

# The Counseling Program Handbook



**Department of Psychological Science and Counseling**

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## Introduction

Welcome to graduate school! We are pleased you are pursuing your graduate education at Austin Peay State University. We hope you will long remember your days in the counseling program and look back on them as the time you began developing your identity as a professional counselor.

University policies regarding your work as a graduate student at Austin Peay State University can be found in the most current version of the [APSU Graduate Bulletin](#). The purpose of the Counseling Program handbook is to provide a reference that you can refer to that has program descriptions, procedures, expectations, etc., specific to this program and will be essential to know throughout your graduate experience. This information is presented as a source that will help you navigate the graduate study experience and allow you to be aware of university and program policies that influence your time in the program.

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP), a specialized accrediting body recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), has granted accreditation to the following programs in the Department of Psychological Science and Counseling at Austin Peay State University: Clinical Mental Health Counseling (M.S.) and School Counseling (M.S.).

## Mission Statement

### University Mission Statement

Austin Peay State University is a mission-driven, community-minded institution that provides transformational experiences through innovative, creative, and scholarly activities. We welcome and inspire an inclusive community of learners to make a positive impact regionally and globally.

### Program Mission Statement

The mission of the Counseling Program is to provide both academic and clinical training that will prepare students to be highly effective professional counselors. Our goal is to influence students to be life-long learners who are sensitive to and appreciative of the developmental needs of individuals and groups in the context of a rapidly changing multicultural society.

## Programs and Descriptions

### M.S. in Counseling Program, Clinical Mental Health Concentration

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling concentration prepares students to work in a variety of community agency settings and/or eventual private practice. Students completing this

concentration will have met the educational requirements for licensure in Tennessee as a Licensed Professional Counselor with Mental Health Service Provider status. The curriculum requirements include coursework, a 100-hour practicum experience, a 600-hour internship, and a comprehensive examination.

### **M.S. in Counseling Program, School Counseling Concentration**

The school counseling concentration prepares graduates for school counseling positions at elementary, middle/junior high, and high school levels. Graduates will meet the current licensing requirements for the Tennessee Board of Education. The curriculum requirements include coursework, a 120-hour practicum experience, a 600-hour internship, and a comprehensive examination.

### **Post-Masters Non-Degree Seeking Students**

This track is designed to assist individuals in meeting the educational requirements for licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor - Mental Health Service Provider (LPC-MHSP) in Tennessee or a Licensed School Counselor in Tennessee by allowing them to complete the necessary coursework and clinical experiences required for licensure eligibility. This track is specifically for individuals who have already completed a master's program in mental health counseling, school counseling, or a related field that need a limited amount of coursework to be eligible for licensure. Students in this certificate program will complete coursework that aligns with the core areas required for licensure eligibility and assists students with meeting the educational requirement of 60 graduate semester hours in counseling. Students who need more than 27 hours to be eligible for licensure must enroll in the M.S. in Counseling program. Note: successful completion of this track does not guarantee licensure eligibility.

## **Student Conduct: Developing a Professional Orientation**

Entering the graduate program in counseling is the first step along the way to becoming a professional counselor. The counseling profession has established high ethical standards that all professional counselors must adhere to. During your study, you will become familiar with the American Counseling Association (ACA) [Code of Ethics](#) and/or the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) [Ethical Standards for School Counselors](#). As a graduate student in counseling, you are expected to embrace and adhere to these codes. Violations of the ethical codes and standards are taken very seriously and could result in actions taken to remove offenders from the program. Counseling faculty are available to discuss any aspect of the ethical codes with you. \*Program policies in this handbook section apply to degree-seeking and non-degree-seeking students.

An essential part of the graduate school experience is the development of a professional identity. It is hoped that all counseling graduate students will become student members of the American Counseling Association ([www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org)) and/or the American School Counseling Association ([www.schoolcounselor.org](http://www.schoolcounselor.org)) during their first semester of study. This will be a vital resource as you develop your professional orientation.

## University Policies

University policies related to your work as a graduate student at Austin Peay State University can be found in the most current version of the [APSU Graduate Bulletin](#). This document provides you with official information that is important for you to know and includes your rights as a student. The APSU Student Handbook also provides information about the campus and the Code of Student Conduct. All students should be familiar with these documents.

Students are expected always to conduct themselves appropriately. Academic and classroom misconduct will not be tolerated. Students must read the “Code of Conduct” in the new [Student Handbook](#) to understand what will be expected of them within the academic setting. Policy 3:005 will be followed in reporting any suspected cases of academic misconduct.

### ***Drug-Free Workplace/Campus***

The Counseling program fully supports and follows the APSU Drug-free workplace policy ([Policy 3:006](#); Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988). Although we do not have a policy for drug testing, all students are regularly evaluated by supervisors and program faculty. If concerns about a student’s well-being, substance use/relapse, or other arise, the student must meet with the faculty. Program faculty will ultimately determine any student’s progression through the program and appropriateness for clinical work, and a remediation plan or other steps may be required to continue in the program.

Many clinical placements maintain site-specific policies regarding substance use. Students are expected to abide by the policies of their site during their clinical placements. As a note, items that include CBD, including Delta-8, among others, will also show up as a positive on a drug test and may influence outcomes at clinical placements as described by placement policies and in the relevant program practicum and internship handbook. Also, be mindful that images of drugs, drug paraphernalia, and other drug-related imagery do not align with professional dress and presentation and may violate clinical placement policies.

### **Counseling Program-Specific Policies**

At times, the policies of the counseling program are more stringent than those at the university level. In these cases, you will be held to the program-specific policies as a student in the program. These policies are included in the following sections and throughout this handbook.

### **Academic Related Policies**

***Academic Performance and Academic Probation/Suspension.*** Students must maintain a 3.0 GPA while pursuing graduate study. When a student falls below a 3.0 GPA, the student is placed on probation. Every semester after that, the student must earn at least a minimum term/semester grade of 3.5 GPA until the cumulative GPA reaches 3.0 or better. When the student’s cumulative GPA has returned to a 3.0 or greater, the student’s academic status will



return to “Good Standing.” If the student fails to earn a minimum term/semester grade of 3.5 while on probation, the student will be suspended.

Students enrolled in the Counseling Program must receive a grade of “B” or better in all core counseling and clinical courses. This includes all required core courses in the counseling program, excluding electives. (See “Clinical Mental Health Counseling Programs of Study” and “School Counseling Program of Study” for a complete listing of courses). Students receiving a grade below a “B” will meet with their advisor to discuss a remediation plan, which will include, but is not limited to, retaking the course and being placed on academic probation. Receiving grades below a “B” in two or more courses and/or grades below a “B” more than once in the same course could be grounds for dismissal from the program. A [Request to Repeat Graduate Course](#) form must be filed with the College of Graduate Studies for all courses that must be repeated.

**Writing Quality, Academic Honesty, and Plagiarism Policy.** All written work must meet the academic standards of graduate students using APA 7th edition formatting. If you feel you need assistance with your writing, contact the Writing Center in Woodward Library for in-person or virtual appointments (phone #: 221-6559; email [writinglab@apsu.edu](mailto:writinglab@apsu.edu); schedule an appointment at [apsu.mywconline.com](http://apsu.mywconline.com))

You are expected to adhere to the academic honesty policy described in the APSU Code of Student Conduct. Plagiarism is the adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, statements, images, or works of another person as one’s own without proper attribution. Plagiarism most commonly occurs when material is taken from a source without proper citation, but it also includes having another individual write your assignment and presenting it as your own. In addition, self-plagiarism is a type of plagiarism in which the writer republishes a work in its entirety or reuses portions of a previously written text while authoring a new work. Whenever material is directly quoted, it must appear in quotation marks and be cited appropriately. Materials taken from a source (but not directly quoted) must also be cited appropriately. Additionally, integrity also applies to sharing work. Students are expected to refrain from sharing (or selling) completed assignments, which may negatively influence the academic honesty of other students at APSU or other universities.

**AI Usage Policy.** One of the goals of this program is to help you learn to write and communicate effectively. AI (artificial intelligence) resources such as ChatGPT can be helpful in several ways, including increasing the speed at which you can produce, helping with data analysis and assessment, and promoting quick information retrieval such as relevant research, resources, and information to support evidence-based practice; and skills development and practice. That said, you will still need to create, edit, and recognize quality writing yourself and develop the knowledge and skills for yourself.

It is important to be intentional about using AI tools responsibly and ethically. (1) Do not rely solely on AI tools to complete assignments. It is important to understand the material and complete assignments independently, using AI tools as a supplement rather than a replacement for your own work. (2) Do not use AI tools to plagiarize. Using AI to generate or modify content

to evade plagiarism detection is unethical and violates academic integrity. (3) You must acknowledge the use of AI in any work you submit within this program. Text directly copied from AI sites must be treated as any other direct quote and properly cited (see below for a sample). Other uses of AI must be clearly described at the end of your assignment. (4) Refrain from assuming that AI responses are always correct. It has been noted that AI can generate fake results. Ultimately, as the student, you are responsible for the final product and any limitations or potential biases from AI platforms. For additional information on AI use in Counseling, see the [NBCC Ethical Principles for Artificial Intelligence in Counseling](#) (4/12/2024).

In-text citation rule: (Algorithm author, year)

Sample in-text citation: (OpenAI, 2023)

Reference list sample: OpenAI. (2023). ChatGPT (Mar 14 version) [Large language model].

<http://chat.openai.com/chat>

If you are in doubt regarding any aspect of this policy, please ask for further clarification. Students found in violation of academic honesty may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with university policy.

## **Professionalism and Student Conduct Policies**

In addition to academic development and performance, it is essential that counseling students adhere to the following policies regarding confidentiality and professional behavior at all times during their program of study.

***Professional Behavior.*** Becoming a professional counselor means assuming responsibility for not only your clients' well-being but also the well-being of the school or agency where you work and the reputation of the profession itself. As such, you are required to conduct yourself with the same level of professionalism that will be expected of you in a work setting. This includes things like confidentiality and respect in your presentations and management of clinical material; respect for peers, faculty, and others in your conversation and behavior; timeliness, attentiveness, and participation in all class meetings, assignments, and activities; maintaining professional dress and language; timely and respectful communication with faculty and peers; willingness to deepen your self-awareness and growth; responsibility for your personal wellness; and so forth.

***Virtual and Online Professionalism.*** Professional behavior extends to the online learning environment and virtual meetings. In virtual settings, ensure that you check your environment and remove any objects that are not appropriate or that may be distracting to others in the meeting. Additionally, maintain professional behavior as you would in the classroom or counseling room, even in a virtual environment.

***Professional Dress.*** Students must dress professionally during their time in the program, specifically during clinical interactions as a part of coursework, practicum, and internship. As you choose clothing, keep in mind the following guidelines.

- Dress to support your role, not to engage attention for you personally. You are developing relationships in the community with potential employers and clients and

want to represent yourself and the program well.

- Dress with sensitivity to your audience.
- Dress with simplicity. It is not necessary to buy expensive clothing to project professionalism.
  - Invest in classics such as neutral-colored bottoms and traditional tops (dress shirts, polo shirts, blouses, etc.) and mix and match.
- Wear clothes that fit you now.
- Pay attention to details of grooming and cleanliness, such as hair, nails, shoes, hygiene, and unwrinkled and mended clothes. Avoid distressed clothing or clothes with holes.
- Avoid shoes such as flip-flops, high heels, and sandals. Depending on your setting, basic dress shoes, dress flats, lower-heel dress shoes, boots, and clean athletic shoes may be appropriate. Closed-toed shoes are preferred.
- Avoid t-shirts or slogan shirts in clinical settings.
- Tops and bottoms should not be at all revealing. Low-cut tops; off-the-shoulder, strapless, or thin strapped tops; short bottoms are inappropriate.
- Avoid the “toos” – too much of anything isn’t advantageous, whether it’s makeup, jewelry, patterns, colors, scents, etc.
- For more information, read the article [“Dressing for Success: Some Rules Never Change”](#) from Counseling Today.

Resources for students needing to expand their professional dress options are available through the Counseling Program and APSU.

**Confidentiality.** The counseling profession requires that all counselors maintain absolute confidentiality regarding all personal information their clients share. The same standards apply to all learners enrolled in a counseling program. Any personal or clinical information discussed in a class is not to be discussed outside of class unless the communication occurs directly with the student(s) involved or with the course instructor/program faculty member and then only as it pertains to helping a classmate. The strictest confidentiality must be maintained in all skills and clinical courses. Discussions of any kind regarding clients are strictly prohibited apart from seeking and receiving feedback from a faculty or site supervisor during skills and clinical courses. Any breach of confidentiality or respect will be considered a serious ethical and professional violation. It will not be tolerated and could result in removal from the program. Confidentiality, as described in the current ACA and ASCA codes, will be followed.

**Non-maleficence/Do no harm.** One of the most basic ethical principles of the counseling profession is the ethical principle of *non-maleficence*. Non-maleficence refers to “avoiding actions that cause harm.” By following the guidelines for professional behavior and confidentiality, counseling students should be able to avoid a breach of the ethical principle of non-maleficence. As with any ethical matter, a violation of this principle will be taken seriously, resulting in remediation and potentially leading to removal from the counseling program.

**Personal Counseling for Students.** While individual counseling for each student is not required, students are strongly encouraged to participate in their own personal therapy. The

APSU Student Counseling Services, located in the Ard Building., provides individual counseling at no additional cost to students. Additionally, a list of community counseling resources is available upon request.

## **APSU Counseling Program Training Values Statement Addressing Diversity<sup>1</sup>**

Respect for diversity and values different from one's own is a central value of the Counseling Program at Austin Peay State University. The valuing of diversity is also consistent with the counseling profession as mandated by the American Counselor Association's [Code of Ethics](#) (2014), the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) [Ethical Standards for School Counselors](#) (2022) and as discussed in the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) [Standards](#) (2024). Professional counselors and counselor educators actively work and advocate for social justice and the prevention of further oppression in society. They provide services, teach, and engage in research with, or pertaining to, members of social groups that have often been devalued, viewed as deficient, or otherwise marginalized in the larger society.

Counselor education programs and internships that supervise/employ professional counselors and espouse counseling values (herein "training programs") exist within multicultural communities that contain people of diverse racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds; national origins; religious, spiritual and political beliefs; physical abilities; ages; genders; gender identities, sexual orientations, and physical appearance. Counseling professionals believe training communities are enriched by members' openness to learning about others who are different from them and their acceptance of others. Professors, internship/practicum supervisors (herein "trainers"), and students/interns (herein "trainees") agree to work together to create training environments that are characterized by respect, safety, and trust. Further, trainers and trainees are expected to be respectful and supportive of all individuals, including, but not limited to, clients, staff, peers, and research participants.

Trainers recognize that no individual is completely free from bias and prejudice. Furthermore, it is expected that each training community will exhibit a range of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Nonetheless, trainees and trainers in counselor education programs are expected to be committed to the social values of respect for diversity, inclusion, and equity. Further, trainees and trainers are expected to be committed to critical thinking and the process of self-examination so that such prejudices or biases (and the assumptions on which they are based) may be evaluated in the light of available scientific data, standards of the profession, and traditions of cooperation and mutual respect. Thus, trainees and trainers are asked to demonstrate a genuine desire to examine their attitudes, assumptions, behaviors, and values and to learn to work effectively with diverse populations, including those based on culture, ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status. Both trainers and trainees are expected to demonstrate a willingness to examine their personal values and to acquire and utilize professionally relevant knowledge and skills regardless of their beliefs, attitudes, and values.

The Trainers at APSU will engage trainees in a manner that is inclusive and respectful of their multiple cultural identities. Trainers will examine their own biases and prejudices during their interactions with trainees to model and facilitate this process for their trainees. Trainers will

provide equal access, opportunity, and encouragement for trainees, inclusive of their multiple cultural identities. Where appropriate, trainers will also model the processes of personal introspection in which they desire trainees to engage. As such, trainers will engage in and model appropriate self-disclosure and introspection with their trainees. This can include discussions about personal life experiences, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, feelings, and personal histories. Assuming no one is free from biases and prejudices, trainers will remain open to appropriate challenges from trainees to their held biases and prejudices. Trainers are committed to lifelong learning relative to multicultural competence.

The counselor education program at APSU believes that providing experiences that call for trainees to self-disclose and personally introspect about personal life experiences is essential to the training program. Specifically, while in the program, trainees will be expected to engage in self-reflection and introspection on their attitudes, beliefs, opinions, feelings, and personal history. Trainees will be expected to examine and attempt to resolve any of the above to eliminate potential negative impacts on their ability to perform the functions of a professional counselor, including but not limited to providing effective services to individuals from cultures and with beliefs different from their own and in accordance with the [ACA Code of Ethics](#) (2014), the [ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors](#) (2022), and the [Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies](#) (ACA, 2015).

Members of the training community are committed to educating each other on the existence and effects of racism, sexism, ageism, heterosexism, religious intolerance, and other forms of invidious prejudice. Evidence of bias, stereotyped thinking, and prejudicial beliefs and attitudes will not go unchallenged, even when such behavior is rationalized as being a function of ignorance, joking, cultural differences, or substance abuse. When these actions result in physical or psychological abuse, harassment, intimidation, substandard psychological services or research, or violence against persons or property, members of the training community will intervene appropriately.

In summary, all APSU counselor education program members are committed to a training process that facilitates the development of professionally relevant knowledge and skills focused on working effectively with all individuals inclusive of demographics, beliefs, attitudes, and values. Members agree to engage in a mutually supportive process that examines the effects of one's beliefs, attitudes, and values on one's work with all clients. Such training processes are consistent with professional counselors' core values, respect for diversity, and values that are similar and different from one's own.

<sup>1</sup>This statement was adapted from the "Counseling Psychology Model Training Values Statement Addressing Diversity," which was endorsed by the Association of Counseling Center Training Agencies (ACCTA), the Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs (CCPTP), and the Society for Counseling Psychology (SCP) in August of 2006.

## **Student Retention and Dismissal Policy**

A student's acceptance into the program does not guarantee their fitness to remain in that program. As counselor educators, we have an ethical and professional responsibility to protect current and future clients/students, the profession, and our program by ensuring, to the best of our ability, that all students consistently meet the professional and ethical standards of the field. We do this through regular and ongoing evaluation of students' academic and non-academic performance. The faculty is responsible for assuring that only those students who continue to meet program expectations are allowed to continue in the program. Our goal is to be transparent about this review of student performance. Additionally, we strive for consistency across all decisions, but exceptions can be made.

***Evaluating Student Academic and Non-Academic Performance***. Academic performance includes coursework, clinical skills development, and timely progress toward degree completion. These are evaluated through your assignments and final grades each semester, clinical skills evaluation by your supervisor and/or faculty instructors in your clinical courses, and completion of program courses and other requirements needed for successful graduation. Additional information about specific policies related to academic performance and progress toward degree completion can be found in the following sections: **Academic Performance and Academic Probation/Suspension, Counseling Program Specific Academic Performance Guidelines, Time Limitations, Comprehensive Exam, and Program and Student Evaluation Procedures**.

Non-academic performance includes adherence to standards of professionalism, ethical behavior, and self-regulation. These are evaluated through observation of interactions and behavior in each course, in your clinical work, and in interactions with colleagues, faculty, and staff. While evaluation is ongoing, more formal assessments occur at the end of each fall and spring semester through the faculty review of students (using the Student Progress Assessment; see the **Student Progress Assessment** Section and **Appendix C**). Concerns about student performance and progress are discussed in twice-monthly faculty meetings. We will let you know as soon as possible if we have concerns about your performance. If you have questions about your performance at any time, please visit with your advisor.

Faculty seek to identify additional help students may need to be successful and to recognize outstanding achievements of students in their work. Faculty may work on an informal basis with students evidencing academic or non-academic deficiencies when circumstances indicate that this method may be productive. The faculty member and student will discuss the problems, review appropriate measures of correction, establish a timeline for change, and document the process. However, the severity of the problem may not allow for this method and informal methods are not procedurally required. When, in the professional judgment of a program faculty member, a student is not meeting academic or non-academic program standards or university standards, the faculty member will consult with the other program faculty and department head to determine appropriate steps.

***Student Support, Remediation, and Dismissal.*** Counseling Faculty have a responsibility to dismiss students who are unable to meet the academic and non-academic standards of the program. The faculty also recognize their obligation to a) assist students in obtaining improvement assistance and b) consult with colleagues and document their decision to refer students for assistance or to request that students be dismissed from the program.

***Student Support and Intervention.*** At any point throughout a student's program of study, a Student Remediation and Support Plan may be implemented by either a core counseling faculty course instructor, the student's academic advisor, or the Counseling Program coordinator. Typical causes for the implementation of a Student Remediation and Support Plan are 1) Failure to maintain a grade of "B" or better in any graduate-level course required for the student to complete their program of study, 2) demonstration of a lack of understanding, knowledge, and progress in any of the core counseling courses particularly those related to counseling skills development, 3) an ethical breach, 4) demonstration of conduct unbecoming of a graduate student and counseling professional, and/or 5) a below average score on the Student Progress Assessment. A Student Remediation and Support Plan will be instituted for no more than one full academic year. Progress will be assessed at the end of each semester (at a minimum) for the time period of the remediation plan. A lack of progress in the areas expressly stated in the Student Remediation and Support Plan or a lack of participation in the remediation plan may result in dismissal from the Counseling Program. Note: All student remediation meetings are recorded to protect both students and faculty.

***Student Dismissal.*** The following circumstances constitute some cases of "unsatisfactory" performance and may result in dismissal from the program without an opportunity for remediation.

- More than two grades below a "B" in any required Program of Study courses (consistent with the policy described in the **Counseling Program Specific Academic Performance Guidelines** section).
- More than one grade below a "B" in a single course (consistent with the policy described in the **Counseling Program Specific Academic Performance Guidelines** section).
- Failure to maintain a 3.0 GPA (consistent with the academic probation policy described in the **Academic Performance and Academic Probation/Suspension** section and the **Graduate Bulletin**).
- Failure to earn a passing score on the CECE (consistent with the policy described in the **Comprehensive Exam** section).
- Exceeding the Time Limitations for completing the program (consistent with the policy described in the **Time Limitations** section and the **Graduate Bulletin**).
- Failure to meet all requirements of the student's remediation plan.
- Any serious ethical violation or unprofessional behavior.

### **Statement of Understanding and Consent**

It is essential to ensure a good match between students and the program. The faculty is responsible for monitoring student progress, including non-academic behavior, as students



progress through the program. During the initial meeting with the program coordinator, after acceptance into the program, the student must sign a “Statement of Understanding and Consent,” which pertains to the faculty's responsibility to determine the student's appropriateness for the program and the profession (See **Appendix A**). This signed statement will be placed in each student’s file. More information about ongoing student and program evaluation can be found in the **Program and Student Evaluation Procedures** section of this Handbook.

### **Student Grievance Policy**

The Counseling Program faculty encourage students to speak openly and honestly about their experience while in the Counseling Program. In these conversations, we also recognize the need to be mindful of potential triangulation. Triangulation occurs when a 3<sup>rd</sup> person is involved in a conflict or issue between two individuals, often by talking with this person instead of speaking directly with the person the issue is with. This communication pattern can lead to misunderstandings, miscommunication, and escalation of the problem. Avoiding triangulation when addressing problems is important as it can complicate the situation, create tension, and hinder effective resolution. Direct communication between the individuals involved is crucial for clear understanding, mutual respect, and finding a constructive solution. To this end, if at any point in a student’s program of study, a grievance should arise regarding any aspect of their academic experience, the Counseling program faculty requires students to follow the grievance protocol outlined below.

1. Address the issue with your instructor/professor through a face-to-face meeting.
2. If a meeting with the course instructor doesn’t resolve the issue, meet with your academic advisor.
3. If meeting with your academic advisor doesn’t resolve the issue, meet with the program coordinator.
4. If the issue is not resolved by meeting with your instructor, academic advisor, or the program coordinator, meet with the Department Chair.

\*There are times when the program coordinator may serve as the student’s advisor and possibly course instructor. In these instances, the student may contact another Counseling program core faculty member if a meeting with the program coordinator doesn’t resolve the issue.

Please note that it is the responsibility of the grieving party to submit a grievance on their own behalf. Grievances submitted by a student on behalf of another will not be considered. Additionally, all grievances must be addressed promptly, ideally during the semester in which the grievance occurs. Students can appeal academic and dismissal decisions by following the Graduate Appeal Processes in the [Graduate Bulletin](#).

### **Due Process**

The [APSU Graduate Bulletin](#) details appeals procedures for academic matters, as well as policies regarding academic probation and suspension, student rights and responsibilities, and student

and faculty conduct. A copy of the [APSU Graduate Bulletin](#) is available through the College of Graduate Studies website. This publication also details student services and facilities. The Department of Psychological Science and Counseling follows the policies and procedures described in the bulletin. Students are strongly encouraged to obtain a copy and read it. It is important to be fully aware of all student rights and responsibilities.

Any student who disagrees with a decision related to an academic matter should follow the steps outlined in the **Student Grievance Policy**. A [Student Code of Conduct](#) is provided to all APSU students and pertains to both undergraduate and graduate students. All students should be familiar with this document.

## Counseling Program Objectives and Goals

The Masters' Program in Counseling strives to support the holistic development of quality counselors by meeting program and curriculum-specific objectives aligned with CACREP Standards (2024).

CACREP Professional Identity	APSU Program Objectives
Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice	To prepare counselors who are knowledgeable about the philosophy, history, and current and future trends in the counseling profession
Social and Cultural Diversity	To train counselors who can recognize, understand, and respond to social and cultural differences and change in our society
Human Growth and Development	To train counselors who have a foundation for understanding human behavior and development  To prepare counselors who can design, implement, and evaluate developmentally appropriate counseling interventions and programs
Career Development	To prepare counselors who are knowledgeable and skilled in helping clients make life and career decisions

Counseling and Helping Relationships	<p>To train counselors who are knowledgeable and skilled in the helping/counseling process</p> <p>To prepare counselors who can apply knowledge, theory, and skills to work effectively with clients in a variety of modalities (individual, group, family) and to use crisis intervention, brief counseling, and long-term approaches.</p>
Group Counseling and Group Work	To train counselors who are knowledgeable and skilled in providing group counseling
Assessment and Testing	<p>To prepare counselors who are knowledgeable and skilled in gathering, analyzing, interpreting, and presenting data about individuals</p> <p>To prepare counselors who are knowledgeable and skilled in the use of assessment techniques, including diagnosis, with individuals and groups</p>
Research and Program Evaluation	<p>To prepare counselors who are knowledgeable about research and program evaluation</p> <p>To prepare counselors who can read, critique, utilize and contribute to professional research literature and who are able to engage in program evaluation</p>
<b>Program Area Standards</b>	To prepare counselors who meet additional curricular objectives for their specialization area in the areas of service, prevention, treatment, referral, and program management
<b>Professional Practice Standards</b>	Develop, through supervised practicum and internship experiences, an integration of the knowledge and skills needed to be successful as practicing counselors
<b>Personal Growth and Understanding</b>	Develop, through self-reflection and insight, an understanding of oneself and the use of self in the counseling process. Develop a personal approach to counseling and client/student advocacy with a clear understanding of counselor functions

## **Curriculum: From Admissions to Graduation**

The M.S. in Counseling program is a CACREP-accredited program designed to prepare students for work in the counseling profession in school settings (School Counseling concentration) or community settings (Clinical Mental Health Counseling concentration). Graduates from both concentration tracks are well-prepared for future careers in counseling and to make a

difference in the lives of others. In addition, post-masters students seeking additional coursework toward licensure eligibility

## **Admissions Process**

Admission to the M.S. in Counseling Program (both Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling concentrations) is competitive and selective. Applicants who are admitted typically have a GPA of 3.0 or above. Various factors are considered for admissions, including undergraduate GPA, letters of recommendation, a personal statement, interview process, and number of available openings in the program of interest. All applications completed before the deadline, including supporting documentation, will be reviewed. Those applicants who meet the admissions requirements will be contacted for a phone, zoom, or on-campus interview. Priority admission will be given to applicants whose files are completed, including supporting documents, and who meet admission requirements before February 20<sup>th</sup> for summer/fall admission. A complete listing of application requirements is included in the [APSU Graduate Bulletin](#).

Students who have been admitted to the graduate program but did not enroll for a fall or spring semester must reapply through the College of Graduate Studies. In select circumstances, the program coordinator may grant an admissions deferral. In this case, the student must complete an “Admissions Deferral” form with the Counseling program coordinator.

***Non-Degree Seeking Students:*** The Counseling Program accepts a limited number of post-Masters non-degree seeking (NDS) students into the program. To be considered for admission as an NDS student, applicants must have already completed a master’s degree in counseling or a closely related field. Applicants must complete all application material specified in the [APSU Graduate Bulletin](#) for the M.S. in Counseling Program. Admission is dependent upon a review of all application materials and the number of available openings in the program. Students classified as NDS students may take a maximum of 6 courses (18 credit hours) in the Counseling program.

***Transfer Students:*** The M.S. in Counseling Program accepts transfer course credit on a case-by-case basis for students who are admitted to the Clinical Mental Health or School Counseling concentrations. Students interested in transferring credit completed before beginning the program into the M.S. in Counseling program may submit previous transcripts for an evaluation by the program coordinator to determine what coursework may be eligible for transfer. Courses are eligible for transfer only if the student earned a grade of “B” or better in the course, the course falls within the time limit governing the completion of requirements for the degree, and has been approved by the program coordinator. Students can transfer up to 3 courses (9 credit hours) from other programs into the M.S. in Counseling program. Students seeking to transfer into the program must complete all application material as specified in the [APSU Graduate Bulletin](#) for the M.S. in Counseling program. At least one letter of recommendation must come from an instructor from the institution from which the credits will

be transferred. Admission is dependent upon a review of all application materials and the number of available openings in the program of interest.

### **Financial Support Options**

These financial support options are only available for full-time students enrolled in the M.S. in Counseling program.

***Graduate Assistantships:*** A limited number of graduate assistantships are available to aid students enrolled at APSU as full-time degree-seeking students. Interested students should [apply](#) through the College of Graduate Studies. You may indicate a preference for working within the Department of Psychological Science and Counseling but are also encouraged to apply to open positions across campus. Review the [Handbook for Graduate Assistants in the College of Graduate Studies](#) for specific guidelines and information regarding graduate assistantships.

***Department of Psychological Science and Counseling Scholarships:*** Limited funds are available for scholarships for students within the department. To date, the only University scholarship in place is [The Anthony Rinella Scholarship](#). Interested students should contact the program coordinator before or by early February of their first year in the school counseling program. A faculty committee ranks students based on need and academic standing. Only students enrolled in the school counseling concentration are eligible for these funds.

***Special Support for Minority Students/Students with Disabilities:*** Some programs also have scholarships available through professional affiliations. Contact the program coordinator and/or the Office of Disability Services for specific information regarding these scholarship opportunities.

***Statement Regarding Loans:*** The M.S. in Counseling program requires coursework in the fall, spring, and summer terms. If you use student loans to help fund your education, please be aware of loan payout schedules to ensure your course progression is not impacted.

### **Program of Study and Admission to Candidacy**

The program of study for the Counseling Program is designed to provide comprehensive training for individuals who wish to counsel diverse populations in a variety of professional counseling settings. Curricular experiences encompass opportunities to explore the lifespan, social, and cultural foundations of behavior; practice psychotherapeutic and diagnostic skills; and complete extensive field experiences to apply knowledge and skills in professional settings. Your program of study is automatically created in DegreeWorks once you are admitted to the counseling program and aligns with the Graduate Bulletin requirements for the year in which you enroll. You will work with your advisor and/or the program coordinator to make any necessary changes to this program of study.

## **Changing the Program of Study**

Circumstances occasionally require changes in the program of study that was filed with the College of Graduate Studies. For example, additional courses may have been taken, or scheduled courses may have been canceled due to low enrollment, and a substitution was approved. Changes of this nature require the revision of the student's program of study. Students will work with their academic advisor to make any necessary changes prior to the semester in which the substituted course will be taken to maintain financial aid compliance.

When a student files for graduation, the graduate dean checks the student's transcript with the official degree plan to certify the student for graduation. Therefore, it is important to update the official records if any changes are made.

## **Changing Your Program Concentration**

Students can apply to change their concentration within the first 18 hours of their program of study (approximately two academic semesters). Students wishing to change their program concentration must meet with their academic advisor and the counseling program coordinator and provide a sound rationale. For placement purposes, requests must be made by the April preceding fieldwork. Approval will be contingent upon space availability and goodness of fit as determined by the program coordinator and counseling faculty.

## **Leave of Absence**

Should a student need to take a leave of absence from the program, the student will follow the guidelines included in the [APSU Graduate Bulletin](#) and included on the "Leave of Absence Request Application" form. These steps include completing and submitting the "[Leave of Absence Request Application](#)" through the College of Graduate Studies. Additionally, students taking a full leave of absence or reducing their coursework load in a partial leave of absence will work with their academic advisor and, as applicable, the clinical coordinator to develop a plan for completing their coursework. Students engaged in practicum or internship will also work with their site supervisors to develop a plan for the leave of absence or reduced hours. Students should note that clinical sites cannot guarantee the availability of clinical positions at the time of return. When the student is ready to return no later than two years after the leave of absence, complete and submit the "[Approval for Reinstatement Following a Leave of Absence](#)" form through the College of Graduate Studies.

## **Withdrawal**

Should a student choose to withdraw from the program, the student will complete a "Student Withdrawal from Program" Form and submit it to the Counseling program coordinator. Withdrawal from the university while currently enrolled in courses may require repayment of financial aid. Please see University Policies regarding withdrawal from the university in the [APSU Graduate Bulletin](#). If a student does not complete a "Leave of Absence" form or a "Student Withdrawal from Program Form" and does not attend classes for one calendar year or more must resubmit an application for admission to the Counseling program.

**Time Limitations**

Credit hours earned more than six years before admission cannot apply toward any master's degree. In addition, students have only six years from the date of initial enrollment in a program to complete the degree requirements. This includes all required coursework (including any transferred course credit), research, and comprehensive examinations. If this timeline cannot be met, one may appeal to the Graduate Academic Council for an extension. The appeal may be denied, approved, or approved with requirements. If the appeal is approved with requirements, these requirements may include but are not limited to, retaking specified courses and taking additional courses.

## M.S. IN COUNSELING CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING PROGRAM OF STUDY

The prerequisite for pursuing a Master of Science in Counseling with a concentration in Clinical Mental Health Counseling is 12 hours of psychology or psychology-related courses. Candidates should plan a specific program of study with their graduate committees. Students seeking a master's degree in counseling, in either concentration, must request admission to candidacy before completing nine hours of graduate coursework.



### **Clinical Mental Health Counseling (60 credit hours)**

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling concentration prepares students to work in a variety of community agency settings and/or eventual private practice. Students completing this concentration will have met the educational requirements for licensure in Tennessee as a Licensed Professional Counselor with Mental Health Service Provider status. The curriculum requirements include coursework, a 100-hour practicum, a 600-hour internship, and a comprehensive examination.

### **Required Core (39 hours):**

- COUN 5000 Research & Program Evaluation in Counseling (3)
- COUN 5080 Diagnosis and Psychopathology (3)
- COUN 5110 Lifespan Development (3)
- COUN 5160 Counseling Children and Adolescents (3)
- COUN 5190 Psychological Assessment & Appraisal (3)
- COUN 5400 Theories of Counseling (3)
- COUN 5410 Counseling Techniques (3)
- COUN 5420 Advanced Counseling Techniques (3)
- COUN 5430 Group Theories and Techniques (3)
- COUN 5440 Counseling Diverse Populations (3)
- COUN 5600 Theories and Counseling in Career Development (3)
- COUN 5993 Addiction Counseling (3)
- COUN 6010 Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in Counseling (3)

### **Concentration Requirements (15 hours):**

- COUN 5170 Practicum in Mental Health Counseling (3)
- COUN 5180 Theory and Practice in Clinical Supervision (3)
- COUN 5200 Foundations of Clinical Mental Health Counseling (3)
- COUN 5720 Internship in Mental Health Counseling I (3)
- COUN 5730 Internship in Mental Health Counseling II (3)

### **Electives Options (choose 6 hours minimum):**

- COUN 5992 Couples and Family Counseling (3)
- COUN 6000 Counseling Military Families (3)
- COUN 6020 Research Experience in Counseling (3)
- COUN 6720 Introduction to Play Therapy (3)
- COUN 6730 Crisis and Trauma Counseling (3)
- PSYC 5010 Death, Dying, and Bereavement (3)
- PSYC 5015 Foundations of Academic Advising (3)
- PSYC 5035 Advising Emerging Adult Populations (3)
- PSYC 5050 Applied Psychopharmacology (3)
- PSYC 5320 Learning and Behavioral Disorders (3)
- PSYC 5380 Military Psychology (3)
- PSYC 5990 Thesis (6)\*

### **Total: 60 Hours**

\* Students choosing to complete a thesis or advanced research course should refer to the section on **Research Guidelines** below.



## M.S. IN COUNSELING SCHOOL COUNSELING CONCENTRATION PROGRAM OF STUDY

The prerequisite for pursuing a Master of Science in Counseling with a concentration in School Counseling is 12 hours of psychology or psychology-related courses. Candidates should plan a specific program of study with their graduate committees. Students seeking a master's degree in counseling, in either concentration, must request admission to candidacy before completing nine hours of graduate coursework.



### School Counseling Concentration (60 credit hours)

The school counseling concentration prepares graduates for school counseling positions at elementary, middle/junior high, and high school levels. Graduates will meet the current licensing requirements for the Tennessee Board of Education. The curriculum requirements include coursework, a 120-hour practicum experience, a 600-hour internship, and a comprehensive examination.

### Required Core (39 hours):

- COUN 5000 Research & Program Evaluation in Counseling (3)
- COUN 5080 Diagnosis & Psychopathology (3)
- COUN 5110 Lifespan Development (3)
- COUN 5160 Counseling Children and Adolescents (3)
- COUN 5190 Psychological Assessment & Appraisal (3)
- COUN 5400 Theories in Counseling (3)
- COUN 5410 Counseling Techniques (3)
- COUN 5420 Advanced Counseling Techniques (3)
- COUN 5430 Group Theories and Techniques (3)
- COUN 5440 Counseling Diverse Populations (3)
- COUN 5600 Theories and Counseling in Career Development (3)
- COUN 5993 Addiction Counseling (3)
- COUN 6010 Ethical, Legal & Professional Issues in Counseling (3)

### Concentration Requirements (18 hours):

- COUN 5150 Foundations of School Counseling (3)
- COUN 5210 School Culture for Counselors (3)
- COUN 5640 Practicum in School Counseling (120 hours) (3)
- COUN 5725 Internship in School Counseling (600 hours) (6)
- COUN 6015 Comprehensive School Counseling Program Development & Implementation (3)

### Elective Options (choose 3 hours):

- COUN 5992 Couples and Family Counseling (3)
- COUN 6000 Counseling Military Families
- COUN 6020 Research Experience in Counseling (3)
- COUN 6720 Introduction to Play Therapy (3)
- COUN 6730 Crisis and Trauma Counseling (3)
- EDUC 5080 Classroom Organization and Management (3)
- EDUC 5550 Teaching and Learning (3)
- PSYC 5010 Death, Dying, and Bereavement (3)
- PSYC 5015 Foundations of Academic Advising (3)
- PSYC 5035 Advising Emerging Adult Populations (3)
- PSYC 5050 Applied Psychopharmacology (3)
- PSYC 5070 Introduction to Educational Psych. (3)
- PSYC 5320 Learning and Behavioral Disorders (3)
- PSYC 5380 Military Psychology (3)
- PSY 5990 Thesis (6)\*

\* Students choosing to complete a thesis or advanced research course should refer to the section on **Research Guidelines** below.

## Possible Sequences of Courses



**M.S. in Counseling – Clinical Mental Health Concentration (2-year)  
60 Credit Hours**

Students need to meet with their assigned academic advisor for advisement each semester before registering for classes. Following the sequence will enable you to complete the 60-hour program in 2.5 years of study. Taking courses out of sequence will require extra time to complete your degree and is not recommended. Listed below is the course sequence for the clinical mental health counseling concentration:

### Year One

<b>Summer II</b>	
COUN 5000: Research and Evaluation in Counseling (3)	
<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>
COUN 5400: Theories of Counseling (3) COUN 5410: Counseling Techniques (3) COUN 5200: Foundations of Clinical Mental Health Counseling COUN 6010: Ethical, Legal and Professional Issues in Counseling (3)	COUN 5080: Diagnosis and Psychopathology (3) COUN 5420: Advanced Counseling Techniques (3) COUN 5440: Counseling Diverse Populations (3) Elective (3)

### Year Two

<b>Summer</b>	
COUN 5110: Lifespan Development (3) COUN 5600: Theories and Counseling in Career Development (3) Elective (3)	
<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>
COUN 5160: Counseling Children & Adolescents (3) COUN 5190: Psychological Assessment & Appraisal (3) COUN 5170: Practicum in Mental Health Counseling (3) COUN 5993: Addictions Counseling (3)	COUN 5430: Group Theories and Techniques (3) COUN 5720: Internship in Mental Health Counseling I (3) COUN 5180: Theory & Practice of Clinical Supervision (3)
<b>Summer</b>	
COUN 5730: Internship in Mental Health Counseling II (3 hours) elective	

\*Note: 4-year sequences are available upon request.

Students need to meet with their assigned academic advisor for advisement each semester before registering for classes. Following the sequence will enable you to complete the 60-hour program in 3 years of study. Taking courses out of sequence will require extra time to complete your degree and is not recommended. Listed below is the course sequence for the clinical mental health counseling concentration:

**Year One**

<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>
COUN 5400: Theories of Counseling (3) COUN 5410: Counseling Techniques (3) COUN 6010: Ethical, Legal and Professional Issues in Counseling (3)	COUN 5080: Diagnosis and Psychopathology (3) COUN 5420: Advanced Counseling Techniques (3) COUN 5440: Counseling Diverse Populations (3)

**Summer**

COUN 5110: Lifespan Development (3) COUN 5600: Theories and Counseling in Career Development (3)
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**Year Two**

<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>
COUN 5200: Foundations of Clinical Mental Health Counseling (3) COUN 5190: Psychological Assessment & Appraisal (3) COUN 5993: Addictions Counseling (3)	COUN 5430: Group Theories and Techniques (3) Elective (3) (Typically “Couples and Family Counseling” or “Trauma Counseling”)

**Summer**

COUN 5000: Research and Evaluation in Counseling (3) Elective (3) (Typically “Counseling Military Families” or “Introduction to Play Therapy”)
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**Year Three**

<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>
COUN 5160: Counseling Children & Adolescents (3) COUN 5170: Practicum in Mental Health Counseling (3)	COUN 5720: Internship in Mental Health Counseling (3) COUN 5180: Theory & Practice of Clinical Supervision (3)

**Summer**

COUN 5720: Internship in Mental Health Counseling (3)
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\*Note: 4-year sequences are available upon request.

Students need to meet with their assigned academic advisor for advisement each semester before registering for classes. Following the sequence will enable you to complete the 60-hour program in 2 years of study. Taking courses out of sequence will require extra time to complete your degree and is not recommended. Listed below is the course sequence for the school counseling concentration:

### Year One

<b>Summer II</b>	
COUN 5000: Research and Evaluation in Counseling (3)	
<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>
COUN 5400: Theories of Counseling (3) COUN 5410: Counseling Techniques (3) COUN 6010: Ethical, Legal and Professional Issues in Counseling (3) COUN 5150: Foundations of School Counseling (3)	COUN 5080: Diagnosis and Psychopathology (3) COUN 5420: Advanced Counseling Techniques (3) COUN 5440: Counseling Diverse Populations (3) COUN 5210: School Culture for Counselors (3)

### Year Two

<b>Summer</b>	
COUN 5110: Lifespan Development (3) COUN 5600: Theories and Counseling in Career Development (3) Elective (3)	
<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>
COUN 5160: Counseling Children & Adolescents (3) COUN 5190: Psychological Assessment and Appraisal (3) COUN 5640: Practicum in School Counseling (3) COUN 5993: Addictions Counseling (3)	COUN 5430: Group Theories and Techniques (3) COUN 5725: Internship in School Counseling (6) COUN 6015: Comprehensive School Counseling Program Development & Implementation (3)

\*Note: 4-year sequences are available upon request.

Students need to meet with their assigned academic advisor for advisement each semester before registering for classes. Following the sequence will enable you to complete the 60-hour program in 3 years of study. Taking courses out of sequence will require extra time to complete your degree and is not recommended. Listed below is the course sequence for the school counseling concentration:

### Year One

<b>Summer II</b>	
COUN 5000: Research and Evaluation in Counseling (3)	

<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>
COUN 5400: Theories of Counseling (3) COUN 5410: Counseling Techniques (3) COUN 6010: Ethical, Legal and Professional Issues in Counseling (3)	COUN 5420: Advanced Counseling Techniques (3) COUN 5440: Counseling Diverse Populations (3) COUN 5080: Diagnosis and Psychopathology (3)

### Year Two

<b>Summer</b>	
COUN 5110: Lifespan Development (3) COUN 5600: Theories and Counseling in Career Development (3)	

<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>
COUN 5150: Foundations of School Counseling (3) COUN 5160: Counseling Children & Adolescents (3) COUN 5190: Psychological Assessment and Appraisal (3)	COUN 5430: Group Theories and Techniques (3) COUN 5210: School Culture for Counselors (3)

### Year Three

<b>Summer</b>	
Elective (3) (Typically “Counseling Military Families” or “Introduction to Play Therapy”)	

<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>
COUN 5640: Practicum in School Counseling (3) COUN 5993: Addictions Counseling (3)	COUN 6015: Comprehensive School Counseling Program Development & Implementation (3) COUN 5725: Internship in School Counseling (6)

\*Note: 4-year sequences are available upon request.

## **Dual Track Option**

A dual-track option is offered for students in clinical mental health and school counseling programs. Students can be considered for the dual track option on a case-by-case situation based on performance to date. Students must submit a written letter to their academic advisor stating a rationale, including career goals and a pathway to completing both programs. Consideration for dual-track enrollment will be contingent upon space availability and goodness of fit as determined by the program coordinator and counseling faculty. The following additional course requirements are necessary to complete a dual-track program.

### ***M. S. in Counseling - School Counseling Concentration seeking dual track in Clinical Mental Health Counseling:***

If you are enrolled in the School Counseling program and wish to take additional courses that will make you eligible for state licensure as a clinical mental health counselor, you will need to complete an additional 15 credit hours as follows:

COUN 5200: Foundations of Clinical Mental Health Counseling (3)  
COUN 5180: Theory and Practice in Clinical Supervision (3)  
COUN 5170: Practicum in Mental Health Counseling (3)  
COUN 5720: Internship in Mental Health Counseling (6)

### ***M.S. in Counseling – Clinical Mental Health Counseling Concentration seeking dual track in School Counseling:***

If you are enrolled in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program and wish to take additional courses that will make you eligible for state licensure as a school counselor, you will need to complete an additional 18 credit hours as follows:

COUN 5150: Foundations of School Counseling (3)  
COUN 5210: School Culture for Counselors (3)  
COUN 6015: Comprehensive School Counseling Program Design & Implementation (3)  
COUN 5640: Practicum in School Counseling (3)  
COUN 5725: Internship in School Counseling (6)

#### ***\*\*Important Message About Dual Track Programming\*\****

1. Graduate Assistantships WILL NOT cover the additional semester(s) needed to complete a dual track program.
2. There may be limitations to what financial aid will cover, and additional courses for a dual-track program **may not** be covered by financial aid.
3. Your graduation date will be delayed until all additional credits to complete a dual-track program are met.

Completing a dual-track program **does not** afford you a second degree. It is ONLY intended to provide you with the additional coursework needed to pursue additional state licensure (clinical mental health and school counseling).

## Registration

Students should consult the Schedule of Classes each semester. This schedule is available online during the pre-registration period in the semester before the one in which you plan to enroll. It is essential that you schedule an appointment to be advised. Faculty advisors typically have sign-up sheets posted near their offices and/or available online a week in advance of the pre-registration period.

All registration is done online through Banner, which is available through OneStop and Web for Students. Specific information about registering is available through the [Registrar website](#).

Students may register, pay fees, obtain grades, order student transcripts, and obtain information on admissions, financial aid, housing, and veteran's services by visiting the APSU website at <https://www.apsu.edu/>.

For minimum and maximum credit hours required, refer to the current [APSU Graduate Bulletin](#).

## Technology for Digital Learning

**Hardware.** We prefer that you not solely rely on mobile devices like tablets and smartphones to complete coursework. To be safe, you should avoid using mobile devices for high-stakes course activities like quizzes, exams, and papers, even though D2L is available through mobile browsers. The Office of Information Technology maintains several [computer labs](#) across campus that are available for student use. Additionally, the [Woodward Library Information Commons and Computer Labs](#) houses desktop computers for student use and laptops for students to check out. If you choose to engage in synchronous online meetings via Zoom, you will need access to a camera, speakers, and microphone on a device capable of accessing Zoom.

**Web Browser.** Online course content is delivered through the D2L learning management system, which is accessible through any web browser; however, Distance Education recommends the most up-to-date versions of Google Chrome or Apple Safari. Please use the [D2L System Check](#) to ensure your web browser is configured correctly.

**Software.** You will need software like Microsoft Office for word processing, spreadsheets, and presentations for course assignments. Currently, enrolled APSU students receive free access to Microsoft Office 365 and can install it on up to 5 compatible PCs or Macs. Additional information is available through the [GOVSTECH Website](#). Contact GOVSTECH at [govstech@apsu.edu](mailto:govstech@apsu.edu) with questions.

You can find more information about technology for digital learning through the [Office of Distance Education](#). You can find more information about technology resources available for students through the [Office of Informational Technology](#).

## **Mentorship**

Students enrolled in the M.S. in Counseling program are required to engage in mentorship activities during the second year of their program of study. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Attending New Student Orientations.
2. Providing peer mentoring to a first-year student.
3. Volunteering as a client for first-year students during their counseling skills (COUN 5410) training.
4. Providing peer supervision to a first-year student (Clinical Mental Health Counseling students only).

These mentorship experiences are a valuable component of students' training, as they foster a sense of community within the counseling program and prepare counselors-in-training for the professional role of supervision and consultation. All M.S. in Counseling program students are expected to participate in mentorship. The program coordinator and course instructors will provide guidelines for mentorship.

## **Practicum and Internship**

The internship is the capstone experience of the master's program and is often included in post-master's licensure eligibility coursework. It is during this time that you begin to put into practice professional skills learned in the classroom and practicum setting. Students learn under the direct supervision of a seasoned professional. For a complete listing of Practicum and Internship policies and procedures see the "[Clinical Mental Health Counseling Practicum and Internship Handbook](#)" or the "[School Counseling Practicum and Internship Handbook](#)" available on the program website and from the clinical coordinators.

**Getting started.** The choice of an internship site is an important decision. Where you will complete your internship is a decision made by at least three entities: you, your university supervisor, and an official representing the internship site. This requires some exploration on your part.

**Clinical Mental Health students:** While faculty can advise you on possible sites, you are responsible for contacting the site (with your university supervisor's approval) and formally applying using the site's guidelines to submit your interest. Students may use our provided list of potential placements as a guide to identifying an appropriate placement but are also welcome to identify a site of their choosing. If you choose to pursue a site that is not on the list of potential placements, you must complete the preliminary work of identifying the clinic director of your potential placement and provide their contact information to the Clinical Mental Health Clinical Coordinator contact. If the site meets the university and CACREP requirements for practicum or internship placements and there appears to be a good fit between the APSU clinical training requirements and the site, a meeting is established at the



site for a formal site visit. Once approved, an affiliation agreement between the program and site will be established, and the student can follow the application protocol for potential placement. Once a student has applied to a site and the site has indicated interest and availability, the site supervisor will collaborate with you to schedule an initial interview. Should you and the site supervisor approve the clinical relationship, you will notify the Clinical Mental Health Clinical Coordinator of your decision to complete your training at that site. Once you have informally or formally agreed to begin your clinical experience at a site, you may not prematurely terminate with the site to accept another. If you are unsatisfied with your placement, you must complete at least one semester at your agreed-upon site while searching for another (unless different terms were established with your initial site to stay on board for at least two semesters).

Occasionally, students will request to complete their field experience at their place of employment. The use of employment as the clinical experience is strongly discouraged. The purpose of an internship is to prepare you toward competence for an advanced degree. Internships are defined as an opportunity to gain additional knowledge and work experience in a particular area. If a student chooses to use employment as their clinical experience, they must make a strong case for how their employment tasks are different from and unique to their clinical experience. In these situations, students must receive prior approval from their APSU supervisor.

The site supervisor and student must establish a specialized learning contract describing specific responsibilities that are beyond the scope of their current employment responsibilities. For example, if the student works as a case manager, they could make the case for taking on a therapeutic caseload by differentiating the roles/tasks for each position. If the current employer hired you to do the work of a “clinician,” “counselor,” or “therapist,” the student must provide specific and irrefutable evidence on how the internship would prepare them for the field at an advanced level. For practicum, students are limited to using 8-10 hours of employment per week as clinical experience. For internship, students can use up to 25 hours of employment per week as clinical experience.

Consult with your APSU supervisor to plan a specialized learning contract.

**School Counseling Students:** You will submit a placement request to the School Counseling Clinical Coordinator in the semester preceding fieldwork and complete a successful criminal background check. (Note: To be eligible for placement at any school counseling clinical experience, you must have a clean criminal background check). The School Counseling Clinical Coordinator will meet with the school system lead counselors to evaluate fit, and then lead counselors will seek approval from potential supervisors and school principals. The lead counselors will determine final placements and then forward them to the School Counseling Clinical Coordinator for dissemination.

[Application for Practicum or Internship](#) must occur at least one semester prior to the term in which students intend to enroll. Deadlines are as follows (\*some sites may require earlier action to secure a placement):

- For Fall Start – November 15<sup>th</sup>

A practicum/internship orientation meeting is held every year. Before site selection, students enrolling in Practicum or Internship should meet with their Clinical Coordinator to discuss site selection and goodness of fit. The Application for Practicum or Internship forms are on the [M.S. in Counseling](#) webpage under the Handbook & Resources tab.

***Clinical Mental Health Concentration.*** Students enrolled in the clinical mental health counseling concentration must complete a 100-hour practicum and an internship of a minimum of 600 hours within a mental health setting. The internship must be completed over two full semesters. The clinical experiences allow the student to perform various counseling activities under supervision that accurately reflect the nature of a professional counseling position within the agency setting. Students must receive a grade of “B” or better in all core and clinical courses to move from practicum to internship and to graduate. Students who are unable to complete the required number of hours during the final semester of internship may receive an IP grade in the course and still attend graduation. However, the students’ hours must be completed, and the final grade must be changed before the university deadline for degree conferral (typically 2.5 weeks after commencement) to receive their degree during that graduation cycle. Any decisions regarding adjustments to this requirement must be made in conversation with the student’s Clinical Coordinator, Program Coordinator, Site Supervisor, and Department Chair.

***School Counseling Concentration.*** Students enrolled in the school counseling concentration must complete a 120-hour practicum and an internship of a minimum of 600 hours within a school setting. Students must receive a grade of “B” or better in all core and clinical courses to move from practicum to internship and to graduate. Students who are unable to complete the required number of hours during the final semester of internship may receive an IP grade in the course and still attend graduation. However, the students’ hours must be completed, and the final grade must be changed before the university deadline for degree conferral (typically 2.5 weeks after commencement) to receive their degree during that graduation cycle. Any decisions regarding adjustments to this requirement must be made in conversation with the student’s Clinical Coordinator, Program Coordinator, Site Supervisor, and Department Chair.

### **Student Liability Insurance**

It is the student's responsibility to maintain a current student liability insurance policy. It is mandatory that you carry liability insurance during any semester in which you are enrolled in a practicum or internship course. All students should have liability insurance during all semesters. Liability insurance may be purchased through the American Counseling Association (ACA), American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA), or the American School Counselors Association (ASCA) (for school counseling students).

Information about student insurance coverage may be obtained from the following websites:

- ACA: [www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org)
- AMHCA: [www.amhca.org](http://www.amhca.org)
- ASCA: [www.schoolcounselor.org](http://www.schoolcounselor.org)

Most practicum and internship sites will request proof of liability coverage before allowing the student to work.

In addition to liability insurance, School Counseling students are required to undergo a federal background check prior to engaging in their practicum and internship. Information regarding the background check can be found in the School Counseling Practicum and Internship handbooks. Negative findings will disqualify students from placement eligibility.

## Professional Affiliations

You may join several professional organizations as a student affiliate. The benefits of being a student member include reduced membership fees, conferences, related publications, access to student liability insurance, and receiving updated information regarding your area of interest and networking opportunities. We suggest that you consider joining the following organizations that are most relevant to your interests and graduate program:

American Counseling Association (ACA)

<http://www.counseling.org>

American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA)

<http://www.amhca.org/>

American School Counselors Association (ASCA)

<http://www.schoolcounselor.org>

Tennessee Counselor Association (TCA)

<https://www.tcacounselors.org>

Tennessee Licensed Professional Counselors Association (TLPCA)

<http://www.tlpca.net/>

Tennessee School Counselor Association (TNSCA)

<https://tennesseeschoolcounselor.org>

## Research Guidelines

For students who choose to conduct research as a part of their program of study, the following guidelines apply:

**Research Involving Humans and Animals.** Any research involving humans or human tissues conducted under the auspices of APSU must be reviewed by the Austin Peay State University Institutional Review Board (APSU IRB). Research with minimal involvement of human participants, such as surveys or questionnaires, requires some procedural APSU IRB review. Investigators are required to submit to [irb@apsu.edu](mailto:irb@apsu.edu) a completed [IRB Application](#). Instructions

and an example of an Informed Consent Document are provided under the Applications and Forms section on the [IRB Website](#).

Additionally, Austin Peay State University adheres to the Federal Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. 2131 et seq.) requirements and its amendments, the PHS Policy on the Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, and other Federal statutes and regulations relating to animals. Any research involving laboratory animals conducted under the auspices of APSU must be reviewed by the APSU Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Investigators are required to submit completed Animal Use Forms. Instructions and additional information are provided through the [IACUC Website](#).

**Thesis Guidelines and Information.** Guidance and guidelines for completing a Thesis can be found through the [Graduate Studies Website](#). In general, students wishing to complete a thesis should follow these steps:

1. Identify a Committee Chair.
2. Work with the Committee Chair to select a topic for the paper and identify other Committee Members.
3. Develop a proposal with the Committee Chair and submit it to the Committee for approval.
4. After the committee approves the proposal, submit an IRB application to conduct research involving human subjects with the committee chair.
5. After receiving IRB approval, collect data and analyze.
6. Schedule oral defense of study.
7. After successfully defending the study, make any needed corrections/edits and follow the instructions for Submission of Thesis/Dissertation to ProQuest, available in the [Field Study, Thesis, and Dissertation Manual](#). This must be completed prior to graduation and degree conferral.

## Comprehensive Exam

The comprehensive examination is an exit examination required of all M.S. in Counseling students. It is taken while students are enrolled in their final spring or summer semester. To be eligible for the comprehensive examination, students must have completed or actively enrolled in all courses covering core exam materials, have an overall average of “B” or better, and be in good standing (i.e., not on academic probation). Courses covering core exam material include the following:

Content Area	APSU Core Course Equivalent
Human Growth and Development	COUN 5110: Lifespan Development
Social and Cultural Diversity	COUN 5440: Counseling Diverse Populations
Helping Relationships	COUN 5410: Counseling Techniques COUN 5420: Advanced Counseling Techniques
Group Work	COUN 5430: Group Theories and Techniques

Career Development	COUN 5600: Theories and Counseling in Career Development
Assessment	COUN 5190: Psychological Assessment and Appraisal
Research and Program Evaluation	COUN 5000: Research and Evaluation in Counseling
Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice	COUN 6010: Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in Counseling

**Counselor Education Comprehensive Examination (CECE) – All Students.** The Counselor Education Comprehensive Examination (CECE) is the Program’s comprehensive exam for all students in the Counseling program. The CECE is a standardized, multiple-choice exam covering CACREP Core Areas. It is a valid and reliable way to judge a student’s progress toward mastery of the subject matter of professional counseling. It consists of 120 multiple-choice questions that test the student’s knowledge of the eight core content areas.

**Administration of the CECE.** The purpose of the examination is to determine whether students have attained the level of knowledge in counseling that can ensure minimal competence in the field. The CECE is typically scheduled for the middle of the spring semester. Information about the location and time of the examination will be provided during a brief meeting at the beginning of the spring semester. Students have 210 minutes to complete the evaluation. The CECE is provided at no cost to students.

Please note that changes to the exam administration may occur in response to public health concerns. Contact the program coordinator for the most up-to-date information regarding exam administration.

**Preparation for the CECE.** There is no official study guide for the CECE. Since the CECE, the National Counselor Examination (NCE), and the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE) are based on the same eight knowledge areas, any study materials developed for the NCE or CPCE should be useful for the CECE. The NCE and CPCE study guides are in the Student Resource Library in the Counseling Lab. A practice exam for the NCE can be found at <https://www.mometrix.com/academy/nce-practice-test/>.

**Evaluation of the CECE.** Students will receive scores within two weeks of the last scheduled testing date. For a Total Score to be deemed “passing,” it must be no more than one standard deviation (1 SD) below the current National mean score.

Students who fall below the cut point for the Total Score on the CECE must adhere to the following:

1. If the student’s Total Score on the CECE is below the cut point on their (1<sup>st</sup>) attempt to pass the Counselor Education Comprehensive Examination (CECE), the student may work with the testing coordinator and a testing center to schedule a time to take the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE). If the student chooses not to take the CPCE after

a failing score on the CECE, the student will not receive a degree from the MS in Counseling program.

2. If a student's Total Score on the CPCE is below the cut point on their second (2<sup>nd</sup>) attempt, the student may petition the M.S. in Counseling Program Faculty and request a third (3<sup>rd</sup>) opportunity. With the faculty's approval, the student will first be required to complete additional work in the content area(s) resulting in failing scores (the cut points for content areas are established using the same procedures as the Total Score cut point). After completing the additional work, the student may take a written comprehensive exam administered and scored by the M.S. In Counseling program faculty. If the student chooses not to take the written comprehensive exam after a failing score, the student will not receive a degree from the M.S. in Counseling program.
3. If a student's score on the written comprehensive evaluation is below a passing score, the student will be dismissed from the program and will not receive a degree from the M.S. in Counseling Program.

Note: Regardless of the results, students must complete all degree requirements, including successfully passing a comprehensive exam within a 6-year time frame. Multiple failures may result in automatic dismissal due to time limitations. If a student exceeds the time limitations, they must follow the guidelines provided in the **Time Limitations** section of this handbook.

***PRAXIS II Exam – School Counseling Students.*** The Praxis II (School Counselor 5422) is an exam for students in the School Counseling concentration seeking licensure as a school counselor. Students must pass this exam to receive state licensure as a professional school counselor. It consists of 120 multiple-choice questions that test the student's knowledge related to 4 content categories: Foundations, Delivery of Services, Management, and Accountability. Students may take the exam any time after completing their first semester in the program. Students must earn a score of at least 159 on the Praxis II (5422 School Counselor) to be deemed passing. Information, including how to register for the exam, can be found under the PRAXIS II heading on the College of Education website at: <https://www.apsu.edu/education/currentstudents/testing.php>.

***National Counselor Examination (NCE) – Clinical Mental Health Counseling Students.*** The National Counselor Examination (NCE) is an exam for students in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling concentration seeking licensure. Students must pass this exam to receive state licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) or an LPC with a Mental Health Service Provider (LPC/MHSP) designation. It consists of 200 multiple-choice questions that test the student's knowledge related to the 8 CACREP Core Areas. Students may take the exam during their final semester in the program after successfully completing the CECE. There is not a set passing score for the NCE as it is determined based on normative data from the current testing cycle, but a typical passing score is often in the 90's. Information, including how to register for the exam, can be found on the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) website at <https://www.nbcc.org/exams/administration>.

## Graduation

Students must consult the [Graduation Information](#) on the APSU website to find timely information regarding deadlines to apply for graduation, checklists, FAQs, and the dates for the graduation events that allow graduating students to consult with personnel from the registrar's office regarding degree evaluations. Students may order caps and gowns for commencement at these events as well.

## Credentialing and Licensure Endorsement Policy

Once students have completed their program of study and are eligible to graduate from APSU's M.S. in Counseling Program, they will have completed the academic requirements for Tennessee licensure in their program concentration.

The APSU Counseling Program faculty will provide a credentialing or licensure endorsement when the following requirements have been met:

1. Completed all coursework listed on the Program of Study with a grade of "B" or better in all counseling courses and a GPA of 3.0 or better.
2. Maintained satisfactory Student Progress Assessments and proficiency in the Core Counseling Competencies for your concentration throughout the program of study.
3. Completed all field experiences (practicum and internship) with satisfactory evaluations from site supervisors.
4. Satisfactorily passed the Counselor Education Comprehensive Exam (CECE).
5. Have applied for graduation or have officially graduated from APSU's M.S. in Counseling Program.
6. Have satisfactorily completed any required licensing exams (School Counseling students only).

Specific Tennessee state credentialing and licensure information for each program concentration is provided below.

Note: Post-graduate clinical placements/employment are the student's responsibility and are not provided by the program. APSU cannot guarantee post-graduate Optional Practical Training (OPT) or OPT extensions for F-1 students to allow for completion of post-graduation supervised clinical hours required for LPC licensure. The ability for students to extend their OPT status is based on the decisions of the U.S. Government and Homeland Security.

***Clinical Mental Health Counselor Credentialing and Licensure.*** The State of Tennessee has specific credentialing and licensure standards for licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) or an LPC with a Mental Health Service Provider (LPC/MHSP) designation (a more advanced licensure). These requirements are specifically detailed on the [Tennessee Board for Licensed Professional Counselors](#) website.

The minimum requirements for licensure as an LPC or LPC/MHSP in Tennessee include:

1. Be at least 18 years of age.
2. Hold a master's degree in counseling from a program that includes 60 graduate hours and a field experience component (e.g., practicum and internship).
3. Complete at least two years of professional experience, which includes:
  - LPC: at least 1000 hours of face-to-face professional counseling work with at least 50 hours of consultation with an approved supervisor.
  - LPC/MHSP: at least 1500 hours of professional counseling work (direct client hours), 1500 hours of clinically related work (indirect hours), including at least 150 hours of consultation with an approved supervisor.
  - Note: you may choose to work less than full-time, but you must complete your supervised experience within four years.
4. Pass the National Counselor Examination (NCE). This exam is administered by the [National Board for Certified Counselors \(NBCC\)](#) and is required for both LPC & LPC/MHSP licensure.
5. Pass the Tennessee Jurisprudence Examination for Professional Counselors (TJPEC). This is a law and ethics exam administered by the [Center for Credentialing and Education \(CCE\)](#) and required by the state of Tennessee for both LPC and LPC/MHSP licensure.
6. (LPC/MHSP only) Pass the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (NCMHCE). This exam is also administered by the [National Board for Certified Counselors \(NBCC\)](#) and is required for only LPC/MHSP licensure.
7. Submit letters of recommendation.
8. Complete online application materials and submit any other necessary paperwork. For information regarding the Tennessee State licensing process and necessary forms, go to the [Board of Licensed Professional Counselors, Licensed Marital and Family Therapists, and Licensed Pastoral Therapists](#).

The website information provided here is related to credentialing and licensure in Tennessee. If you seek licensure in another state, refer to that state's government website. You can find more information about different state requirements at this link:

<https://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/licensure-requirements>

***Professional School Counselor Credentialing and Licensure.*** The State of Tennessee has specific credentialing and licensure standards for licensure as a professional school counselor. The School Services Personnel License is for all educators who provide services for students other than instruction.

The minimum requirements for the School Services Personnel License include:

1. Be at least 18 years of age.
2. Hold at least a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college/university. In several cases, specific endorsements require an advanced degree (School Counseling endorsements require a minimum of a master's degree).
3. Complete a state-approved educator preparation program and be recommended for licensure by that provider. (See more information about how to obtain this



recommendation below)

4. Meet all requirements regarding assessments and qualifying scores as specified by State Board of Education rules or policy. For school counselors, this includes passing the PRAXIS II. For more information regarding registering for the PRAXIS II exam for school counseling endorsement (code 487) visit the [Educational Testing Service](#) website.
5. Ensure that the department has official transcripts of all credits earned through an institution of higher education. The transcript must have the school seal and/or the registrar's signature.
6. Meet requirements for the endorsement area (School Counseling endorsement code 487).

Students seeking endorsement for licensure as a School Counselor will need to contact Mr. Kevin Fee in the APSU College of Education at:

**Kevin Fee**

[feek@apsu.edu](mailto:feek@apsu.edu) 931-221-6182

Coordinator of Teacher Licensure

College of Education, Claxton Building, Office 228

Graduating school counseling students should contact Mr. Fee as part of their preparation for graduation and before commencement. The Counseling Program Coordinator will confirm your eligibility for licensure with Mr. Fee upon completing all requirements stated at the beginning of this section.

For additional information on Tennessee state credentialing and licensure as a School Counselor, go to the [Tennessee Department of Education](#) website.

Students seeking licensure in another state should consult that state's Department of Education website. You can find more information about different state requirements at this link: <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/About-School-Counseling/State-Requirements-Programs/State-Licensure-Requirements>

## **Program and Student Evaluation Procedures and Annual Report**

The Counseling Graduate Program at Austin Peay State University (APSU) systematically evaluates its two counseling program concentrations to ensure the M.S. in Counseling Program works effectively toward its mission. You can learn more about our ongoing assessment and evaluation procedures and view Annual Reports by accessing the [Student Assessment, Program Evaluation, and Annual Report](#) page of the Program website. Annual Reports for the previous academic year are posted on the Counseling Graduate Program website by October 15<sup>th</sup> of each year.

### **Tevera Program Assessment Tool**

The TEVERA program assessment tool assesses programmatic outcomes and tracks field

experience. As part of your enrollment, you will be provided with a TEVERA account. The programmatic outcomes section is a tool used to assess students' overall progress in the Counseling Program and to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the M.S. in Counseling Program in preparing effective, professional counselors in accordance with the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP) Standards. Students must submit a key assessment assignment to their TEVERA account for each core counseling course (as specifically noted in course syllabi). All key assessment assignments must be submitted through TEVERA by the assignment due date stated on the course syllabi. Key assessment assignments will not be graded until they are uploaded to TEVERA; if they are not uploaded by the due date, the grade for that assignment will be lowered by 10 points for each day the assignment is late. Please note that the rubric used to assess your performance on the key assessment assignment in TEVERA will not necessarily correlate with your final grade for that assignment or the associated course. Regarding TEVERA, the key assessment assignment is only used to assess your overall performance in the counseling program and the overall effectiveness of our counseling program.

TEVERA also provides a Field Experience tracking tool that provides a single location for students to store all documents related to field experience, including initial applications, agreement forms, supervision forms, and hours logs. The TEVERA account provided for you at enrollment allows for lifetime access to your documents, providing long-term storage and access to all clinical documentation. That said, it will also benefit you to maintain your own copies for your records.

### **Assessment Milestone Decision Points**

The APSU M.S. in Counseling Program Assessment Milestone Decision Points is a five (5) point milestone scale used to track and monitor student progress through the counseling program. Each milestone has specific criteria for completion and movement to the next milestone. Students must complete each milestone's criteria before moving to the next milestone. The decision points and milestones are:

- Decision Point I – Admission and Entry into the M.S. in Counseling Program and specialty concentrations
- Decision Point II/Milestone I – Provisional Status
- Decision Point III/Milestone II – Clinical Status
- Decision Point IV/Milestone III – Advanced Clinical Status
- Decision Point V/Milestone IV – Induction Status

For a complete description of each of the Assessment Milestone Decision Points, see the [Counseling Program website](#).

### **Key Learning Objectives Assessment (KLOA) /Competency Rubrics**

The Key Learning Objectives Assessment information and associated Counseling Program Competency Rubrics were created to meet CACREP accreditation standards and to provide a systematic and holistic means for assessing students' competencies as they progress through

their program of study. The Counseling Program Competency Rubric is a 14-item (KLOA)/four-level rubric. Each item (KLOA) of the rubric is aligned with the eight core counseling competencies and other specialty area competencies. Each item (KLOA) is associated with specific courses, Key Assessment assignments, and other assignments that students must successfully complete to demonstrate they have attained the knowledge and skills required for each KLOA. The Key Assessment assignment is the primary assignment that demonstrates overall proficiency in that course. Students upload their Key Assessment assignment to their TEVERA account, where it is scored according to a CACREP-aligned rubric. At the end of each semester, the counseling faculty will meet to assess each student's progress in relation to the counseling program competency rubric based on each student's performance on the associated Key Assessment assignments and other assignments listed in the KLOA, Course Alignment, and Key Assessment Assignment table (available on the [Counseling Program website](#)). This provides an objective means for assessing students' overall knowledge and skills for each KLOA.

### **Student Progress Assessment**

Many areas of the program are more subjective and difficult to reduce to a grade, such as personal/social/consciousness skills; interactions with fellow students and faculty; ability to collaborate; interest and efforts to grow into a professional; judgment; ability to approach complex problems and think quickly on your feet; and self-awareness, especially regarding the impact of behavior on others. Therefore, faculty provide this assessment as written feedback on student performance in more intangible, subjective areas of your performance and other areas also captured in course grades.

The Student Progress Assessment form (see **Appendix C**) is completed by program faculty for every student at the end of each fall and spring semester. These forms are reviewed and discussed in faculty meetings to ensure all students are progressing in the intangible areas described above, and those students with problems are identified and dealt with in the most fair and helpful manner. Student Progress Assessments are compiled in consultation with all counseling faculty and shared with the student at the end of each fall and spring semester. In cases where student problems arise, various steps may be implemented, including, but not limited to, developing a detailed remediation plan to address areas of concern and/or a requirement that the student seek personal counseling.

## APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Student Statement of Understanding and Consent

*(Must be signed and returned to your faculty advisor by September 15th)*

The course content and experiential activities in the Counseling Program are designed to allow students to advance their personal, intellectual, clinical, and professional development and functioning. Throughout your program of study, you will be given feedback concerning your personal, intellectual, and professional strengths, weaknesses, and performance. This feedback will come from faculty, supervisors, peers, and clients. Students will be expected to deal with this feedback maturely and professionally.

Through the Program's curricula, faculty expect that students will explore and recognize how personal beliefs, issues, emotions, and behaviors affect the student's ability to function as a counseling professional. The various "techniques" or "skills" courses will require that you develop and demonstrate your clinical and professional skills as you work with classmates in role-play situations, with volunteers and clients in actual sessions, and with supervisors/supervisees. You will be asked to examine your behaviors, beliefs, and emotions in relation to your professional activities and experiences on an ongoing basis.

Counseling Program faculty members have a responsibility to dismiss students who are unable to render competent service due to academic and/or non-academic performance deficiencies.

If, in the professional judgment of the faculty, a student's academic and/or non-academic performance (as described in the **Student Retention and Dismissal Policy** and **Student Progress Assessment Form**) is deemed substandard, unethical, illegal, and/or professionally unbecoming at any time during the course of training, faculty will review the performance and behavior of the student and develop a written remediation and support plan. In the case of severe ethical violation(s) or unprofessional behavior, the student will be dismissed without an opportunity for remediation.

I \_\_\_\_\_ (print student name) have read the Counseling Program Handbook, specifically the **Student Retention and Dismissal Policy** and related policies\*. I agree that the Counseling Program faculty has the right and responsibility to monitor my academic and non-academic performance as they relate to the standards and expectations of the counseling profession. I agree to participate fully in all courses and the program. As a student, I have the right to appeal any of the decisions made by the faculty. I agree to follow faculty directives and program and university appeal processes as applicable. Students can appeal decisions by following the Graduate Appeal Processes found in the [APSU Graduate Bulletin](#).

I provide consent for any remediation or dismissal meetings to be recorded and stored confidentially on a secure server for no more than five years.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Advisor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\*Policies relevant to **Student Retention and Dismissal** include, but are not limited to, **Counseling Program Specific Academic Performance Guidelines**, **Academic Performance and Academic Probation/Suspension** in the Graduate Bulletin, **Comprehensive Exam**, and **Time Limitations**.

## Appendix B: Acknowledgement of Counseling Program Handbook Guidelines & Photo Release

*(Must be signed and returned to your faculty advisor by September 15th)*

This statement is to affirm that students enrolled in the Counseling Program have received and reviewed the Counseling Program Handbook and that they were provided with an opportunity to ask and have answered by a faculty advisor any questions they may have regarding the contents and guidelines set forth in the Handbook.

---

Initial Here

\_\_\_\_\_ I received a copy of the Counseling Program Handbook. I have read, understand, and have had an opportunity to discuss the contents and guidelines set forth in the Handbook with a faculty advisor. My signature below affirms that I agree to follow the guidelines established in the Handbook to the best of my ability. Should I encounter difficulty or have a concern related to these guidelines at any point in my academic program of study, I will immediately seek out a faculty advisor to assist in a timely resolution.

\_\_\_\_\_ I grant faculty in the Counseling program, my permission to use photographs taken during APSU activities for any legal use including but not limited to publicity, copyright purposes, illustration, advertising, and web content.

Furthermore, I understand that no royalty, fee or other compensation shall become payable to me by reason of such use.

YES, I do give permission to use photos

No, I do not give permission to use photos

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ A#: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C: Student Progress Assessment

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **A#:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluators: Drs. Kim Coggins, Jessica Fripp, Eva Gibson, Mitchell Toomey, Adjunct Faculty as appropriate

We are genuinely interested in your welfare and professional development. Because we are invested in you, the profession, and your future charges, we deliver this feedback to you. As has been stressed through the recruitment, selection, and coursework, the Counseling Program prepares people who demonstrate outstanding personal and professional qualities. Professional counselors are in a high-profile role. Above-average performance is the standard for the field. Grades are only one indicator of a candidate's suitability for the counseling profession. Many areas of the program are more subjective and difficult to reduce to a grade, such as personal/social/consciousness skills; interactions with fellow students and faculty; ability to collaborate; interest and efforts to grow into a professional; judgment; ability to approach complex problems and think quickly on your feet; and self-awareness, especially regarding the impact of behavior on others. Therefore, we provide this evaluation as written feedback on student performance in more intangible, subjective areas of your performance and other areas also captured in course grades.

When Human Services Agencies, Supervisors of School Counseling, and Principals contact us for a recommendation for a counseling professional, they do not ask us to send us the person with a strong grade point average. Instead, employers and administrators are looking for a person who possesses qualities that cannot be reduced to a grade in a course. Please accept this information in the spirit it is intended: an effort to help you self-reflect, grow your professionalism, and examine your match for the profession.

This instrument serves several important purposes:

A rating of at least "average" is needed for each area to demonstrate consistency with the disposition;

The areas identified as needing attention will help you grow into a professional;

It is the ethical obligation of the faculty not to graduate someone who is not a match for the profession; and,

This instrument serves as informed consent as to where you stand should someone ask us for a recommendation of your employability as a professional counselor.

## Student Progress Assessment

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

A#: \_\_\_\_\_

**Criteria:** The following criteria assess students' academic and professional development during their first year in the M.S. in Counseling Program.

- 5) Superior:** Always performs above the minimum requirements and shows outstanding aptitude and performance.
- 4) Above Average:** Always meets minimum requirements in a satisfactory manner and performs at a level considerably above that normally expected.
- 3) Average:** Usually meets minimum requirements in a satisfactory manner; performing as might be expected.
- 2) Below Average:** Occasionally fails to meet minimum requirements in a satisfactory manner, performing at a level somewhat below that expected.
- 1) Needs Significant Improvement:** Usually fails to meet minimum requirements in a satisfactory manner; performs at a level considerably below that expected.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS	Rating
Displays sensitivity toward others	
Accepting of differences	
Demonstrates cultural humility and work toward cultural competence	
Self-aware (strengths, personal issues, limitations, etc.)	
Interacts appropriately with others	
Open to personal and professional growth	
Recognizes their personal and professional impact upon others	
Professional demeanor	
Able to self-monitor one's own behavior	
Able to maintain an appropriate work/life balance and utilize effective self-care routine	
DEMONSTRATION OF PROFESSIONALISM	
Preparedness for class (such as attendance and punctuality)	
Shows responsibility as a group member (carries appropriate share of cooperative group's workload, etc.)	
Demonstrates appropriate behavior as a group member	
Is engaged in their learning. Demonstrates a commitment to growth and knowledge instead of just grades.	
Demonstrates future job performance in the way they interact with the faculty and fellow students; attends to their work; is responsible	
Shows maturity of behavior and thought	
Is a consensus builder, team player, and is a positive force in the cohort	
Demonstrates a positive attitude	
Demonstrates the willingness and ability to work with various personalities as will be expected in professional counseling settings	
Takes appropriate turns at stepping up to leadership and being a follower	
Shows the ability to advocate for oneself and fellow students in an appropriate way	
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE	



Quality of work is consistently strong	
Assignments show depth of understanding	
Assignments show progress	
Writing Skills	
Communication Skills	
Student has consistently demonstrated the ability to incorporate suggestions and feedback from professor(s) on how to improve work	
Takes responsibility for their own learning. Provides faculty with suggestions, strategies, and approaches what will enhance learning. Avoids the easy route to a degree and seeks and fosters opportunities for growth	
Assignments are completed on time	
Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and analyze information quickly (as in the real world of mental health and school counseling)	
<b>FUTURE AS COUNSELOR</b>	
Potential for becoming an effective professional counselor	
<b>AVERAGE SCORE</b>	

**Strengths:**

**Areas of concern:**

**Recommendations:**

- Continue in the program / your progress is good.
- Continue in the program but concentrate on making the needed changes. We will meet mid-semester.
- We encourage you to consider the content of the individual advising session we recently conducted with you. It is in your best interest to exit the program for a time period of \_\_\_\_\_ then consult with the faculty about re-entering the program at a later date. We will give you specific suggestions for strengthening your stand as a student.
- We encourage you to consider the content of the individual advising sessions we recently conducted with you. It is in your best interest to reconsider your match to this program and the counseling profession. We are very sorry to have to ask you to reconsider your status as a student in this program.

This was prepared with feedback from the entire faculty.

Program Coordinator  
Or Advisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_