



Master of Education in School Counseling

Program Handbook

2025-2027

Department of Counseling

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WELCOME

Welcome to the University of Texas at San Antonio's Department of Counseling's School 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. Within this handbook you will find much of the information you will need regarding 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, State certification, and other related professional concerns. While this information is intended to facilitate smooth and orderly progress toward degree completion, the information in this 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 Education in School Counseling degree provides coursework leading to certification as a professional school counselor. UTSA's Department of Counseling also offers the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Counselor Education and Supervision. 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 Masters of Education in School Counseling degree. A manual outlining the requirements for doctoral studies can be found at the departmental office and is posted 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 the evolving demands of their profession and enrich the quality of people's lives.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

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 professional identity as clinical mental health counselors, school counselors, counselor educators, and supervisors.
- Articulate a conceptualization of individuals served from a strength-based perspective founded on 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.

Innovative Programs

- [Bilingual Counseling](#)
 - [Integrated Behavioral Healthcare](#)
 - [Neurofeedback](#)
 - [Study Abroad to Oaxaca, Mexico](#)
 - [Strengths and Wellbeing: Innovation Research Lab](#)
 - [Counselors Against Sex Trafficking Research Lab](#)
 - Innovations in Disability, Economic Equity, and Addictions (IDEA) Research lab
 - Play Therapy courses
-

MASTER OF EDUCATION IN SCHOOL COUNSELING DEGREE

School Counseling Objectives

In addition to the program objectives previously listed, students completing the program with a specialization in School Counseling will:

- Demonstrate the competencies required to work with all students K-12 individually or in groups to address their educational, career, personal, and social development.
- Demonstrate consultative and coordinating competencies required to work with parents, educators, other professionals, and community stakeholders collaboratively to address the developmental needs of all students.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the role and function of the professional school counselor, including professional standards and behaviors as described in *The Texas Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs*.
- Demonstrate the competencies necessary to conduct research and use assessment data in order to organize, plan, design, implement, and evaluate a data-driven comprehensive and developmental school counseling program.

School Counseling Specialization

The school counseling specialization is designed to prepare you to function as a school counselor in public and private schools. Additionally, to obtain certification as a professional school counselor in Texas, you must apply to the UTSA School Counselor Certification Program, obtain your master's degree, and pass a state examination. For more information on school counseling requirements, please contact Dr. Malvika Behl at malvika.behl@utsa.edu.

Requirements vary from state to state. If you plan to relocate to another state, we recommend researching the specific requirements for that state.

Summary of Degree Specializations

School Counseling Specialization (60 semester credit hours - [See Appendix 1](#))

- Sixteen Core Courses, No Electives
- Four Clinical Courses

Job Outlook for Graduates

As of May 2023, the State of Texas reports the number of Educational, Guidance, and Career Counselors at 31,680 with an average yearly salary of \$64,770. Nationwide, there are approximately 162,610 counselors working within elementary and secondary schools with an average yearly salary of \$74,910.

If you are interested in learning more about career opportunities in counseling, please consult the representatives at the Career Planning Services office. 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/oes211012.htm>

ADMISSIONS 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 GPA during the last 60 hours of their undergraduate studies to be eligible for clear admission to the counseling program. Applicants with a GPA between 2.70 - 2.99 may be accepted into the program on a probationary basis. Applicants without an adequate background for counseling will be required to take COU 3103 Helping Skills and, at the discretion of the admission committee, complete up to 15 additional hours of preparatory courses as a condition of admission. One or more letters of recommendation, a written statement of goals, and a personal interview may be required. Interested persons should contact the Student Development Specialist for the Department of Counseling or check the website for more information. The number of students admitted to this program may be limited.

Advising information is provided to students on the first-class meeting of the course COU 5103- Introduction to School Counseling. Please make sure to go to your MyUTSA email account to activate it 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 Department of Counseling 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.gonzalez5@utsa.edu. She can clarify questions related to admissions and other academic issues (i.e., degree requirements, policies and procedures, applications for practica and internships, petitions for reinstatement, 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. You will have an opportunity to meet with an advisor to discuss such issues as course substitutions, petitioning, course transferability, etc. If an academic issue arises that the Student Development Specialist cannot assist you with, please e-mail your advisor with your inquiry.

Please keep in mind that your advisor is a faculty member who teaches courses during 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, in between semesters, and during the summer sessions.

Occasionally, students request a change of academic advisor. Request forms are available in the department office (DB 4.122). Obtain a form, secure the approval of the new advisor, and return it to the Student Development Specialist. Every effort will be made to match your needs with a faculty advisor who can address them.

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 the Automated Student Access Program (ASAP) at <http://asap.utsa.edu>. Students are urged to access ASAP immediately to establish a Personal Identification Number (PIN) to utilize ASAP as needed.

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 two years following your last semester of enrollment. Refer online to ASAP (<http://asap.utsa.edu>) for registration procedures.

Registration instructions are included in the Schedule of Classes each semester. Questions regarding registration should be directed to the Office of the Registrar at (210) 458-8000 or the Enrollment Services Center at (210) 458-8000.

UTSA does not guarantee the availability of particular courses or sections. Furthermore, classes may be cancelled if the minimum numbers of seats in a class have 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 (<https://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 UTSA

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.

Procedure for COU 6953 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, available at the department office, DB 4.122, and provide a syllabus for the course. The syllabus requires a description of the proposed topic to be studied, description of required work, and 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 Office of the Registrar. The Office of the Registrar will then notify you of registration procedures.

"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.



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) two weeks written notice. Students should provide faculty members with relevant information and documents about the endorsement including, but not limited to job description, addressee, curriculum vitae, and relevant enrolled courses.

The counseling faculty believes that it is their professional duty to only endorse or recommend a student or graduate for employment opportunities, licenses, certifications and/or other credentials to 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 do 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., DESE, 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](#)
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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 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 3 [[link](#)]). 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 masters 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 UTSA 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 UTSA 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 UTSA 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 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
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.	<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
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COU 6523 • EDP 5033 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 3
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COU 6153 • COU 5223 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 3
Domain 5: Counseling Practice & Relationships: Articulate and apply emerging theoretical orientations to clinical case conceptualization, treatment planning, and the development of effective counseling relationships.	<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
Domain 6: Group Counseling & Group Work: Demonstrate knowledge and skills in planning, facilitating, and evaluating group counseling processes across diverse populations and clinical settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COU 5233 • COU 5683 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 3
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COU 5223 • COU 6883 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 3
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.	<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
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COU 5243 • COU 5713/5723 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 3
School: Implement comprehensive PK-12 school counseling models that integrate evidence-based, culturally sustaining interventions to advance academic achievement, career readiness, postsecondary transitions, and graduation rates through strategic advocacy,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COU 5253 • 5793/5803/5813 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 3

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)	3
COU 5013 Introduction to School Counseling (school counseling students)	
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 4: [link](#)) as well as specific skill assessment for

individual and group assessment (see Appendix 5 - [link](#) and 6 - [link](#)). 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 coursework. 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.

- **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 [[LINK](#)], 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 3) 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 X). 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

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 UTSA 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 Counseling Department Chair within five (5) business days of their concern not being resolved by the GAR. The Counseling Department 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 Counseling Department Chair. If the GAR notifies the student that the outcome of the FTPE is 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) 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 Counseling Department 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.
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- 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 Counseling Department Chair within five (5) business days of their concerns not being resolved with the committee. The Counseling Department 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 UTSA 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 UTSA 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.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Please refer to the current UTSA Information Bulletin. The Student Code of Conduct can be found online at <http://www.utsa.edu/infoguide/appendices/b.html>

ADVISING SHEETS

Advising sheets are available on the department website at https://education.utsa.edu/_documents/counseling/student-resources/forms/23-25-school-counseling-advising-sheet.pdf and in the department office (DB 4.122). 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. This is typically completed during the first class meeting of COU 5301-Introduction to School Counseling. You must be admitted to the department before an advising sheet can be completed. After an advising sheet is reviewed and signed by you, a copy of the form will be placed in your file. The advising sheet is audited during the semester you apply for graduation and can become a part of various licensure and certification applications. Therefore, please keep a copy of your advising sheet.

Master of Education in Counseling with an Specialization in School Counseling

- I. Background Requirements (if applicable)
- II. Required courses (60 hours):
 - COU 5103 Introduction to School Counseling
 - COU 5113 Ethical & Legal Issues in 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 5253 Child and Adolescent Counseling in a Systemic Context
 - COU 5283 Counseling in Multicultural Settings
 - COU 5393 Development of Counseling Skills
 - COU 5613 Biopsychosocial Aspects of Addiction
 - COU 5683 Practicum in Counseling (100 hrs.)
 - COU 5793 School Counseling Internship I (200 hrs.) *
 - COU 5803 School Counseling Internship II (200 hrs.) *
 - COU 5813 School Counseling Internship III (200 hrs.) *
 - COU 6003 Consultation and Program Evaluation
 - COU 6153 Career Development and Choice
 - 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

Please refer to the [advising sheet](#) in Appendix I for additional information

Portfolio requirements are shared in [Appendix III](#)

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Students requiring special considerations due to a disability should contact the Office of Disability for necessary accommodations Downtown Campus, 210- 458-2945, <http://www.utsa.edu/disability>). The Office of Disability Services will provide the necessary documentation and support for the student through the examination process.

You must re-take the examination if you fail to pass it. If you fail the examination three times, a committee will meet to review your file, and will instruct you on your options. It is important to note that you will take subsequent examinations after graduation if you plan on becoming a licensed professional counselor or a certified school counselor. Mastery of these exams, then, becomes particularly important to your professional career.

NATIONAL COUNSELOR EXAMINATION (NCE)

As a CACREP-accredited program, the Department of Counseling is eligible to offer the National Counselor Examination (NCE) to students. To be eligible to take the NCE, students must meet the same criteria to be eligible to take the Department of Counseling's comprehensive examination.

In addition to taking the NCE, students in this program can apply for the National Certified Counselor (NCC) credential. This is the only professional credential that students can apply for before graduation. For more

information on the benefits of the NCC credential, visit the National Board of Certified Counselor's (NBCC) website at <http://nbcc.org/>

The NCE is offered once each Fall and Spring semester. 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 through UTSA is strictly voluntary and is not a required program activity. The semester prior to each examination, an email will be sent to all students with instructions explaining the application process.

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 "theory and practice classes" with 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 extensively utilizes simulation activities. Such activities as role-playing may be used in these and other courses.

The SFCC website contains a link with information related to clinical experiences: <http://education.utsa.edu/community-family-life-center/>

Toward the end of the program, students transition from simulation exercises to community and school client contact through participation in master's-level practicum and internship courses. Enrollment in these courses requires prerequisites and an application initiated by the student.

Applications will be available and can be downloaded from the departmental website (<https://education.utsa.edu/counseling/resources.html>). Applications must be returned before the scheduled deadline. Application dates will be posted on the website and sent to students via their MyUTSA e-mail account.

Applicants are typically notified of their standing within one week after the application deadline, which is noted on the application. A list of approved sites is available in the department office. It is essential to select the best and most suitable practicum or internship site that aligns with your interests and future professional goals. Care should be exercised to ensure the "fit" between student and site. The prospective practicum student should become aware of the expected duties and responsibilities of the position, as well as opportunities for education and growth. The Department's Clinical Director must approve each site. **For those doing their Practicum/Internship experience in a school setting, supervisors must be Texas State Certified as a Professional School Counselor. No exceptions to this rule will be made. Supervisors must be on-site.**

School Counseling 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 combined minimum of 700 hours in these courses.

School Counseling. School counseling practicum and internship requirements will consist of a 100-hour practicum and three 200-hour internships or two 300-hour internships. All internships must be completed in a school setting and supervised by an on-site Texas Education Agency (TEA) Certified School Counselor. Please get in touch with Jessica Gonzalez, the Student Development Specialist, for more information.

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 (http://education.utsa.edu/images/uploads/Fitness_to_Practice_Policy_2012-2.pdf) and the Handbook of Operating Procedures (<http://utsa.edu/hop/chapter5/5-17.html>).
 - Improve performance in response to feedback from supervisors.
 - Be consistent with customs in the school or agency regarding grooming, punctuality, dependability, etc.
 - Complete specified documentation, such as a log, case study, and counseling session summaries, according to the time schedule on the appropriate course syllabus. All documentation should be typed and written in a professional and thoughtful manner.
 - Treat all client-related material confidentially within appropriate legal and ethical guidelines.
 - Demonstrate competence in the following areas:
 - a) School Counseling Program Management
 - b) Guidance
 - c) Counseling
 - d) Consultation
 - e) Coordination and Referral
 - f) Student Assessment Interpretation
 - g) Professional Behaviors
 - h) Professional Standards
 - Make and keep copies of all assignments, evaluations, practicum logs, et cetera that have been turned into the professor. Students are responsible for maintaining their own records.
-

APPLICATION FOR GRADUATION

The application for graduation should be submitted one semester prior to the intended semester of graduation. Applications are available online at <http://asap.utsa.edu/>. Application deadlines are enforced. See your MyUTSA e-mail account and website for postings.

SARABIA FAMILY COUNSELING CENTER

The Sarabia Family Counseling Center is located at the Downtown Campus on the third floor of the Durango Building (DB 3.304). The center is available to students enrolled in practicum, clinical mental health and doctoral level internships, and assessment courses. Hours vary by semester. For more information on The SFCC, please visit <http://education.utsa.edu/community-family-life-center/>

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSISTANTSHIPS

Graduate assistantships are awarded to each university department. If you wish to apply for an assistantship, please complete the application available in the College of Education and Human Development, Office of the Dean, 1604 Campus, MB 3.304, (210) 458-4370. At least two letters of recommendation are required from persons who have supervised you in a work setting. If you are receiving financial aid assistance, a copy of the most recent award letter is also required. A student background check will be conducted. Graduate assistantships usually require 10 to 19 hours of work per week for which you are awarded a stipend.

Once an assistantship has been awarded, you will be asked to submit paperwork to Human Resources. Student employee paperwork can be retrieved online at <http://www.utsa.edu/hr/index.cfm>. Refer to the Handbook of Operating Procedures for student employee regulations (<http://www.utsa.edu/hop>). 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.

GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS/FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

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

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 with updates in terms of name, address, email, and telephone number changes. You must also inform the Office of the Registrar of such changes (210) 458-8000.

CREENTIALING OF TEXAS SCHOOL COUNSELORS

The school counseling specialization meets the academic requirements for certification as a Professional School Counselor in Texas.

- In addition to completing the program, students are required to take and pass the TExES examination. All students are strongly encouraged to take the TExES before graduating or shortly thereafter. For credentialing information, go to http://education.utsa.edu/certification_program/

School Counselor Certification Program

An additional requirement for students who wish to be employed as professional school counselors in Texas public schools is a separate application to the UTSA School Counselor Certification Program (SCCP). Admission to the Master of Education in School Counseling program does not guarantee acceptance into the SCCP. Please note that only those students who successfully complete the requirements for the UTSA SCCP will receive endorsement to sit for the state school counselor certification exam.

Requirements for Admission for the Graduate Certification Program

1. Full and Clear Admission to the MEd School Counseling Program
 2. Be admitted to UTSA (<http://www.utsa.edu/admissions>)
 3. Maintain your preferred email address
 4. Hold a Bachelor's degree from an accredited University
 5. Display English Language Proficiency- Teacher Candidates who did not receive a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution in the United States must take the TOEFL IBT in order to demonstrate proficiency. Required scores for TOEFL IBT are
 - a. Speaking — 24
 - b. Listening — 22
 - c. Reading — 22
 - d. Writing — 21
 6. Meet minimum Cumulative GPA of 3.0 or 3.0 in the last 60 hours of coursework.
 7. Complete the SCOU Candidate Interview Screening: [Admission Student Interview Protocol Application.docx](#) after introduction to school counseling.
 8. Read and Sign the Code of Ethics https://utsa.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bayKBGgRjAFCZvL
 9. Read and Sign the Criminal History Policy https://utsa.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_aXHbQiYvUA8wBDv
 10. Submit an application to the Certification Officer for Certification
- More information can be found in the [Teacher Preparation Program Handbook8-31-2024.docx](#)

TEXES EXAMS FOR SCHOOL COUNSELOR CERTIFICATION

Examination Requirements for School Counselor Certification

To become a Texas educator, candidates must pass the examinations required by the Legislature in Texas Education Code (TEC) [§21.048](#) and the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) in Texas Administrative Code (TAC) [§233.1\(e\)](#). The Texas Education Agency (TEA) administers these tests through a [testing vendor](#). These tests are generally referred to as the Texas Examination of Educator Standards or “TExES” exams. Passing standards for the TExES exams are posted in the Commissioner’s Rules, [19 TAC §151](#).

Practice Test Requirements

School Counselor candidates must take the Practice Exam and score 70% or higher to be approved for the state certification exam. Candidates submit an [eligibility form](#) reporting the practice test score to be approved for the real test.

Accommodations

Practice Test Accommodations: Candidates who need accommodations for the practice tests administered at UTSA must coordinate with [Student Disability Services](#) and the Testing Center.

TEExES Test Accommodations: Candidates who need accommodations for the real TExES test should review the testing vendor's [Alternative Testing Arrangements](#). Because it may take a long time to secure alternative testing arrangements for the real TExES test, candidates should investigate early and plan months ahead.

Identification

Candidates must provide proper identification to be admitted to either the practice or real TExES tests. For the practice tests, a state-issued or UTSA ID is generally sufficient. Review the ID requirements for the real TExES test at the [testing vendor's website](#). Failure to show proper ID for the real TExES test may result in candidates not being admitted to the testing center and forfeiture of the testing fees. Be prepared.

NOTE: Candidates who indicate non-U.S. citizenship must provide a passport from their country of origin in order to take the TExES exam for certification. Consular, diplomatic, or embassy IDs are not sufficient. Consult the [testing vendor's website](#) for more details.

On-line Registration Instructions for UTSA TExES Practice Exams

1. Log on to Banner ASAP.
2. Click on the tab "Student Services".
3. "TExES Practice Exam Registration".
4. Select "Register for TEST Session".
5. Under Test Name choose "Practice TExES".
6. From the drop-down menu select the practice exam you want to take.
7. On the far right under the "Select Test" column is a small radial (circle) button that must be clicked.
8. Hit the "Submit" button and you will be registered for a UTSA TExES Practice Exam.

Practice exam scores will generally be available on Banner ASAP two business days after the practice exam session. Scores are reported in percent correct with a score of 80% being comparable to the state scaled passing score of 240/300. 70% is required for test approval.

Candidates who fail the practice test should pay attention to the data. A failure in a domain or on a test indicates gaps in your knowledge that you need to fill before taking the real test.

- If you fail once, talk with your friends in your study group about what you need to learn.
- If you fail twice, talk with a professor.
- If you fail a third time, talk to the Assistant Director of Assessment and Program Accountability.

Approval to Test (take the state exam)

School Counselor candidates may only register for exams that correspond to their area of certification through UTSA.

- School Counselor candidates will be eligible to register for one state exam after the practice exam and review session requirements have been met, when applicable.
- All candidates must submit an Eligibility Form for "approval to test" every time they want to be approved to register for a state exam.
- Candidates who meet the UTSA requirements will be approved to take the test.

Test Retake Procedures and Rules

Five Times Rule for Taking State Exams

Candidates may only take the same TExES exam a total of five times. The five attempts include the first attempt to pass the exam and four retakes. You must follow TEA procedures to obtain a waiver to take the test more than five times. This is difficult, lengthy, and expensive.

Retake Procedures for the TExES 252

If you fail a TExES exam, you must wait 30 days before you can take the test again. You must get UTSA approval to retake the test. ([TAC §230.21\(a\)\(1\)\(D\)](#))

This table describes UTSA policy regarding the approval of retake attempts on TExES tests. A reflective essay includes an analysis of the candidate’s score report, identification of competencies where the candidate needs additional study, and identification of needed resources to address those competencies. An action plan is the candidate’s plan for mastering the knowledge, skills and attitudes identified in the reflective essay. It should include resources, a schedule/timeline, and benchmarks/standards for measuring progress. The candidate should develop the reflective essay and action plan in conjunction with the faculty mentor/chair.

The Fitness to Teach Council meets as needed, approximately every six weeks.

Table 5: Retake Policy

Status	Policy
After Failed 1st Attempt	1. Student submits a reflective essay ² and an action plan ³ to the Director for Assessment and Program Accountability (DAPA), completes 50 hours of remediation, and documents the activities/resources used. 2. Student scores 85% on the practice examination or comparable examination.
After Failed 2nd Attempt	3. Student writes a reflective essay regarding the repeated failures and submit it to the department chair. Chair completes a Formal Review: Level I. 4. Student develops an action plan using non-UTSA resources and documents the activities and resources used.
After Failed 3rd Attempt	5. Student meets the Fitness to Teach Council. Council completes a Formal Review: Level II. 6. Student completes remediation and presents evidence of readiness as prescribed by the Council.
After Failed 4th Attempt	7. DAPA approves 5th attempt.
After Failed 5th Attempt	8. DAPA signs the waiver request prepared by the student as required by SBEC policy.
After Failed 6 or more attempts	9. DAPA signs waiver requests prepared by the student as require by SBEC policy.
Legacy Failures⁴ – Under 5 Years	10. Follow the policies above depending on the number of failures. 11.
Legacy Failures – Over 5 Years	12. Candidate meets with an Assistant Director, Teacher Certification to explain the candidate’s aspirations, the reasons for past failures, and testing plans. 13. The Fitness to Teach Council may approve the candidate for testing.

State Exam Registration

All School Counselor candidates seeking certification through UTSA are required to have “approval to test” before they may register for their certification exams. Approved candidates navigate two websites to register for tests, the TEA website and the testing vendor’s website.

TEA

The TEA website is like a house with a locked front door and many rooms inside. The front door is the Texas Education Agency Login or “TEAL.” The room candidates want to enter is the Educator Certification Online System or “ECOS.” Candidates must enter through a TEAL account to exchange information with ECOS.

Request a **TEAL Login** account by completing the following steps on the [TEA website](#).

Logging onto TEAL for the First Time

1. Click on **ECOS for Educators** at the top of the page.
 2. Click on [Create a New TEAL Account](#).
 3. Select “**Educator**” as your Organization Type on the TEAL New User Registration form. TEAL will prompt you to enter your Social Security Number and other information.
-

4. After you have created your TEAL User account, you will receive an email with your new username and password. Follow the link in this email to login, using your new username and password.
5. After changing your password and establishing your security questions, you will be redirected to the TEAL landing page, where you can access the ECOS for Educators application by clicking on the link. [TEA provides directions for creating a TEAL account.](#)

Exam Approval Status

1. To check exam approval status, go to the [TEA Website](#) and login to **TEAL**.
 - a) Click on “**View Examinations**”.
2. “**Approval to test**” will only be granted to teacher candidates that have successfully completed UTSA eligibility requirements prior to submitting the Eligibility Form.

****UTSA DOES NOT NOTIFY CANDIDATES WHEN THEY HAVE BEEN APPROVED.***

Testing Vendor

1. Visit the [testing vendor’s website](#) to register for a TExES State Exam.
2. Click the “Register” tab, then “Register Now,” then “Create an account now.” Follow the directions.
3. You will need your TEA ID Number each time you register for a TExES State Exam.
4. Be sure you understand the [Candidate Rules Agreement](#) and the ID policy. Your unexpired identification documents must match your name in ECOS. If they do not, you must [request a name change from TEA](#).
5. The testing vendor provides support at (800) 877-4599, (413) 256-2898 or via email or chat at their website.

Proper Identification Required for Testing

In order to take the TExES exam for certification, candidates who indicate non-U.S. citizenship must provide a passport from their country of origin. Consular, diplomatic, or embassy IDs are not sufficient. Read the identification requirements at the [testing vendor’s website](#).

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: (366) 547-0607 Fax: (366) 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.

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 advisor, Dr. Devon Romero at devon.romero@utsa.edu, for more details.

National Organizations

American School Counseling Association (ASCA). ASCA members lead, advocate and collaborate to promote equity and success for all students by connecting the school counseling program to the school's academic mission and school improvement plan. They uphold the ASCA ethical and professional standards and promote the development of the school counseling program based on the ASCA National Model.

ASCA members include practicing school counselors as well school counseling students and higher education faculty. School counseling supervisors at the school, district and state level are also members of ASCA.

Benefits of the ASCA membership: <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/Membership/Membership-Options>

American Counseling Association (ACA). Founded in 1952, ACA is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the growth and enhancement of the counseling profession. We provide education, community and professional development opportunities for more than 60,000 members, including counselors in various practice settings and counselors in training.

Benefits of the ASCA membership: <https://www.counseling.org/membership/value-of-membership>

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.creativecounselor.org/>

State Organizations

Texas Counseling Association (TCA). Regular membership is open to all persons interested in promoting professional counseling and guidance. Student membership is open to graduate and undergraduate students who are currently enrolled in three hours or more in a counseling-related program. Student certification by major subject field instructor is required at the time of joining or renewal in the association. Students interested in obtaining TCA's competitive insurance rates for their clinical classes may contact TCA staff or download insurance information

<https://txca.org/home>

Texas School Counselors Association (TSCA). Texas School Counselors Association is one of the largest divisions of the Texas Counseling Association (TCA). Members of TSCA can expect support from TSCA through leadership, advocacy, and professional development. Special rates are offered for student members. For more information, please visit: <http://www.txca.org>

Local Organizations

South Central Regional Counseling Association (SCRCA). The South Central Regional Counseling Association is an organization of professional counselors serving children and adults in a variety of settings who have joined together to provide leadership and direction that encourages the personal and professional development of counselors; to influence decisions that affect the counseling profession; and to promote progress, understanding, and improvement of counseling. The Association is organized to represent the diverse interests of its membership through an Executive Board and committees. South Central Regional Counseling Association represents professional counselors in Atascosa, Bexar, Comal, Frio, Guadalupe, Kinney, Medina, Uvalde, Val Verde, and Wilson counties. **For more information, please visit:** <https://scrca-chapter.txca.org/>

Department Faculty and Staff

Department of Counseling Office

Durango Building, UTSA Downtown Campus 501 W. Cesar E. Chavez Blvd.

San Antonio, Texas 78207 Telephone: 210-458-2600

Fax: 210-458-2605

Office Hours: Monday-Friday (except state holidays), 8:00 am-5:30 pm

APPENDIX 1: SAMPLE SCHOOL COUNSELING ADVISING SHEET
 MASTER OF EDUCATION IN SCHOOL COUNSELING
 2025-2027

Student Name _____

Banner ID _____

Program Advisor: Malvika Behl

Catalog of Admission 2025-2027

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

I. Required Core Coursework (48 semester credit hours)

Course Number		Course Name	Course Prerequisites	Grade	Semester Completed
COU	5103	Intro to School Counseling			
COU	5213	Counseling Theories			
EDU	5003	Research Methods in Education			
EDP	5033	Human Development Across the Lifespan			
COU	6153	Career Development & Choices			
COU	5113	Ethical & Legal Issues in Counseling			
COU	5223	Clinical Assessment and Appraisal Strategies for Counselors			
COU	5233	Group Theory & Process	COU 5103 & 5213		
COU	5243	Diagnosis in Counseling	COU 5103 & 5213		
COU	5253	Child and Adolescent Counseling in a Systemic Context	COU 5103 & 5213		
COU	5283	Counseling in Multicultural Settings	COU 5103 & 5213		
COU	5393	Development of Counseling Skills	COU 5103 & 5213		
COU	6003	Consultation & Program Evaluation	COU 5103 & 5213		
COU	5613	Biopsychosocial Aspects of Addiction COU	COU 5103 & 5213		
COU	6523	Couples and Family Counseling	COU 5103 & 5213		
COU	6883	Trauma, Crisis, and Grief COU	COU 5103 & 5213		

II. Clinical Coursework (9 semester credit hours)

Course Number		Course Name	Course Prerequisites	Grade	Semester Completed
COU	5683	Practicum in School Counseling	5103, 5213, 5393, 5283, 5233, 6523		
COU	5973	School Counseling Internship I (200 hours or 300 hours)	5683, 5253		
COU	5803	School Counseling Internship II (200 hours or 300 hours)	5793		

Students have the option of completing School internship in **two internships**: COU 5793 and COU 5803 **OR three internships**: COU 5793, COU 5803, and 5813

III. Elective Coursework (3 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	5813	School Counseling Internship II (200 hours)	5803		

NOTES

- 1) Total number of hours for the Masters in Education degree in School Counseling is 60.
- 2) School counseling students who have full-time employment are strongly encouraged to take only 3 hours during the fall and spring semesters although a maximum of 9 hours of counseling courses may be taken. Students may take 9 hours during the summer months.
- 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.Ed. in School 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.Ed. 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 5793, 5803,& COU 5813). 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.

SUGGESTED COURSE SEQUENCING								
PART-TIME								
Year 1			Year 2			Year 3		
Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer
COU 5103 Intro to SC	COU 5283 Multicultural Counseling	COU 5233 Group Counseling	COU 5683 Practicum	COU 5793 Internship I	EDU 5003 Research in Education	COU 5803 Internship II	COU 5813 Internship III	COU 6153 Career Cou
COU 5213 Theories	COU 6523 Couples and Family Counseling	COU 5113 Ethical & Legal Issues in Counseling	COU 5223 Assessment	COU 5253 Child & Adolescent Counseling	EDP 5033 Human Development	COU 5243 Diagnosis	COU 6883 Trauma, Crisis,& Grief Cou	COU 5613 Addictions
		COU 5393 Counseling Skills	<i>*Recommen d Practicum & Assessment Together</i>		COU 6003 Consultation Skills			
	<i>Apply for Fall Practicum</i>	<i>**Summer courses are limited</i>	<i>Apply For Spring Internship</i>	<i>Apply For Fall Internship</i>	<i>**Summer courses are limited</i>	<i>Apply For Spring Internship</i>		<i>**Summer courses are limited</i>

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:
COURSE: CRN: TIME: MODALITY:	COURSE: CRN: TIME: MODALITY:	COURSE: CRN: TIME: MODALITY:	COURSE: CRN: TIME: MODALITY:	COURSE: CRN: TIME: MODALITY:
ALTERNATE CLASSES				
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:

NOTES:

APPENDIX 2: PORTFOLIO GUIDELINES

School Counseling Portfolio Requirements

The purpose of an Internship Portfolio is to provide you with:

- An educational tool to document your experiences, learning, and 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.

The purpose of a portfolio is to document your work and achievements during your graduate counseling program experience. It provides a comprehensive picture of your performance as a counseling student. Use your creativity to showcase your accomplishments and the developmental, preventive, and intervention activities you have planned and implemented during your internship to assist students with educational, career, and personal/social development. Your portfolio helps you organize all you have done and accomplished during your internship and assists when marketing yourself for jobs.

Organize Your Portfolio:

1. Archive documents to demonstrate your progress and increased mastery in the eight school counselor competencies utilized in the four program delivery components.
2. Be creative and think of examples of your own work that you would like to archive for future reference. Include meaningful, relevant, and attractive examples of your work.
3. Organize your portfolio in a way that will be useful to you in the interviewing process and on your first counseling job.

Your portfolio should be in a folder located on One-Drive and will include evidence of your achievements in the different professional school counseling competency domains and comprehensive school counseling program components. It must include evidence of your learning experiences as you progress through the three internships required in the school counseling program.

- A. In the **Internship I** course, students will complete and include evidence in the portfolio of the following activities addressing identified competency domains and the related program components.
 1. Program Management:
 - Foundational Components (development of a program mission statement, rationale, definition, assumptions, and goals.)
 - Sample Job Description
 - Program Brochure
 2. Guidance
 - Classroom Guidance Plan (planned lesson, supporting materials, results evaluation using multiple sources in preparation for required observation)
 3. Counseling
 - Evidence that shows both individual and group counseling hours were completed.
 4. Professional Behavior/Professional Standards
 - Counseling Philosophy Paper (theoretical orientation, nature of client change, ethical/legal issues, counselor professionalism, etc.)
 - B. In the **Internship II** course, students will complete and include evidence in the portfolio of the following activities addressing identified competency domains and the related program components.
 1. Counseling:
 - Case Presentation (following format provided in Internship II class)
-

- Group Counseling Plan-planned activity(ies), supporting materials, results evaluation using multiple sources in preparation for required observation
2. Coordination:
 - Referral-demonstrate use of the referral process in case presentation as appropriate
 3. Consultation:
 - Community Involvement Activity (include supporting documents such as pictures, agendas, and handouts of your participation and leadership in parent education, advisory boards, parent-teacher organization-related service, etc.)
- C. In the **Internship III** course, students will complete and include evidence in the portfolio of the following activities addressing identified competency domains and the related program components.
1. Counseling:
 - Evidence that shows both individual and group counseling hours were provided.
 2. Program Management:
 - Mock Interview (articulate a comprehensive guidance program purpose, design, implementation, and evaluation, and articulate professional school counselor competencies and their use in program delivery to a panel of area school district directors of guidance programs) – Write a one-page feedback of the mock interviews – Double spaced, one page, no APA style.
 3. Consultation
 - Consultation Plan-choose either developmental or remedial consultation; document process, materials, and results evaluation used in preparation for required observation.
 4. Professional Behavior
 - Personal Recognition (notes of gratitude, news clippings, etc.)
 - Technological and other Communication Skills (e.g., power point and video presentations)
 - Professional Memberships, Conferences, Workshops, Awards, Recognitions
 - Professional Goals for entry into the counseling profession
- D. Career Planning:
The following items should be included in the portfolio the final internship semester (You may want to use UTSA career services for assistance).
1. Cover Letter
 2. Updated Resume (include reference to graduate research completed)
 3. Updated Transcript
 4. References
 5. Practice TExES 252 results
-

Your portfolio will be graded according to the following rubric:

1-4 points	5-7 points	8-10 points	11-13 points	14-15 points
Portfolio does not meet requirements sufficiently to earn a passing grade.	Minimally acceptable level. Portfolio includes some evidence of accomplishments, but important areas are missing. Examples are unclear or poorly developed and supporting documents are not relevant to the work cited.	Satisfactory portfolio that includes examples from most domains. Examples are adequate. Organization and quality of supporting documents could be improved.	Well-developed portfolio that clearly documents experience in all domains. Writing is of good quality. Methods of documentation are effective in representing accomplishments. Quality of supporting documents is good	Extremely well-developed portfolio that clearly reflects accomplishments in the ten school counselor domains and four program service delivery components. Experience is extremely well documented, presenting a comprehensive profile of student's work, knowledge and skills gained. Quality of supporting documents is excellent

APPENDIX 3: 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</p> <p>a) directly observed;</p> <p>b) student self-report,</p> <p>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 Counseling Department 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 4 - 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 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 5: 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 6: 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.
