time of application. The chapter sponsors continuing education, social, and professional activities throughout the year. Please contact the chapter co-advisors, Dr. Devon Romero, at Devon.romero@utsa.edu, or Dr. Madelyn Duffey at Madelyn.Duffey@utsa.edu, for more details.

American Counseling Association (ACA)

The American Counseling Association is a not-for-profit, professional, and educational organization that is dedicated to the growth and enhancement of the counseling profession. Founded in 1952, the ACA is the world's largest association exclusively representing professional counselors in various practice settings.

The ACA helps counseling professionals develop their skills and expand their knowledge base. ACA has been instrumental in setting professional and ethical standards for the counseling profession. The association has made considerable strides in accreditation, licensure, and national certification. It also represents the interests of the profession before Congress and federal agencies, and strives to promote recognition of professional counselors to the public and the media.

Students are encouraged to join the ACA and network with the many professionals and peers dedicated to the profession of counseling. Memberships are available to both undergraduate and graduate students enrolled at least half-time or more at the college level. Student members must present proof of academic credentials upon request. A professor signature is required. Students interested in obtaining ACA's competitive insurance rates for their clinical classes may contact ACA staff or download insurance information at <http://www.counselinq.org/>.

For Additional Information:

American Counseling Association 5999 Stevenson Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22304-3300

Web: <http://www.counselinq.org/> Telephone: (800) 347-6647

Fax: (800) 473-2329

The Association for Creativity in Counseling (ACC)

The ACA includes 20 divisions within the association. Although the UTSA Counseling Program supports each of the divisions within ACA, it is closely associated with the Association for Creativity in Counseling, in significant ways. ACC's founding president was Dr. Thelma Duffey. ACC provides opportunities for networking, exposure to unique and innovative counseling practices, and publishes a quarterly journal entitled, [Journal of Creativity in Mental Health](#). You can find more information at <https://www.creativityincounseling.org/>

State Organizations

Texas Counseling Association (TCA)

Regular membership is open to all persons interested in promoting professional counseling and guidance. Any person who has met the qualifications for regular membership and has paid the prescribed dues shall be eligible to attend meetings of the association, to vote, and to hold office. Student membership is open to graduate and undergraduate students currently enrolled in three or more hours in a counseling-related program. Student certification by major subject field instructor is required at the time of joining or renewal in the association. Any person who has met the qualifications for student membership and has paid the prescribed dues shall be eligible to attend the association's meetings, but student members may not vote or hold office.

For Additional Information:

Texas Counseling Association 1204 San Antonio, Suite 201
Austin, Texas 78701

Web: <http://www.txca.org>

Telephone: (512) 472-3403 or (800) 580-8144

Fax: (512) 472-3756

Local Organizations

South Central Regional Counseling Association

The South Central Regional Counseling Association is a Chapter of the Texas Counseling Association (TCA), which is a state branch of the American Counseling Association (ACA). Student membership is available and includes a subscription to the SCRCA newsletter. Student membership is available and includes a subscription to the SCRCA newsletter, as well as other member benefits and networking opportunities. You can find more information at: <https://scrca-chapter.txca.org/>

Appendix A: Portfolio Guidelines

Purpose of an Internship Portfolio:

- An educational tool to document your experiences, learning, and your reflections in order to assess your learning and growth from the start of internship to the end.
- A marketing tool to document your skills and competencies to your employer for the purpose of enhancing your job search at the end of your academic program.
- A resource that you can refer to during your career and one that lays the foundation for your future growth.
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of achievement of CACREP (2016) core curricular and specialty standards

The purpose of a portfolio is to document your work and achievements during your graduate counseling program experience. It may be helpful to think of your portfolio as the grand finale of your performance as a counseling student. You will pull together everything you have done during your coursework and at your practicum and internship site(s) to prepare you to be an effective counselor. Use your creativity to show different things that you have accomplished and showcase them not only for the purpose of this class but perhaps for use with future employers. Your portfolio may be something you use to market yourself for jobs. It will also help you to remember all you have done and be proud of your achievements!

Your portfolio should be in a loose-leaf format or digitally formatted online and should include evidence of your having achieved in the different domains involved in the work of a counselor. It should include evidence of your accomplishments or learning experiences in the following areas:

Domain Areas

In the Internship-I course, students will select four of the following domains to complete. In the Internship II course, students will complete the remaining four domains. Recognizing the overlap between the portfolio domains, CACREP core and specialty standards are provided that are mostly closely aligned with each domain. CACREP Section 2.5; CACREP Section 5 CMHC 1.b, 3.a,b

- 1) Ability to apply counseling theory (e.g., case study, articles, papers from classes;
- 2) Group counseling work (e.g., information/session plans from a group you lead)
- 3) Leadership role (e.g., anything that documents your leadership, CSI, taking on projects at your site)
- 4) Referral and coordination/consultation (e.g., anything resources that you have investigated for clients)
- 5) Crisis intervention (e.g., trainings, anything that documents experience in this area)
- 6) Advocacy (e.g., trainings, anything you participated in involving professional advocacy)
- 7) Ethical and legal concerns (e.g., papers from class, articles, trainings)
- 8) Multicultural competence (e.g., trainings, papers from class, presentations)
- 9) Career Planning: It should also include (and you can go to career services for assistance!): A cover letter and an up-to-date resume.
- 10) Wellness Plan: In the Internship I course, students will develop a wellness plan. The wellness plan will outline the counselor-in-training's self-care strategies during Internship I. The wellness plan should be updated and amended as strategies are implemented for what worked and what did not. Students will compile all self-care assessments provided and completed throughout the semester.

Recommendations for Organizing the Basic Portfolio:

Archive documents to demonstrate your progress and increased mastery of the above areas.

Write a 1-2 page (double-spaced) reflective summary about how you have made progress in each domain area, from the start of your coursework to the end of this internship.

Attach supporting materials of work that you have done during this period. You may choose to include materials/work covered in your courses to support your competency in an area.

Be creative and think of examples of your own work that you would like to archive for future reference. Be intentional with your selection of materials; e.g., do not just print online articles to increase the portfolio's size.

The most important thing is for you to organize the portfolio in a way that will be most useful to you when you start your counseling job. Something you can refer to and that will increase the effectiveness of your future work.

Portfolio Checklist

Each of your Domain areas should contain the following materials:

- 1-2 page (double-spaced) reflective summary
- Supporting Materials

Additional materials for Portfolio submission:

1. Career Plan
2. Cover Letter
3. Resume
4. Wellness Plan
5. Completed self-care assessments
6. *Portfolio Rubric (Internship II students submit the graded rubric from their Internship I experience)

Portfolio Rubric

This rubric will be used across your two internship experiences. Students in Internship II are required to include the graded rubric from their Internship I experience in their submission.

Your final portfolio grade for Internship I and Internship II will reflect an average of the graded domains for the semester of completion.

Appendix B: Comprehensive Skill List

Throughout the program, students will develop mastery in individual and group counseling skills. The skills listed are applicable to all counseling modalities, yet may be modified based on setting, population, or counseling type. When applicable, nuances related to group counseling are included in the definition. Skills are taught throughout coursework and specific skills are assessed on a regular schedule in designated courses (please see Individual Skills Assessment and Group Skills Assessment).

Attending Skills

Non-verbal skills in which counselors create a positive therapeutic environment using their body language and facial expressions.

- **Active Listening.** Fully listening and attending to clients' verbal and non-verbal communication while remaining present in the "here and now." In a group setting, this includes scanning and attending to all clients in session.
- **Facilitative gestures.** Non-verbal motions that facilitate communication and convey empathy, understanding, and that the counselor is attending to the client (e.g., nodding, empathic gestures, expressions used as reinforcers, cues to pace the conversation). They are used appropriately and with regard to the client's cultural background (e.g., use of personal space, eye-contact, hand gestures).
- **Nonverbal Skills.** Facial expressions, posture, and physical distance between counselor and client conveys to client counselor engagement and respect for client's preferred personal space.
- **Silence.** Intentional and strategic pauses **and** gaps in conversation with the aim of allowing the client to reflect, process, and to respond without pressure. In a group setting, silence allows the group to use its own resources.
- **The counseling space.** All counseling spaces (e.g., virtual, in-person) are accessible and comfortable for all clients, reasonably ensure confidentiality, safe, and conveys a professional environment (e.g. clean, unclutter, neutral and calming background; adequate lighting)
- **Eliminates distractions.** Behaviors (e.g., fidgeting, tapping objects, unnecessary technology) or conditions (e.g., noise, décor, dress) that could distract or take away from the client or the session.

Facilitative Conditions

Counselor ways of being that promote relationship building and developing ongoing trust in the counseling relationship.

- **Congruence.** Expressing genuine thoughts and feelings in a transparent and professional manner, ensuring alignment between verbal and nonverbal communication.
- **Unconditional positive regard.** Accepting and valuing clients without judgment, fostering a safe and supportive therapeutic environment in which clients' humanity is exalted and respected.
- **Warmth.** A welcoming demeanor that welcomes clients into trust, comfort, and safety in the counseling relationship.
- **Empathy.** Holistically demonstrating a deep understanding of the client's experiences and feelings through verbal and non-verbal skills.
- **Nonjudgment.** An open and caring presence in which counselors respect and accept clients based on their humanity, and do not assess or evaluate a client's "goodness" based on what they have done or not done in their lives.

Basic Counseling Skills/Microskills

Fundamental and facilitative counseling skills that are used across theoretical approaches to ensure clients are heard and understood and are essential for information gathering, session progression, and form the basis for using a theoretical orientation.

- **Minimal verbal encouragers.** Very brief verbal interjects (e.g., “mmhmm,” “uh-huh,” “go on”) that encourage the client to continue speaking and to convey active listening.
- **Paraphrasing.** Rewording short client statements to enhance understanding and reflection while maintaining the essence of their message.
- **Summarizing.** Highlighting key points client(s) make during a specific portion of the session to enhance client clarity, reinforce insights, facilitate progress, or close the session. In a group setting, summarizing often includes summarizing information offered by more than one group member.
- **Repeating.** Reinforcing a key word or phrase the client used.
- **Open-ended questions.** Inquiries designed to stimulate explanation, storytelling, and/or more full description rather than a dichotomous response (e.g., “yes, no”). Balances the use of open-ended questions with other basic counseling skills.
- **Closed-ended questions.** Requests for factual information or dichotomous responses that are used only when necessary. While helpful in certain situations, overuse can limit exploration and potentially feel like interrogation.
- **Probes.** Statements (e.g., “say more,” “tell me more,” “explain further,” “describe what you experienced”) that guide clients toward deeper self-reflection and insight while maintaining a supportive and non-directive approach.
- **Reflection of feelings.** Accurately identifying the client’s emotions based on the client’s verbal or nonverbal messages.
- **Reflection of meaning.** Advanced reflecting skill in which the helper feeds back to the client the underlying meanings based on the client’s worldview and values to foster deeper self-awareness, self-exploration, and understanding.
- **Normalization.** Techniques that help clients feel understood and to reduce feelings of isolation and shame by framing experiences, thoughts, and/or feelings as common and shared.
- **Tone.** Varied vocal intonations throughout the session that demonstrate curiosity, interest, and are appropriate to the feelings the client conveyed or the feeling the counselor is working to elicit.
- **Pacing.** Moderating the speed at which conversation occurs and how quickly or slowly the session progresses based on client needs
- **Grammatical matching.** The use of terms and intonation that corresponds with the client’s ways of communication that are congruent with the counselor’s ways of communication.

Advanced Counseling Skills

Progressive skills that can be used sparingly and intentionally once a strong counseling relationship has been established.

- **Immediacy.** Addressing present-moment emotions, dynamics, or interactions in the counseling session to enhance authenticity and connection.
- **Redirection.** Statements or questions used to refocus the session and maintain a productive focus while respecting the client’s needs.
- **Self-disclosure.** Sharing relevant and appropriate personal experiences or insights that focus squarely on the client to build rapport and/or support client growth.
- **Confrontation/Challenge.** Strategies designed to highlight inconsistencies, self-defeating patterns, and/or areas for growth while maintaining empathy and support. In group work, confrontation/challenge is typically used not only for the benefit of an individual but for the benefit of the group (e.g., to highlight group communication patterns that likely occur in everyday life, to facilitate perspective taking, to practice conflict management).

- **Interpreting.** Offering possible explanations for certain behaviors, feelings, and thoughts to encourage deeper self-reflection and self-exploration.

Attending to Client Worldview

Intentional efforts to understand client context, identities, beliefs, and ways of being to positively enhance the counseling process.

- **Client identities.** Exploring salient facets of identity that are meaningful to the client to identify strengths and resiliencies and to foster awareness and growth.
- **Cultural integration.** Intentionally incorporating the client's worldview, context, identities, beliefs, and ways of being into the counseling process to ensure client-centered care rather than imposing the counselor's own values.
- **Humility.** Actively seeking to understand the client's unique experiences curiously and respectfully without judgment or adding undue burden to the client. Includes openness to making mistakes and willingness to be corrected and/or redirected by the client.
- **Advocacy for client needs.** Identifies unique client needs and responds to them inside and outside of session. Works to increase equitable access to programs, resources, and services with and on behalf of clients.

Group Specific Skills

Skills used expressly with group counseling.

- **Blocking.** Intervening to stop counterproductive behaviors in group settings (e.g., interrupting harmful comments).
- **Protecting.** Safeguarding clients from emotional harm within group dynamics, especially during early stages when conflicts may arise.
- **Facilitating.** Guiding group dynamics or individual sessions to ensure productive interactions.
- **Linking.** Identifying commonalities among group members to foster connection and universality.

The Counseling Process

Skills related to facilitating sessions in ways that reflect ethical practice.

- **Informed consent.** Outlining and explaining client rights, limits to confidentiality, counseling expectations, and obtaining client agreement, both in the initial session and as needed throughout the counseling process. In group work, specifically highlighting nuances such as confidentiality not being guaranteed, expectations regarding relationships among group members, etc.
- **Goal Setting.** A collaborative process in which counselors help clients identify realistic counseling objectives. This provides direction and measures progress throughout the counseling journey. In a group setting, this includes planning specific goals for the group process.
- **Beginning the session.** Welcomes the client, summarizes prior discussions/content, offers opportunity for the client to decide what to discuss, and provides focus for the session.
- **Closing the session.** Manage time effectively, summarizes key insights, assigns homework (if applicable), and ensures the client is emotionally and physically stable and prepared to leave.
- **Termination.** Preparing the client or group to integrate and apply learning to everyday life when nearing the end of the counseling relationship. Includes skills for ethically ending the counseling relationship.
- **Community resources and referrals.** A robust, current list of community resources to make appropriate referrals during and at the end of the counseling relationship.
- **Recordkeeping.** Accurate, timely, and ethical reporting of client data, activities, and communication that conform to state regulations.

Assessment Skills

Skills for gauging client symptoms, risk, diagnosis, and progress.

- **Skill integration and delivery.** Using attending skills, facilitative skills, microskills, and basic counseling skills while conducting assessments, delivering informed consent, etc.
- **Intake assessment.** Collecting holistic information prior to or within the first session. Includes written information the client completes, as well as intake interviews with follow-up questions, diagnostic, and biopsychosocial questions.
- **Suicide/homicide.** In the initial session and continually as needed, based on behavioral and diagnostic cues, directly addresses suicidal/homicidal ideation and taking action to protect clients and others as indicated by state law.
- **Stage of change.** Continually assesses the client's readiness for change and for treatment and tailors interventions, treatment plan, and process to align with where the client is in their developmental process.
- **Specific diagnostic tools.** The use of appropriate and specific assessments for which the counselor is trained to diagnose DSM-5-TR disorders with the intent to provide accurate and helpful treatment and/or referral.
- **Assessment of diagnosis.** Accurately differentiating between diagnosis and developmentally appropriate reactions, including during crisis or other trauma event, as well as attending to cultural nuances that may influence whether diagnosis is appropriate.
- **Culture specific tools.** An array of assessment methods (e.g., Cultural Formation Interview, broaching) intended to understand the influence of culture on clients' presenting concerns, strengths, resiliencies, and meaning making.
- **Client progress.** Consistently evaluating the methods, interventions, and interactions to determine what is benefiting the client and what is not with the intent to make changes when needed. In a group setting, individual client process is assessed, including whether group continues to be an appropriate modality, yet group progress is assessed as well.

Supervision and Feedback

Receiving and applying clinical supervision to clinical practice.

- **Receiving feedback.** Openly and attentively listening to and taking in direction and strengths offered about their dispositions, skills, techniques, and other components germane to professional development. Respectfully and openly asks questions and seeks clarity, while thoughtfully acknowledging the feedback they have received.
- **Assessing feedback.** Thoughtfully considers the information they have received from supervisors, peers, and/or clients with the aim to discern next steps and strengthen their practice.
- **Applying feedback.** Actively integrating feedback in a thoughtful and respectful way. Does not avoid applying feedback.

Appendix C: Individual Skills Assessment

All masters students will be assessed on the skills listed below during COU 5393 (Development of Counseling Skills) and the first semester of Internship (COU 5713 or COU 5793). Students are assessed using the developmental rubric explained in the [Developmental Assessment and Expectations](#) section of this document.

The assessment points and benchmarks for the individual skills assessments are as follows:

Individual Student Assessment

- COU 5393: Students will meet expectations for at least 80% of all skills in which they are evaluated.
- COU 5683: Students will meet expectations for at least 80% of all skills in which they are evaluated.
- COU 5713/5793: Students will meet expectations for at least 80% of all skills in which they are evaluated.

Program Assessment

- COU 5393: 80% of students will receive an overall score of 3.
- COU 5713/5793: 80% of students will receive an overall score of 3.

Assessed Skills

Active Listening

Fully listening and attending to clients' verbal and non-verbal communication while remaining present in the "here and now." In a group setting, this includes scanning and attending to all clients in session.

Nonverbal Skills

Facial expressions, posture, and physical distance between counselor and client convey to client counselor engagement and respect for client's preferred personal space.

Silence

Intentional and strategic pauses and gaps in conversation with the aim of allowing the client to reflect, process, and respond without pressure. In a group setting, silence allows the group to use its own resources.

Unconditional Positive Regard

Accepting and valuing clients without judgment, fostering a safe and supportive therapeutic environment in which clients' humanity is exalted and respected.

Empathy

Holistically demonstrating a deep understanding of the client's experiences and feelings through verbal and non-verbal skills.

Reflection of Feelings

Accurately identifying the client's emotions based on the client's verbal or nonverbal messages.

Reflection of Meaning

Advanced reflecting skill in which the helper feeds back to the client the underlying meanings based on the client's worldview and values to foster deeper self-awareness, self-exploration, and understanding.

Summarizing

Highlighting key points client(s) make during a specific portion of the session to enhance client clarity, reinforce insights, facilitate progress, or close the session. In a group setting, summarizing often includes summarizing information offered by more than one group member.

Open-ended Questions

Inquiries designed to stimulate explanation, storytelling, and/or more full description rather than a dichotomous response (e.g., "yes, no"). Balances the use of open-ended questions with other basic counseling skills.

Closed-ended Questions

Requests for factual information or dichotomous responses that are used only when necessary. While helpful in certain situations, overuse can limit exploration and potentially feel like interrogation.

Probes

Statements (e.g., “say more,” “tell me more,” “explain further,” “describe what you experienced”) that guide clients toward deeper self-reflection and insight while maintaining a supportive and non-directive approach.

Immediacy

Addressing present-moment emotions, dynamics, or interactions in the counseling session to enhance authenticity and connection.

Redirection

Statements or questions used to refocus the session and maintain a productive focus while respecting the client’s needs.

Client Identities

Exploring salient facets of identity that are meaningful to the client to identify strengths and resiliencies and to foster awareness and growth.

Cultural Integration

Intentionally incorporating the client’s worldview, context, identities, beliefs, and ways of being into the counseling process to ensure client-centered care rather than imposing the counselor’s own values.

Informed Consent

Outlining and explaining client rights, limits to confidentiality, counseling expectations, and obtaining client agreement, both in the initial session and as needed throughout the counseling process. In group work, specifically highlighting nuances such as confidentiality not being guaranteed, expectations regarding relationships among group members, etc.

Beginning the Session

Welcomes the client, summarizes prior discussions/content, offers opportunity for the client to decide what to discuss, and provides focus for the session.

Closing the Session

Manage time effectively, summarizes key insights, assigns homework (if applicable), and ensures the client is emotionally and physically stable and prepared to leave.

Skill Integration and Delivery

Using attending skills, facilitative skills, microskills, and basic counseling skills while conducting assessments, delivering informed consent, etc.

Stage of Change

Continually assesses the client’s readiness for change and for treatment and tailors interventions, treatment plan, and process to align with where the client is in their developmental process.

Applying Feedback

Actively integrating feedback in a thoughtful and respectful way. Does not avoid applying feedback.

Appendix D: Group Skills Assessment

All masters students are assessed on the skills below during COU 5233 (Group Counseling) and Practicum (COU 5683). Students are assessed using the developmental rubric explained in the [Developmental Assessment and Expectations](#) section of this document.

Individual Student Assessment

- COU 5233: Students will meet expectations for at least 80% of all skills in which they are evaluated.
- COU 5683: Students will meet expectations for at least 80% of all skills in which they are evaluated.

Program Assessment

- COU 5233: 80% of students will receive an overall score of 3.
- COU 5683: 80% of students will receive an overall score of 3.

Assessed Skills

Active Listening

Fully listening and attending to clients' verbal and non-verbal communication while remaining present in the "here and now." In a group setting, this includes scanning and attending to all clients in session.

Nonverbal Skills

Facial expressions, posture, and physical distance between counselor and client convey to client counselor engagement and respect for client's preferred personal space.

Silence

Intentional and strategic pauses and gaps in conversation with the aim of allowing the client to reflect, process, and respond without pressure. In a group setting, silence allows the group to use its own resources.

Unconditional Positive Regard

Accepting and valuing clients without judgment, fostering a safe and supportive therapeutic environment in which clients' humanity is exalted and respected.

Empathy

Holistically demonstrating a deep understanding of the client's experiences and feelings through verbal and non-verbal skills.

Summarizing

Highlighting key points client(s) make during a specific portion of the session to enhance client clarity, reinforce insights, facilitate progress, or close the session. In a group setting, summarizing often includes summarizing information offered by more than one group member.

Open-ended Questions

Inquiries designed to stimulate explanation, storytelling, and/or more full description rather than a dichotomous response (e.g., "yes, no"). Balances the use of open-ended questions with other basic counseling skills.

Closed-ended Questions

Requests for factual information or dichotomous responses that are used only when necessary. While helpful in certain situations, overuse can limit exploration and potentially feel like interrogation.

Probes

Statements (e.g., “say more,” “tell me more,” “explain further,” “describe what you experienced”) that guide clients toward deeper self-reflection and insight while maintaining a supportive and non-directive approach.

Blocking

Intervening to stop counterproductive behaviors in group settings (e.g., interrupting harmful comments).

Protecting

Safeguarding clients from emotional harm within group dynamics, especially during early stages when conflicts may arise.

Facilitating

Guiding group dynamics or individual sessions to ensure productive interactions.

Linking

Identifying commonalities among group members to foster connection and universality.

Immediacy

Addressing present-moment emotions, dynamics, or interactions in the counseling session to enhance authenticity and connection.

Redirection

Statements or questions used to refocus the session and maintain a productive focus while respecting the client’s needs.

Cultural Integration

Intentionally incorporating the client’s worldview, context, identities, beliefs, and ways of being into the counseling process to ensure client-centered care rather than imposing the counselor’s own values.

Informed Consent

Outlining and explaining client rights, limits to confidentiality, counseling expectations, and obtaining client agreement, both in the initial session and as needed throughout the counseling process. In group work, specifically highlighting nuances such as confidentiality not being guaranteed, expectations regarding relationships among group members, etc.

Beginning the Session

Welcomes the client, summarizes prior discussions/content, offers opportunity for the client to decide what to discuss, and provides focus for the session.

Closing the Session

Manage time effectively, summarizes key insights, assigns homework (if applicable), and ensures the client is emotionally and physically stable and prepared to leave.

Applying Feedback

Actively integrating feedback in a thoughtful and respectful way. Does not avoid applying feedback.

Appendix E: Fitness to Practice Evaluation (FTPE) Form

Student Name	
Student Email Address	
Student's Program	
Number of Credits the Student Has Completed	
Name of Person Completing the FTPE	
Date FTPE is Being Completed	
Date or Date Range of Incident(s) Leading to FTPE	
Fitness to Practice Areas Specific to this FTPE	<p>Please select one or more of the following as they apply to this FTPE and remove the rest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Success • Key Performance Indicators • Professional Dispositions • Skills Acquisition (specify individual or group skills) • Rules, Regulations, or Policy Violation(s) • Dismissal from a Practicum or Internship Site
<p>Are you completing this form based on an incident(s) you</p> <p>a) directly observed;</p> <p>b) student self-report, c) gained knowledge about an incident(s) through a third party (e.g., site supervisor) or</p> <p>d) both: you observed an incident(s) directly <i>and</i> gained knowledge about an incident(s) through a third party.</p> <p>Please indicate your response and provide a brief explanation.</p>	

Description of Concerns

1. What incident(s) has led to completing this FTPE? Please explain fully what has occurred for each specific Fitness to Practice Area listed in the above section.

2. Are there other individuals who have been impacted by the incident(s) described in question one? Please explain and if possible, please name the individuals.

3. Are there any other entities involved in the incident(s) described in question one (e.g., UT San Antonio BIT, Title IX Office, UT San Antonio Police, etc.)? If yes, please describe.

4. Do you have an immediate safety concern for anyone involved in this situation? If yes, please contact the the Chair of the Department of Counseling and the Graduate Advisor of Record (GAR) for the appropriate program (i.e., Clinical Mental Health Counseling, School Counseling, or Doctoral Program) immediately. If the safety concern is harm to self or others, immediately contact the UT San Antonio Police Department or UT San Antonio Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) prior to contacting department leadership.
5. To date, what actions have faculty or other Program constituents taken to work with the student regarding the concern(s) documented in question one?
6. To date, what actions has the student taken to correct the concern(s) documented in question one?
7. Please attach all pertinent documentation related to the concern(s). If the specific Fitness to Practice Area is a key performance indicator, professional dispositions, or skills acquisition, please indicate whether the assessments were part of regular assessment and attach assessments. If the concern is connected to a practicum or internship placement site, please include site supervisor evaluations. Other forms of documentation may include but are not limited to, emails, assignments, assignment rubrics and/or feedback.
8. As per the remediation and retention policy, the GAR will decide how to proceed with this FTPE. However, do you have any recommendations for the GAR to consider?

Names and Signatures

Name of Evaluator: _____

Evaluator Signature and Date: _____

Name of Student: _____

*Student Signature and Date: _____

**Student signature indicates receipt of the FTPE Form not agreement with the contents of the FTPE Form. The FTPE Form is intended to be a documented record of the evaluator's concern(s) about a student's performance in accordance with the policies stated in the student's program handbook.*

Appendix F: Support Person Agreement Form

The Counseling Program at UT San Antonio is committed to student success and preparing students for the demands of the counseling profession. At times, students need additional support to develop the knowledge, awareness, skills and behaviors that align with the counseling profession. In those instances, the Counseling Program works with students using a variety of remediation and retention interventions to increase their success.

As part of our program policy, students who are engaging in remediation and retention interventions are permitted to have a support person present for meetings. The support person must be approved by the committee chair at least three (3) days prior to the meeting. The role of the support person is to provide the student, as named below, support with their presence only. The support person is not an active participant in the meeting. To be a support person for a student, the support person, as named below, must:

- Keep all information discussed in the meeting confidential. They may not speak with anyone other than the student about what occurred during the meeting.
- Not speak, intervene, disrupt, or otherwise interfere with the meeting.
- Not record the meeting in any form (e.g., audio, video) as per UT San Antonio Counseling Program policy.
- Not contact any committee member or UT San Antonio Counseling Program faculty member regarding this student.
- Not have an actual or perceived conflict of interest with any committee member.

If the support person the student chooses is a lawyer/attorney, this information must be disclosed in the “relationship to student” question in the signature portion of this document. The committee reserves the right to have University Legal Counsel present in the event the student chooses to have a lawyer/attorney present.

These stipulations are in place to ensure a safe and productive working environment for the student and faculty members engaged in this process within an academic environment. If a support person violates these policies, they may be asked to leave the meeting and/or legal actions may be taken if the student’s privacy is violated.

By signing below, all parties agree to the policies and procedures outlined in this document. The student may choose to remove this support person at any time by emailing the committee chair.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature/Date: _____

Support Person Name: _____

Support Person Email: _____

Support Person Phone Number: _____

Support Person Relationship to Student: _____

Support Person Signature/Date: _____

Committee Chair Name: _____

Committee Chair Signature/Date: _____



Department of Counseling (210) 458-2600 <https://education.utsa.edu/departments/counseling/>

Appendix G: Advising Sheet 2025 - 2027

Student Name _____ Banner ID _____
Program Advisor _____ Catalog of Admission 2025-2027

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Required Core Coursework (42 semester credit hours)

Pre-requisites for Practicum

Pre-requisites for Internship

Course Number	Course Name	Course Prerequisites	Grade	Semester Completed
COU 5203	Introduction to Clinical Mental Health COU*			
COU 5213	Counseling Theories			
EDU 5003*	Research Methods in Education			
EDP 5033*	Human Development Across the Lifespan			
COU 6153*	Career Development & Choice			
COU 5113*	Ethical & Legal Issues in Counseling	COU 5203 & COU 5213		
COU 5243	Diagnosis in Counseling	COU 5203 & COU 5213		
COU 5223	Clinical Assessment and Appraisal Strategies for Counselors			
COU 5233*	Group Theory & Process	COU 5203 & COU 5213		
COU 5283	Counseling in Multicultural Settings			
COU 5393*	Development of Counseling Skills	COU 5203 & COU 5213		
COU 5613*	Biopsychosocial Aspects of Addiction COU	COU 5203 & COU 5213		
COU 6523	Couples and Family Counseling	COU 5203 & COU 5213		
COU 6883	Trauma, Crisis, and Grief COU	COU 5203 & COU 5213		

*Summer Courses

Clinical Coursework (9 semester credit hours)

Course Number	Course Name	Course Prerequisites	Grade	Semester Completed
COU 5683*	Practicum in Counseling (100 hours)	5113*, 5203, 5213, 5233, 5283, 6523, 5393		
COU 5713*	Clinical Mental Health Counseling Internship (300 hours)	5683, 5243		
COU 5723*	Clinical Mental Health Counseling Internship (300 hours)	COU 5713		

*Ethics pre-requisite for students beginning Spring 2024

Elective Coursework (9 semester credit hours)

All elective courses offered through the Department of Counseling are approved for this degree plan. Electives outside the department must be related to counseling.

Course Number	Course Name	Course Prerequisites	Grade	Semester Completed
COU				
COU				
COU				

N O T E S

- 1) Total number of hours for the Master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling is 60.
- 2) Students may only take a maximum of 9 hours of Counseling courses each semester.
- 3) Every Master's degree candidate at UTSA is required to pass a Comprehensive Exam via a professional portfolio in order to be awarded the Master's degree.
- 4) With departmental approval, a maximum of nine hours of coursework already taken and passed with a B or better in an equivalent course at the graduate level at another university or in another education- or counseling-related degree program may be applied to the degree and must be transferred during the first semester of study at UTSA. No class counted toward another degree can be used to satisfy the requirements of the M.S. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Classes applied to another graduate degree may serve as substitutes for up to 9 hours of core classes with the student's advisor's approval (but students will need to take additional courses, with advisor approval, to achieve the 60 hours necessary for the M.S. degree). Students will need to provide copies of the course syllabus and transcript indicating course completion and grade.
- 5) Only two courses with a grade of "C" (2.0) will be accepted toward this degree.
- 6) Students must earn a "B" (3.0) or better in all clinical courses (COU 5393, COU 5683, COU 5713, & COU 5723). Students who receive a B- or lower must retake that course and earn a "B" or better before progressing in the clinical course sequence.
- 7) Students must achieve a GPA of 3.0 (on a 4.0) scale each semester or you will be put on academic probation (Graduate school requirement).
- 8) To graduate, all graduate students must have an overall grade point average of at least a 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale; Graduate school requirement).
- 9) Graduation candidates must apply for graduation early in the semester in which they plan to graduate through the ASAP student account. Deadlines are posted on the schedule of classes.

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Suggested Course Sequencing

SUGGESTED COURSE SEQUENCING PART-TIME									
Year 1			Year 2			Year 3			
Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall
COU 5203 CMHC Intro	COU 5283 Multicultural	EDP 5033 Hum Dev	COU 5113 Ethics	COU 5243 Diagnosis	COU 5393 Skills	*Choice from List	COU 5713 Internship I	*Choice from List	*Choice from List
COU 5213 Theories	COU 6523 Couples and Family Counseling	EDU 5003 Research	COU 5233 Group	*Choice from List	*Choice from List	COU 5683 Practicum	*Choice from List	COU 5723 Internship II	*Choice from List
		**Summer courses are limited		Apply for Fall Practicum	**Summer courses are limited	Apply For Spring Internship	Apply for Summer Internship	**Summer courses are limited	Take NCE & Graduate

SUGGESTED COURSE SEQUENCING FULL-TIME								
Year 1			Year 2			Year 3		
Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer
COU 5203 CMHC Intro	COU 5113 Ethics	COU 5393 Skills	COU 5683 Practicum	COU 5713 Internship I	COU 5723 Internship II	*Choice from List		
COU 5213 Theories	COU 6523 Couples and Family Counseling	EDP 5033 Hum Dev	COU 5243 Diagnosis	*Choice from List	*Choice from List	*Choice from List		
COU 5283 Multicultural	COU 5233 Group	EDU 5003 Research	*Choice from List	*Choice from List		*Choice from List		
	Apply for Fall Practicum	**Summer courses are limited	Apply for Spring Internship	Apply for Summer internship	**Summer courses are limited	Take NCE & Graduate		

*List of Other Required Courses

COU 6153 Career Development and Choice

COU 5223 Assessment (Recommend assessment at same time as Practicum or internship if possible.) COU 5613* Biopsychosocial Aspects of Addiction Counseling
COU 6883 Trauma, Crisis, and Grief Counseling
Elective 1***
Elective

**** Summer courses** may be limited to clinical courses (COU 5393, COU 5683, COU 5713, & COU 5723), Child and Adolescent Counseling, Group Counseling, Ethics, Addiction, Career, EDP 5033 Human Growth and Development, EDU 5003 Research, and electives from other departments.

*****Electives** can be any graduate course related to counseling, from our department or others. These may include EDP (educational psychology), SWK (social work), BBL (bicultural-bilingual studies) or others as long as the topic is related to counseling. Kristina will email students with a list of possible electives before registration each semester.

Electives commonly offered in our department include COU 6673 Introduction to Play Therapy; COU 6683 Advanced Play Therapy; COU 5253 Child & Adolescent COU in Systemic Context; COU 6973 SI: Child Abuse & Domestic Violence; COU 6003 Consultation; COU 6973 SI: Neurofeedback Multi-Level and Advanced Neurofeedback; COU 6973 SI: IBH 1 and II. (Note: If you are in a certificate program (BBC, IBH) specific electives will be needed for your program.)

Special Topics: If you take COU 6973 three times, you must petition the Graduate School to count all three courses towards your program of study. After you register for your third COU 6973, please contact Jessica Gonzalez (Jessica.gonzalez5@utsa.edu) for more details.

Federal Financial Aid: When planning your semesters, please note that to remain eligible for full-time federal financial aid, graduate students must be enrolled in at least 9 credit hours in the fall or spring semesters, or 6 credit hours in the summer, that count toward the degree. If enrollment falls below the full-time minimum, federal financial aid will be prorated based on the number of qualifying credit hours. Enrollment below the part-time minimum may result in ineligibility for federal financial aid.

PRE-REGISTRATION PLANNING

NAME: _____

SEMESTER / YEAR: _____

PRIOR TO REGISTRATION EACH SEMESTER, LOOK AT THE CLASSES OFFERED AND SELECT COURSES YOU WOULD LIKE TO TAKE BASED ON YOUR LONG-TERM PLAN. NEXT, LIST ALTERNATE COURSES IN CASE YOU CANNOT REGISTER FOR YOUR FIRST CHOICES. LIST CRN NUMBERS AND TRY TO REGISTER AT 7:00 AM ON THE DAY REGISTRATION OPENS.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
COURSE: CRN: TIME: MODALITY:	COURSE: CRN: TIME: MODALITY:	COURSE: CRN: TIME: MODALITY:	COURSE: CRN: TIME: MODALITY:	COURSE: CRN: TIME: MODALITY:
COURSE: CRN: TIME: MODALITY:	COURSE: CRN: TIME: MODALITY:	COURSE: CRN: TIME: MODALITY:	COURSE: CRN: TIME: MODALITY:	COURSE: CRN: TIME: MODALITY:
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ALTERNATE CLASSES				
COURSE: CRN: TIME: MODALITY:	COURSE: CRN: TIME: MODALITY:	COURSE: CRN: TIME: MODALITY:	COURSE: CRN: TIME: MODALITY:	COURSE: CRN: TIME: MODALITY:
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NOTES: