

UT San Antonio Department of Counseling 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 and professional dispositions), 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.

Table 1

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 and professional dispositions. 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 A). 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 (i.e., professional dispositions); 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

In this section, we name and define the fitness to practice components for the doctoral program. 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 doctoral programs must meet the grade-point average requirement of 3.0 or higher (on a 4.0 scale) in all work counted as part of the degree program and no courses in which grades of less than "C" (below 2.0 on a 4.0 scale) were earned may be applied to the doctoral degree. To graduate, all doctoral students must have an overall grade point average of at least a 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale).

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 linked 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.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPIs are essential, core practice areas named by our accreditor (i.e., CACREP) and defined by the faculty. There are five KPI domains for the doctoral program. 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.

Table 2*Doctoral Program KPI Assessment*

KPI	Courses in which KPI is Assessed	Benchmark
Counseling: Demonstrate advanced knowledge of counseling theories and skills to conceptualize cases, deliver interventions, and address diverse client needs, consistently integrating multicultural competence and ethical standards into professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COU 7213 • COU 7313 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 3
Supervision: Apply contemporary models and best practices of clinical supervision, to foster supervisee growth, professional identity, and competency through collaborative, innovative, and trauma-informed supervisory relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COU 7583 • COU 7593 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 3
Teaching: Exhibit counselor education teaching skills through the design, delivery, and assessment of inclusive, empirically supported, and technology-enhanced learning experiences that promote student development, critical thinking, and responsiveness to diverse learning needs and contexts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COU 7123 • COU 7513 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 3
Research and Scholarship: Demonstrate the ability to develop, conduct, evaluate, and disseminate research using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods to advance the counseling profession and address the evolving needs of diverse populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COU 6893 • COU 7823 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 3
Leadership and Advocacy: Exhibit leadership and advocacy skills by applying theories, models, and strategies within counseling, educational, and community settings to influence policy, training, and ethical practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COU 7133 • COU 7143 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 3

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 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 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. Dispositions are assessed on an established schedule four times during each student's plan of study. Each evaluation point has minimum benchmarks assigned. 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 and counselor educators while contributing to a respectful and inclusive community.

Students are assessed developmentally on the following 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.

Table 3

Professional Disposition Assessment Schedule

Assessment Point	Benchmark
COU 7133	3
COU 7593	3
COU 7413	3
COU 7993/7996	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.

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. Doctoral students who are not already licensed as an LPC or certified as a school counselor should consult the sections in the Master's student handbook (see Rules, Regulations, Policies, and Laws section for CMHC and School Counseling) for legal requirements and links.

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.

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 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 B). 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 Department of Counseling Chair within five (5) business days of their concern not being resolved by the GAR. The Department of Counseling Chair 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 Department of Counseling Chair. 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 Department of Counseling Chair. 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 (see 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 Department of Counseling Chair within five (5) business days of their concerns not being resolved with the committee. The Department of Counseling Chair 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.

Appendix A: Fitness to Practice Evaluation (FTPE) Form

Essential Information

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 (a) directly observed; (b) student self-report, (c) gained knowledge about an incident(s) through a third party (e.g., site supervisor) or (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 Department of Counseling Chair 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 B: 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: