

STUDENT HANDBOOK

for the

M.A.Ed. in SCHOOL COUNSELING

and the

M.S. in CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH  
COUNSELING

at

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

The programs in School Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling are accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

**2022-2023 Entering Counseling Students**

## TO THE STUDENT

The WCU Counseling faculty welcome you to your program in professional school or clinical mental health counseling. We hope you enjoy your program and benefit greatly from it. We also look forward to getting to know you better and learning from you.

The purpose of this student handbook is to provide you with a written guide as you progress through your program. We ask you to consult it frequently. Among other things, this handbook contains a description of your program and its expectations and requirements. The handbook also refers you to other valuable sources of information such as the WCU Graduate School, University and professional websites, and the Counseling Program website.

Every effort has been made to assure the accuracy of this handbook at the time of its printing. However, changes in or elimination of provisions contained herein on any and all matters including courses, course descriptions, and program policy may be made and applied before the next handbook is published. It is the intention of the faculty to inform you of changes as they occur.

We hope that you find this handbook useful. So that we can continue to improve the quality of the handbook in the future, we invite you to share with us in writing your ideas, suggestions, and observations regarding its contents.

The Student Handbook is available online through our program website:  
<https://www.wcu.edu/learn/departments-schools-colleges/ceap/humanserv/coun/counseling-resources.aspx>

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## **COUNSELING PROGRAMS AT WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY: A BRIEF HISTORY**

The information provided in this brief history is based largely on a review of undergraduate and graduate catalogs, commencement programs, and student records in the Human Services departmental office. It is also based partly on the recollections of individuals who have been involved with counselor education since its early days at Western Carolina University (WCU). Although there are some gaps and omissions in both the written records and personal recollections available, this record of the programs in counseling is reasonably complete and accurate.

The preparation of individuals as school counselors began in the mid-1950s. This initial preparation consisted of a number of courses which led to certification by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction but did not comprise a master's degree program. One of the individuals who became certified through this program was Dr. Mary Wayte. Later, in the Fall of 1963, she became a counselor educator at WCU. One of her professors was Dr. Luther Taff, who left WCU to become a counselor educator at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Some of the courses available in the mid-1950s were Principles and Techniques of Counseling, Educational and Occupational Information, Analysis of the Individual, and Guidance in the School.

The courses that were used in the certification of individuals as school counselors in the mid-1950s had their origins in courses that were available "on demand" as early as 1941. These courses were Principles of Guidance, Vocational Guidance, Guidance Clinic, and Mental Hygiene and their appearance in the catalogs closely followed the creation of the Guidance Clinic by Dr. Carl D. Killian in 1940. The Guidance Clinic was primarily a testing center and offered its services to the University, public schools in the area, and, following World War II, to veterans through a contractual arrangement with the Veterans Administration.

The M.A.Ed. program in school counseling first appeared in the catalog for the academic year 1960-1961. It consisted of 45 quarter hours, of which 27 hours were specifically required and 18 hours were approved electives. By the end of the academic year 1961-1962, 17 individuals had completed the M.A.Ed. program in school counseling. Dr. Mary Wayte was an early director of the school counseling program.

The summer school catalog for 1968 lists, for the first time, an M.A.Ed. program in "non-school counseling" (predecessor to clinical mental health counseling). Dr. Bob Rigdon, who finished his M.A.Ed. in counseling at WCU in 1963, had an individualized program which was a forerunner of the non-school counseling program. Dr. Rigdon, who joined the faculty as a counselor educator in 1967, directed the non-school counseling program. The degree designation for this program was changed from M.A.Ed. to M.S. effective Spring 1994. The program title later changed to Community Counseling and in Summer 2010, to Clinical Mental Health Counseling. In Summer 2006, both specialty areas moved from 48-hour to 60-hour degrees.

An M.A.Ed. program in 2-year college counseling (student personnel services in higher education) was first listed in the graduate catalog for school year 1971-72. Dr. Hal Salisbury,

who joined the faculty as a counselor educator in 1970, directed the two-year college counseling program. Dr. Salisbury also served as director of the WCU Testing and Counseling Centers which evolved from the Guidance Clinic originally established by Dr. Killian. For a time, faculty members in counselor education staffed the Testing and Counseling Centers in addition to their teaching responsibilities. The program in student personnel services in higher education was declared inactive in 1988 and was deleted effective January 1992. There is a graduate program in Higher Education Student Affairs (HESA) today at WCU, and though it is housed in the same department, it is not affiliated with the Counseling program.

A Certificate of Advanced Study (C.A.S.) program in counseling was established in 1980. It was preceded by one year by a counseling specialization in the Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) degree in Curriculum and Instruction. Both the C.A.S. and Ed.S. were declared inactive in 1987. The C.A.S. program in school counseling was reactivated as of January 1991 and was deleted finally by action of the University of North Carolina General Administration in 1995-1996.

A school-counseling licensure-only pathway was created in 2019. This was developed as an option for applicants who possess, or are in the process of attaining a 60- credit hour master's level degree, from a regionally accredited university with CACREP accreditation in an approved counseling area (i.e., Clinical Mental Health, Marriage and Family Therapy, College Student Development) Upon completion, students are eligible for school counselor licensure in North Carolina but do not graduate with a separate degree.

In addition to the current faculty and the individuals already mentioned, there are a number of others who have served as counselor educators or who taught courses which were part of the certification process prior to the development of the graduate degree programs in counseling at WCU. These individuals include the following: Dr. Neill Scott, Mr. Taylor Huskins, Mr. Minor Wilson, Dr. John McGeever, Dr. Stephen McIntosh, Dr. David McMillan, Dr. Nan Zimmerman, and Dr. Sherry Baldwin. Full-time faculty in the degree programs in Counseling who no longer teach at WCU include (in order of termination of service): Dr. Dan Saddler, Dr. Jim Morrow, Dr. Larry Grantham, Dr. Michael Garrett, Dr. Mary Deck, Dr. A. Michael Dougherty, Dr. Dale Brotherton, Dr. Valerie Schwiebert, Dr. Phyllis Robertson, Dr. Elizabeth Graves, and Dr. Merry Leigh Dameron.

There are no records to indicate the number of individuals who have completed certification/ licensure programs in professional school counseling and no reliable estimate can be made. Commencement programs are the best source of information on the number of individuals who have earned graduate degrees in counseling. Unfortunately, one commencement program is missing from the files and, for several years, M.A.Ed. graduates were not identified by major. For a few years, counseling graduates were identified as such, but not by their area within counseling. A careful review of student files in the departmental office was necessary to fill in the gaps created by missing or incomplete information on graduates. Through August 2022, 1,705 individuals have completed graduate programs in counseling; of these, 893 have completed the M.A.Ed. in school counseling, 744 have completed the M.A.Ed. or M.S. in community or clinical mental health counseling, 40 completed the M.A.Ed. in student personnel services in higher education, 27 completed the C.A.S. in counseling, four completed the counseling specialization in the Ed.S. program in Curriculum and Instruction, and four

completed the school counselor licensure-only pathway.

Western Carolina University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). The M.S. in clinical mental health counseling and the M.A.Ed. in school counseling are accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). These programs were first accredited by CACREP in 1993, and reaccredited in 2000, 2007, 2015, and 2017. Our current CACREP accreditation is valid through October 2023 (next re-accreditation cycle in 2022-2023). The M.A.Ed. in professional school counseling is additionally accredited by the National Council for Accreditation in Teacher Education (NCATE; now the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation/CAEP) and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI).

## **PROGRAM OFFICES**

Counseling faculty offices are at WCU-Biltmore Park 2 Town Square Suite 320 (across the street from the main WCU-BP building). The abbreviation for this office space is 2TS. Additionally, there is one Counseling office on main campus in Killian Building.

Staff serving the counseling program, as well as other programs, include: Rena McKay, the Department of Human Services administrative support associate, and Denise Royer, the department's student services specialist. They and graduate assistants (GAs) respond to routine calls and handle the day-to-day office needs of the faculty. The departmental office in Cullowhee is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday; telephone number is (828) 227-7310.

At WCU-Biltmore Park, staff include: Dr. Kevan Frazier, Executive Director of WCU Programs at Biltmore Park (WCU-BP); Lauren Dodgin, WCU University Program Specialist; Kelly McIntyre, WCU-BP Student Services Specialist (all have offices in BP suite 120), and a WCU-BP Administrative Specialist 5:00-9:00 p.m. at the reception window on the third floor. WCU-BP, located at 28 Schenck Parkway, is open Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., and Friday and Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; the telephone number is (828) 654-6498.

## **FACULTY AND STAFF**

### **Faculty**

**Dr. Russell C. Curtis**, Professor. Originally from Charlotte, North Carolina, Dr. Curtis earned his bachelor's degree in Business Management from North Carolina State University. He earned his master's degree from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. His doctorate is in Counseling and Counselor Education from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He joined the WCU faculty in fall of 2000.

Following a career in banking, Dr. Curtis has 2.5 years' experience working as a mental health counselor in a community mental health center in Rock Hill, South Carolina. His professional memberships include the American Counseling Association and North Carolina Counseling Association. Dr. Curtis is a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor.

**Dr. Melodie H. Frick**, Associate Professor and Director of the Counseling Program. Dr. Frick joined the WCU Counseling Program in Fall 2012. Originally from Asheville, she earned her bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of North Carolina-Greensboro, master's degree in Community Counseling from Western Carolina University, and Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision from the University of Virginia.

Dr. Frick has worked in the counseling field since 1997, including outpatient mental health agencies, private practice, and counselor education. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor and Supervisor, National Certified Counselor, and Approved Clinical Supervisor. Her professional memberships include the American Counseling Association, Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, Society for Sexual, Affectional, Intersex, and Gender Expansive Identities, International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors, Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, and the North Carolina Counseling Association.

**Dr. Loidaly M. González-Rosario**, Assistant Professor. Dr. González-Rosario earned her doctoral degree in Counselor Education at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. She was an elementary teacher and professional school counselor in Miami Dade County Public Schools for over 5 years. She holds a certificate in teaching, and School Counseling in the State of Florida with endorsements in ELL and SPED. She earned her bachelor's and master's degree at Florida International University. Her research interests include school counseling practices, play therapy in schools, and counseling with Hispanic/Latine children. She is an advocate for underserved and never-served populations and her research and service work to center marginalized voices and experiences.

**Dr. Elizabeth Likis-Werle**, Associate Professor and Clinical Mental Health Counseling Field Placement Coordinator. Dr. Likis-Werle joined the WCU Counseling faculty in August 2018, after 6 years as faculty at East Tennessee State University where she was the Director of the Community Counseling Clinic and Coordinator the College Counseling Student Affairs concentration. She earned her doctorate in Counselor Education and Supervision from UNC-Greensboro where she explored the experiences of college women's drinking in relation to their gender identity. She earned her master's in Counseling from Western Carolina University, and her bachelor's degree in Psychology from Wofford College.

She has been living and working in the Asheville area since the mid-1990s including working at the UNC-Asheville Counseling Center and the WCU Counseling Center. She is licensed as clinical mental health counselor and supervisor, and has worked in residential wilderness camps, as a school-based therapist, intensive in-home therapist, program manager with a foster and adoption agency, and at Copestone Psychiatric IOP program. Her research interests are college student mental health, identity development, substance abuse, women's and girl's issues, and media influence of risky behaviors.

**Dr. Melissa Mecadon-Mann**, Assistant Professor, completed her Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision at Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama. Dr. Mecadon-Mann has 15 years of experience working in K-12 education; she earned her M.Ed. in Professional Counseling from the University of West Georgia and worked as a high school counselor in the metro-Atlanta area.



Prior to counseling, Dr. Mecadon-Mann studied music education at Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois, and worked as a band, choir, and general music teacher in, both, northern Illinois and Atlanta, GA. She continues to blend her love of music and wellness by writing and publishing educational and social/emotional learning songs for children.

Dr. Mecadon-Mann serves as co-chair for the Social Media Committee with the Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling (ACAC) and she is a member of the first-ever cohort of ACAC Emerging Leaders. She is a Certified School Counselor in Georgia, a Licensed Associate Professional Counselor (APC) in Georgia, and a National Certified Counselor (NCC). Dr. Mecadon-Mann's research interests revolve around student advocacy, cultural and social justice, Relational-cultural Theory in schools, and professional identity development.

**Dr. Lisen C. Roberts**, Associate Professor, School Counseling Field Placement Coordinator, and former Human Services Department Head. Dr. Roberts joined the Counseling faculty in Fall 2001. Prior to that, she served for 4 years as Program Director of Child and Family Studies at WCU. Dr. Roberts grew up in upstate New York (with summers in Finland and Martha's Vineyard). From Keene State College in New Hampshire, she has a bachelor's degree in Secondary Special Education and a master's degree in Counseling. Her doctorate is in Family Studies, with a cognate in Counseling, from The University of Tennessee.

Dr. Roberts has 5 years' public school experience and is a North Carolina licensed school counselor. She is a member of the American Counseling Association, the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, the North Carolina Counseling Association, and the North Carolina School Counselor Association.

**Dr. E. Heather Thompson**, Associate Professor and Coordinator of Testing. Dr. Thompson joined the WCU faculty in Fall 2009 after completing her Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision at the University of Virginia. She has a bachelor's degree in History from Southern Methodist University, master's degree in Community Agency Counseling from the University of Memphis and is a Nationally Certified Counselor. Prior to joining the faculty at WCU, her professional experience included individual and group work in both agency and school settings, and equine therapy. Some of the broad issues addressed in her clinical work and scholarship include domestic violence, sexual abuse, child abuse, crisis counseling, and play therapy. Her national professional memberships include the American Counseling Association, Association of Counselor Education and Supervision, and the Association for Play Therapy.

### **Faculty Contact Information**

Dr. Russ Curtis	curtis@email.wcu.edu	828-654-6528
Dr. Melodie Frick	mhfrick@email.wcu.edu	828-654-6564
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Dr. Elizabeth Likis-Werle	likiswerle@email.wcu.edu	828-654-6551
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Dr. Lisen Roberts	lroberts@email.wcu.edu	828-227-2291
Dr. Heather Thompson	ehthompson@email.wcu.edu	828-654-6562

### **Non-Core Faculty Who Assist With Counseling Courses**

Faculty from the Educational Leadership program, within the Department of Human Services, teach the EDRS 602: Methods of Research course, and include Dr. Robert Crow and Dr. Emily Virtue. More information about these faculty can be found on their webpage:

<https://www.wcu.edu/learn/departments-schools-colleges/ceap/humanserv/ed-leadership/edd-degree-program.aspx>

### **Support staff**

#### **Cullowhee**

The WCU Counseling Program Offices are in the Department of Human Services. The main office is in room 208 Killian Building on the WCU campus in Cullowhee. The office may be reached by telephone at (828) 227-7310. Departmental office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Dr. Lisen Roberts is the Human Services Department Head. Denise Royer (droyer@email.wcu.edu) is the department's Student Support Specialist. Rena McKay (remckay@email.wcu.edu) is the department's Administrative Support Associate.

#### **Biltmore Park**

A resident administrative staff consisting of Dr. Kevan Frazier, Executive Director, Lauren Dodgin, Kelly McIntyre, Support Associates, an evening Support Associate, and a number of Graduate Assistants support all programs offered in Biltmore Park (Asheville) by Western Carolina University. With offices located in suite 100 (3<sup>rd</sup> floor after 5pm) at 28 Schenck Parkway in Biltmore Park, the staff are available to assist students on matters related to admission and application procedures, registration, scheduling appointments with advisors, financial assistance, textbooks, class schedules, student services, library services, tuition, and payment of fees. The offices are open Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (unless otherwise listed); the telephone number is (828) 654-6498. Kevan Frazier's email is kdfrazier@email.wcu.edu.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

The Counseling program exists within the Department of Human Services, which exists within the College of Education and Allied Professions.

Western Carolina University (chancellor, Dr. Kelli Brown) is divided into six Colleges: College of Arts and Sciences; College of Business; College of Education and Allied Professions; College of Engineering and Technology; College of Fine and Performing Arts; and College of Health and Human Sciences.

The College of Education and Allied Professions (dean, Dr. Kim Winter) is divided into three units: Department of Human Services; Department of Psychology; and School of Teaching and Learning.

The Department of Human Services (department head, Dr. April Perry) is divided into 8 umbrella Programs: Birth-Kindergarten (director, Dr. Cathy Grist); Counseling (director, Dr. Melodie Frick); Educational Leadership (director, Dr. Jess Weiler); Higher Education Student Affairs (director, Dr. Yancey Gulley; Dr. Dustin Evatt-Young, LEAD); Human Resources

(director, Dr. John Sherlock); Parks and Recreation Management and Experiential and Outdoor Education (directors, Dr. Callie Schultz-PRM and Dr. Andrew Bobilya-EOE); and School Administration (director, Dr. Heidi Von Dohlen); and service unit Project Discovery (director, JennieV Sorrells).

## **ACCREDITATIONS, MISSIONS, AND OBJECTIVES**

### **Western Carolina University**

As the westernmost institution in the University of North Carolina system, WCU provides comprehensive educational opportunities to residents in the state's western region and attracts students from around the globe to explore the region's vast natural diversity. Founded in 1889 as a teaching college, WCU now provides an education to more than 10,000 students in undergraduate and graduate programs.

Western Carolina University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award baccalaureate, masters, and doctorate degrees. Western Carolina University has been accredited by SACSCOC since 1946; the last accreditation review took place in 2017.

Western Carolina University is a public regional institution of higher education whose mission is to create learning opportunities that incorporate teaching, research, service, and engagement through on-campus, off-campus, on-line, and international experiences. The university focused its undergraduate, master's and three doctoral programs, educational outreach, research, creative, and cultural activities to sustain and improve individual lives and enhance economic and community development in Western Carolina and beyond.

The story of WCU is one deeply connected to the people of our region; we are rooted in our service to the people of Southern Appalachia and beyond. WCU belongs not just to our students and our faculty and staff, but to the whole community, for we are integrally connected to this region as its educational, economic, and cultural center. Our vision is to be a national model for student learning and engagement that embraces its responsibilities as a regionally engaged university.

Western Carolina University is committed to excellent in teaching and learning, collaboration with a respect for our communities, free and open interchange of ideas, responsible stewardship, organizational and environmental sustainability and cultural diversity and equal opportunity. These are the values that guide our approach to education and service daily.

**Mission Statement:** Western Carolina University creates learning opportunities that incorporate teaching, research, service, and engagement through on campus, off campus, on-line and international experiences. The university focuses its undergraduate, master's and three doctoral programs, educational outreach, research, creative, and cultural activities to sustain and improve individual lives and enhance economic and community development in Western Carolina and beyond.

## The College of Education and Allied Professions

The College of Education and Allied Professions is home to WCU's leading programs in teacher education as well as numerous programs in human services such as Counseling, Parks and Recreation Management, Human Resources, and Educational Leadership. In addition, programs in Psychology, which is one of WCU's Top 5 undergraduate majors, are housed in the college. No matter what program you choose, the College of Education and Allied Professions will provide extensive opportunities for hands-on learning through field experiences, outreach projects, research, and professional mentorship.

The primary role of the College of Education and Allied Professions (CEAP) is to prepare educators, counselors, psychologists, speech-language pathologists, recreation personnel and other human service specialists at both entry and advanced levels. These professionals will staff public elementary, secondary, postsecondary schools, sport and recreation agencies, and other human service organizations in North Carolina and the region beyond.

The College fulfills its mission by developing and maintaining a community of scholars that promotes and recognizes good teaching, service, and research. Of these three scholarly activities, providing optimal learning environments for students is most important, followed by service and research. CEAP provides undergraduate and graduate programs, including both traditional and online instruction.

The mission of the professional education programs at WCU is to prepare highly effective and ethical graduates that are inspired to be lifelong learners, engaged in the community, and empowered to become leaders who strive to transform the future. Professional education programs at WCU include preparation programs for teachers, administrators, counselors, school psychologists, and child and family development professionals at the undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels.

The mission of the CEAP professional education programs at Western Carolina University is to prepare highly effective and ethical graduates that are **inspired** to be lifelong learners, **engaged** in the community, and empowered to become leaders who strive to **transform** the future.

The primary role of the CEAP is to prepare educators, counselors, school psychologists, recreation personnel and other human service specialists at both entry and advanced levels. These professionals will staff public elementary, secondary, postsecondary schools, sport and recreation agencies, and other human service organizations in North Carolina and the region beyond. The College fulfills its mission by developing and maintaining a community of scholars that promotes and recognizes good teaching, service, and research. Of these three scholarly activities, providing optimal learning environments for students is most important, followed by service and research.

The College strives to provide leadership and technical assistance for the improvement of teacher preparation and elementary and secondary schooling in North Carolina, the nation, and developing countries. The College is strongly committed to partnering with the public schools to

educate pre-service teachers to teach all children to high standards, to assist beginning professional educators to be successful and remain in the profession, and to provide quality staff development for career professional educators. Additional fundamental roles of the College are to serve the liberal studies program of the University and to offer programs and special clinical services that relate closely to the mission of the College and that are needed by its constituencies.

The College fulfills its mission by creating and nourishing a community of learners guided by knowledge, values, and experiences. The guiding principles of the community of learners include: (a) the belief that the best educational decisions are made after adequate reflection and with careful consideration of the interests, experiences and welfare of the persons affected by those decisions; (b) an appreciation of and respect for diversity; and (c) a commitment to fostering the responsible use of technology.

### **Department of Human Services**

The Human Services Department offers a wide range of undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate degrees in fields intended to meet a variety of human needs. Careers in the human services focus on improving quality of life for individuals and communities and preventing and remediating problems.

Students enrolled in the Department of Human Services can take advantage of many opportunities for real-world experience. Our students get hands-on experience through internships, field experience, and hands-on teaching.

The Department of Human Services within the College of Education and Allied Professions offers programs of study at the baccalaureate through doctoral levels. These programs prepare candidates for rewarding professions in early childhood education, parks and recreation management, community and educational leadership, human resources, professional school and clinical mental health counseling, and higher education student affairs. The Department includes Project Discovery, which works directly with youth in Western North Carolina public schools to encourage attendance and completion of post-secondary education. Our mission is to create collaborative educational environments that support our students' professional development. We prepare students to be professionals engaged in lifelong learning who embrace diversity and inclusion, design and implement evidence-based initiatives, and promote social justice. Our programs are guided by ethical, professional standards for best practice, which includes community service and internship experiences. In addition to preparing students, we serve communities through leadership, scholarship, and service.

### **Counseling Program Mission**

The mission of the counseling program is to subscribe to the standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Program (CACREP) and prepare ethically bound professional counselors for entry-level counseling positions in clinical agencies and school settings. The faculty teach and supervise across specialty areas (clinical mental health and school counseling) and focus on excellence in the preparation of professional counselors regardless of the setting in which they will be employed. Instruction in counseling is founded

upon commitment to the belief that individuals are valuable, responsible, and capable, and that counselors work to create the conditions in which people prize themselves as human beings and act accordingly. The counseling faculty is committed to creating teaching-learning environments that encourage the active participation of students. Students are invited to join faculty in advocating for clients' and human rights and for professionalism which requires adequate reflection and careful consideration of the interest and welfare of the persons affected by their decisions.

Program objectives (Student Learning Outcomes) are as follows:

The counselor demonstrates knowledge and skill in:

- 1) Ethical practice
- 2) Social and cultural diversity
- 3) Human development
- 4) Career development
- 5) Individual counseling
- 6) Group counseling
- 7) Assessment, diagnosis, and treatment planning
- 8) Research and program evaluation
- 9) Specialty area: Clinical Mental Health Counseling or School Counseling
- 10) Professional dispositions and behaviors

The WCU counseling program has served both full-time and part-time students since 1960. The clinical mental health and school counseling programs have been CACREP accredited since 1993. Classes are offered daytime and evening sections to provide opportunities for part-time enrollment. Enrollment in summer coursework is required to complete the 60-hour programs. Note: Students who are recovering from addiction to alcohol or drugs are recommended to have 12-months sobriety before entering the counseling program, and 18-months prior to enrolling in field experiences.

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS**

The programs in professional School Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling are accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Program requirements, including the length of the programs, field placement hours, and curriculum are consistent with current CACREP standards. CACREP requires curriculum in eight core areas for all students in the program. The areas are professional identity, social and cultural diversity, human growth and development, career development, helping relationships, group work, assessment, and research and program evaluation.

WCU's programs in counseling provide students with academic and field-based experiences leading to the Master of Arts in Education (MAEd) in School Counseling or the Master of Science (MS) degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. The CACREP-accredited School Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling programs are 60 semester hours requiring a minimum of two years including at least one summer. Requirements in both programs include 39 hours in specified core coursework; a 3-semester-credit 150-hour practicum, followed by a 6-semester-credit 600-hour full-time internship, as well as specific course requirements in each

program area.

### M.A.Ed. in School Counseling

The professional School Counseling program at WCU prepares individuals for employment as counselors in public school settings at elementary, middle, and high school levels, and leads to a recommendation for licensure by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. A school counselor is a professional counselor who possesses knowledge and skills in the basic counseling core areas: human growth and development, social and cultural foundations of counseling, helping relationships, groups, evaluation, and professional counselor orientation. In addition, school counselors are knowledgeable about school settings and have competence in designing and implementing kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) school counseling programs.

School counseling programs are comprehensive and developmental in nature and are designed to be integral to a school's total educational plan. School counseling programs focus on the identification, development, implementation and evaluation of interventions and strategies that meet the diverse social, emotional, and academic needs of children and adolescents in a multicultural society. School counselors organize their work schedules around the following basic interventions: individual counseling, small group counseling, large group guidance, consultation, and program development.

School counseling programs are differentiated at school levels by the developmental stages of students and related interests, tasks, and challenges. Developmental counseling programs are designed for all students, emphasize personal growth and individual potential, and are directed toward helping students learn more effectively and efficiently. School counselors work with students, teachers, parents and caregivers, school administrators, and other school personnel, and utilize community resources to meet these goals.

### M.S. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling program at WCU prepares students for employment at the entry level as counselors in diverse mental health agency settings. Students in this program must consult with their advisors to select elective courses that are in harmony with their career goals. In addition to the professional core, curricular studies will include the following topics relevant to clinical mental health counseling: history, trends, philosophy, purposes, ethics, legal aspects, standards, professional roles, organizational and administrative structures, staffing patterns, typical physical facilities, employment and evaluation procedures, operational resources, grant writing, provisions for continuing professional development, relationships between the various counseling and helping services within that system, and supervision of counselors. Most employers of clinical mental health counselors provide or require beginning counselors to take additional training appropriate to the needs of their clientele and to meet the requirements of licensure or certification agencies, as applicable.

## MATRICULATION REQUIREMENTS

### Application Process

Electronic applications to the Counseling program are accepted at any time during the year. Admission decisions are made by the Admissions committee (core Counseling faculty) one time per year. The application deadline is February 1, annually. Applications that are incomplete after February 1 will be considered the following year. Applicants must select one specialty area: School Counseling or Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Applicants may select Summer or Fall admission. Students typically begin the Fall semester, however newly admitted students are allowed to take 1 - 2 courses, if space allows. Applicants from diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences are encouraged to apply.

The Admissions committee review applicants' materials and qualified applicants will be invited for an admission interview. Interviews are offered to those whose credentials of grade point average, Graduate Record Examination scores (if applicable), recommendations, and personal goal statements qualify the person for full or provisional admission to the program. Those who qualify for the interview will be contacted by the Director of the Graduate Counseling Program and provided with interview date, time, and overview of the interview process. The interviews will be hosted by current students and conducted by the Admissions committee through group interviews. Because of the interactive and interpersonal nature of the counseling process, the interview aspect of the person's application is considered to be extremely important when considering applicants for the counseling program. Candidates who are unable to attend the interview will be given an alternate interview option (phone, online, or in-person interview) after the group interview. Invitation to the interview does not assure acceptance into the program. Admission decisions are made in early March through mid-April. Candidates may be waitlisted until mid-August unless space allows or they remove their application for consideration.

### Application Requirements

To be eligible for admission to the Counseling program, applicants must meet at least one of the following requirements:

1. A bachelor's degree with a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher. Applicants without a minimum 3.0 GPA must submit Graduate Record Exam (GRE) Scores.
2. GRE minimum scores of 150 Verbal/Quantitative and 4.0 Analytical. Applicants with a 3.0 GPA or higher are not required to submit GRE scores.
3. An earned master's degree.

Applicants must submit all materials electronically via the Graduate School portal. Application materials include: the WCU graduate application form, official transcript(s), three recommendations for graduate study (preferably academic or employment-related), responses to four essay paragraph prompts, and an education/work history résumé.



## **PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

**Students are responsible for meeting with their advisors during their first fall term of enrollment.** At this initial meeting, students will review the planning sheet containing a listing of course requirements, and will develop, in consultation with their advisors, a tentative schedule of courses to complete their programs. Students must bring program planning sheets during the advising appointment (see pp. 54-58). Completed forms will be retained in university student records.

**Professional Core is 39 required semester hours for all students in school and clinical mental health counseling programs to meet the program's requirements designed to comply with CACREP's core curriculum.**

**Professional Core courses (39 hours) for all counseling students:**

- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| • COUN 602: Professional and Ethical Issues in Counseling | 3 hours |
| • COUN 605: The Helping Relationship                      | 3 hours |
| • COUN 610: Family Counseling                             | 3 hours |
| • COUN 615: Cross Cultural Counseling                     | 3 hours |
| • COUN 617: Addictions Counseling or SOCW 520: Addictions | 3 hours |
| • COUN 625: Developmental Perspectives of Counseling      | 3 hours |
| • COUN 630: Theories and Techniques of Counseling         | 3 hours |
| • COUN 633: Crisis Intervention and Trauma Therapy        | 3 hours |
| • COUN 635: Group Methods in Counseling                   | 3 hours |
| • COUN 640: Assessment in Counseling                      | 3 hours |
| • COUN 650: Career Development                            | 3 hours |
| • COUN 667: DSM & Effective Treatment in Counseling       | 3 hours |
| • EDRS 602: Methods of Research                           | 3 hours |

The philosophy of the counseling program is that students are prepared above all to be professional counselors followed by specialization in school or mental health counseling. The core is designed to promote the overall development of counselors in eight core areas: professional orientation, helping relationships, group work, appraisal, social and cultural foundations, life-span development, career development, and research and evaluation in counseling. A student who earns a final course grade of C in COUN 605: The Helping Relationship course must repeat and successfully pass the course before taking COUN 686: Practicum in Counseling.

### **Areas of Specialization - 21 semester hours**

Professional School and Clinical Mental Health Counseling each have 21 hours of specialization that include required courses, elective courses, practicum, and internship. Specialization courses are listed on the following page.

## **Specialization Coursework**

### **School Counseling (18 required hours + 3 guided elective hours)**

COUN 620: Counseling Children and Adolescents	3 hours
COUN 645: Consultation and Collaboration	3 hours
COUN 660: School Counseling Program Development	3 hours
COUN 686: Practicum	3 hours
COUN 687: Internship	6 hours

### **Approved Guided Counseling Electives (3 hrs: Consult advisor)**

COUN 612: Sexuality Counseling	3 hours
COUN 619: Nature as a Metaphor	3 hours
COUN 621: Play Therapy	3 hours
COUN 637: Expressive & Creative Arts in Counseling	3 hours
COUN 672: Positive Psychotherapy in Integrated Care	3 hours
COUN 677: Spirituality in Counseling	3 hours
COUN 693: Topics in Counseling	3 hours

### **Clinical Mental Health Counseling (12 required hours + 9 guided elective hours)**

COUN 623: Introduction to CMH Counseling	3 hours
COUN 686: Practicum	3 hours
COUN 687: Internship	6 hours

### **Approved Guided Electives (9 hours: Consult advisor)**

COUN 612: Sexuality Counseling	3 hours
COUN 619: Nature as a Metaphor	3 hours
COUN 620: Counseling Children and Adolescents	3 hours
COUN 621: Play Therapy	3 hours
COUN 637: Creative and Expressive Arts in Counseling	3 hours
COUN 672: Positive Psychotherapy in Integrated Care	3 hours
COUN 677: Spirituality in Counseling	3 hours
COUN 693: Topics in Counseling	3 hours

\*Students pursuing the additional LCAS certificate may substitute electives with three SOCW-LCAS courses. Students must discuss this option with their advisor and apply to the certificate program. More information may be found here: <https://www.wcu.edu/learn/departments-schools-colleges/HHS/socw/substance-abuse-studies-certificate-program.aspx>

## **Suggested Order of Study**

Each student **must** meet for advising with their assigned advisor before the end of the first fall semester. Counseling students maintain either full-time or part-time status while completing the program and may change status as their circumstances require. Students need to notify their advisor when enrollment status changes and review how such change will impact the program plan. Part-time students are encouraged to enroll in 6 credits per semester to expedite their

progression through the program. Full-time students enroll in at least 9 credits per semester.

All students must complete the professional core and meet the requirements of the professional school or clinical mental health counseling specialization to meet minimum degree program of 60 hours. Summer work will be required to complete the 60 hours. See Appendices A and B for a recommended plan of study for full-time status (completing in 2 years, including 1-3 summers), and when courses are offered. Note: course offerings/schedules are subject to change and students must meet with their advisor to plan an individualized course of study.

### Independent Study Process (COUN 680)

Independent studies are reserved for students with a proven record of strong writing skills and professional initiative. Independent studies are particularly appropriate for students who intend later academic study at the doctoral level.

The goal of independent study (COUN 680) is to allow students to extend their knowledge base beyond the scope of core and elective courses offered within the program. In addition, the further exploration of specific topics of interest may contribute to a student's development of specialized area of expertise in counseling. The choice of topic lies with the student but may be stimulated by discussion with faculty. **It is NOT appropriate that independent study replace core curriculum courses or current elective courses being offered.**

Independent study involves the student working closely with a faculty member or members to fulfill predetermined objectives agreed upon by both the student and faculty member from the outset. Special extenuating circumstances may apply and must be approved by the counseling faculty.

### Procedures for Independent Study.

1. During the preceding semester that the independent study is to take place, a student must notify his/her advisor of his/her intent to complete an independent study.
2. The student and advisor will review the student's program of study to determine how the independent study will fit into his/her curriculum plan.
3. The student and advisor can discuss possible persons on the faculty with expertise in the area of interest who could serve as the instructor for that independent study and approach that person, requesting an independent study with him or her.
4. The student then must write a brief proposal for his/her independent study outlining goals, objectives, assignments, along with specific timeline for completion, and number of credit hours that will be assigned for the independent study to be completed.
5. A copy of this proposal will be presented during a faculty meeting by the faculty member overseeing the independent study to the counseling faculty for approval.
6. Upon approval, the faculty member overseeing the independent study can then come to a mutual agreement with the student concerning expectations for completion of the independent study, and document this, to be kept on file with the counseling program director.
7. Once everything is in place for the independent study, the faculty member who is overseeing the student's independent study will notify the program director so COUN

680 with the proper title and instructor name will be included during that semester to correspond with the independent study.

### Technology Requirements

Students must have access to a computer to complete typed assignments and reliable internet services to access student emails, course materials via Canvas (WCU's Learning Management System), Tevera\*, and online systems such as Zoom when virtual meetings are required. In some courses such as COUN 605, 630, 635, 686, and 687, a digital recording device will be required for practice skill sessions with classmates and for actual counseling sessions with clients.

\*Tevera is an online field placement management platform first used in the COUN 602: Professional and Ethical Issues in Counseling course, to complete enrollment in practicum and internship, and in the COUN 686: Practicum in Counseling and COUN 687: Internship in Counseling courses. Students must purchase a one-time Tevera access code via the WCU bookstore to have access to Tevera; the code will be listed as required or optional within applicable courses via the WCU bookstore. Students have life-time access to Tevera and recorded hours during practicum/internship, in addition to hours recorded post-graduation when students pursue licensure as clinical mental health counseling.

### Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive ("comps") exam is a program-approved exam required for completion of the counseling degree. The examination is offered two times per year, once in the Fall and once in the Spring semesters. The comprehensive examination is based on CACREP core standards and consists of questions designed for students to demonstrate knowledge from the professional core courses in the counseling program. Students are eligible to take the comprehensive examination in the final semester in which they are completing the counseling program, or one semester prior if core counseling courses are completed, and with faculty approval. Students must register for COUN 500: Comprehensive Examination (0-credit) during the semester they take comps.

Students must receive passing scores on each content area of the comprehensive exam. If a student receives failing scores, they will be required to re-take the failed content area(s). Students who are unable to pass the failed content areas upon re-take must redo the entire comprehensive exam the following semester and will not be allowed to graduate until they pass the comprehensive exam. If after a second attempt of the full comprehensive exam a student still receives failing scores, the faculty will develop an individual remediation plan for the student that must be completed before being allowed to graduate.

The content areas include:

COUN 602: Professional and Ethical Issues in Counseling  
 COUN 605: The Helping Relationship  
 COUN 610: Family Counseling  
 COUN 615: Cross Cultural Counseling  
 COUN 625: Developmental Perspectives of Counseling

COUN 630: Theory and Techniques of Counseling  
 COUN 635: Group Methods  
 COUN 640: Assessment in Counseling  
 COUN 650: Career Development  
 COUN 667: Diagnosis and Treatment in Counseling  
 EDRS 602: Methods of Research

### FIELD EXPERIENCES

Students must complete two field experiences prior to earning their degrees, COUN 686: Practicum and COUN 687: Internship. Practicum and internship requirements comply with (or exceed) CACREP requirements. As aforementioned, students in recovery for alcohol or drug addiction(s) are recommended to have 18-months sobriety before enrolling in field experiences.

**Field Experiences (686, 687) are offered during the Fall and Spring semesters. Students must apply for each field placement in the semester prior to the semester in which they intend to enroll** (i.e., a student wishing to be in practicum in the Fall must apply in the prior Spring semester). Students must show that they have met or can meet all pre-requisite and co-requisite course requirements and must be approved for field experience by the counseling faculty to be permitted to enroll in field placement courses.

COUN 686: Practicum	Requirements include documenting 100-150 contact hours during a semester. A student acquires the contact hours in the following ways: 1 hour of individual supervision with the assigned faculty supervisor; 3 hours every other week for group supervision during the scheduled class meeting time; a minimum of 8 hours a week is scheduled at the practicum site. Forty (40) of the 100-150 contact hours must consist of direct services to clients. Direct service hours must be documented by the student and can consist of individual and group counseling, consultation, testing and test interpretation, and classroom guidance/training activities in which the counselor-in-training takes an active role. Students are to schedule weekly meetings with their site supervisors for supervision and case management purposes. Students who do not meet the minimum contact hours or who do not perform at a satisfactory level may be required to repeat practicum and will not be allowed to proceed to internship without satisfactory completion. The student-faculty ratio for this course will not exceed 1:6.
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COUN 687: Internship	Internship requires that the student document 600 contact hours during the semester. Of that total, 240 hours must consist of direct services to clients. Categories of direct services are the same as in practicum. Group supervision occurs during the scheduled internship class every week for 3 hours. Individual supervision is scheduled weekly, for 1 hour at the site with the site supervisor. Students who do not meet the minimum contact hours or who do
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not perform at a satisfactory level may be required to repeat internship and will not be allowed to graduate without satisfactory completion. The student-faculty ratio for this course will not exceed 1:12.

Through special, written request, and upon approval by the counseling faculty, internship may be completed in two semesters (300 hours per term). Any student with an approved “split internship” is required to attend group supervision and receive weekly individual supervision and meet all contract obligations both semesters.

**Students are required to show proof of liability insurance coverage to participate in both practicum and internship.** Students may purchase liability insurance through the university, ACA, or ASCA. Additional requirements of the field experience courses are included in the course syllabi and in the field placement contracts.

#### Policy on Criminal Background Checks

One of the highest priorities of any school or agency is the safety of their students and clients. Consequently, we require criminal background checks from every student participating in a field experience. Each semester we have a few students with one relatively minor charge on their criminal background check. With a reasonable explanation demonstrating growth and why such a problem will not occur again, schools and agencies may be forgiving. However, students with more severe charges or multiple minor charges could face more difficulty. Students should be aware that schools or agencies may refuse to accept them for field experiences due to negative findings through a criminal background check. Also, students may be turned down for licensure or employment. Students who have reports indicating violent or sexual offense convictions may face great difficulty in obtaining placement and may result in dismissal from the program. Students with concerns about their individual situation should make an appointment to see the Counseling Program Director to discuss specific circumstances. Ultimately, students with criminal charges continue in the program at their own risk of not being allowed to take courses (e.g., practicum and internship) necessary for program completion.

Students are required to complete an initial criminal background check in the COUN 602: Professional and Ethical Issues in Counseling course, and to complete a follow-up background check prior to beginning practicum or internship. Background check results are valid for 1-year and must be updated, as applicable, if it has been 1-year since last taken and the student is beginning practicum and/or internship. Instructions will be provided in the course and available on the Counseling Resources webpage. Be aware that criminal background check results are sent to the Counseling Program Director, Field Placement Coordinators, and COUN 602 instructors. Results may be requested by school personnel, program and agency administrators, and advisers, as necessary for field placement purposes.

Students with any discrepancies, arrests, dismissals, or convictions, will need to write a full explanation including circumstances, court disposition, any penalties such as community

services, and lessons learned that provide assurances that there will be no further problems. Court documents may also be required. More complex issues will be forwarded to a full Counseling faculty review to decide if placement should even be attempted.

Students who are arrested after the criminal background check (initial and follow-up) is completed, must contact the Counseling Program Director within 72-hours to discuss the impact on current or future placements. Failure to disclose criminal charges may disqualify you from further Practicum/Internship placement.

### Placement Process for Field Experience

**To be eligible to enroll in either practicum or internship, a student must have a GPA of 3.0, completed prerequisites by time of field experience, and no grade of Incomplete. Students also must have an updated criminal background check completed prior to field placement.**

Students apply for field experiences the semester before they plan to enter practicum or internship. Students must have met or will meet course prerequisites prior to the semester that they wish to enroll. When students apply, approval for field experience is not automatic. Each applicant's progress in the program is reviewed to determine the degree of readiness for the field experience. Approval for field experiences by the faculty indicates their confidence in the applicant to complete the experience successfully. Students are tentatively approved (or not) at the time of field experience application, and again during the semester review process prior to the field placement semester.

The process for placement into field experiences (practicum and internship) within the counseling program at Western Carolina University consists of the following steps:

#### 1. Announcement of Deadlines and Required Meeting for Applying for Field Placements

Deadlines for receiving applications are **September 15** for spring semester and **February 15** for fall semester. If these days fall on a weekend or holiday, applications can be submitted on the day before the holiday, or the Friday before the weekend. Field placement applications are available via Tevera.

Students must follow field placement instructions provided on the Counseling program's webpage (which also include Tevera instructions for field placement application) and attend a **required** information meeting with field placement coordinators (to be held in person, online, and/or via website recording in Resources tab) for practicum and internship field placement applicants. Students should review their handbook and placement procedures prior to this meeting. An email announcement of the time, dates, and format for these meetings will be made.

**It is the student's responsibility to meet the application deadlines and attend (or watch via video) the required field placement**

## 2. Application Process

It is imperative that students meet the above stated deadlines. Faculty will review applications quickly in order to schedule field placement sections for the coming semester.

Students applying for a field placement must:

- a) Students must review the field placement notebooks located in Biltmore Park 2TS prior to meeting with their advisors.
- b) Students must make an appointment with their advisors to review progress in the program, review their résumés, and discuss possible options for field placement.
- c) Students must complete and have their advisor and appropriate field placement coordinator sign their application via Tevera. Coordinators: Dr. Roberts for school counseling; Dr. Likis-Werle for clinical mental health counseling). Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.
- d) If students know of possible new sites, students are to contact the appropriate Field Placement Coordinator (Dr. Roberts for school counseling; Dr. Likis-Werle for clinical mental health counseling) who will determine if sites comply with accreditation standards for field placement.

## 3. Approval

At the faculty meeting following the application deadline, all applications are reviewed by the faculty. A decision is first made to accept or not accept a student into a field experience. This decision is based on a student's progress in the program. **The decision to admit into a field experience is significant.** Placement means the faculty trusts the readiness of a person to assume the role of counselor-in-training and perform in a professional setting. This decision is not made lightly by faculty. If it is determined that a student is not ready for a field experience for any reason, the student's advisor, field placement coordinator, and/or program director will discuss that decision and future options with the student.

The second faculty decision is to review approved students' requests for field placement. Considerable discussion occurs about where to best place each student. When placement sites are considered, the listing of preferences on the application by the applicant are considered. Faculty reserve the right to place students in the setting that will best meet the needs of the students and expectations and requirements of the program. Note that internship students are placed before practicum students. To comply with CACREP standards, faculty supervisors of individuals are limited to a maximum of six students per supervisor for practicum, and internship group sections are limited to a maximum of 12 students.

## 4. Assignment to Course Sections

Final decisions for the exact number of sections, the day(s) and times that they will meet, and the faculty and students assigned to each section are determined after placement decisions have been made. Based on approved students' anticipated schedules for the next semester, the Program Director assigns students to field experience sections. Students are notified by email of the section to which they are assigned, when and where that section will meet, and the faculty



supervisor assigned to their section. Students register for sections according to the instructions they receive from the Program Director.

Group supervision for the field experiences occurs during the assigned class time. Weekly individual supervision with the university supervisor is required during practicum and will be scheduled individually with the supervisor for 1-hour per week outside of class (group supervision) time. Weekly individual supervision during internship is typically with the site supervisor at the site.

## 5. Field Placement

CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING (CMHC): Once students in the CMHC program have discussed appropriate sites with their advisors, applied for practicum or internship via Tevera, have been approved by faculty to pursue practicum/internship placement, and received an approval notice from their field placement coordinator via Tevera, students can then proceed according to following course of action:

- a. Call the site/school and ask for the practicum/internship site supervisor in the agreed upon site to see if they are interested in hosting a practicum/internship student and can meet the requirements as described in the practicum/internship contract. \*\*Be persistent with emails and phone calls to site supervisors but after three unreturned phone calls and emails, consult with the CMHC Field Placement coordinator, Dr. Elizabeth Likis-Werle, to discuss options.
- b. If the site coordinator/supervisor is interested, schedule an interview as soon as possible to discuss your interests, site requirements, and the WCU contract to determine if the placement will work. The purpose of the interview is for both parties to evaluate the potential for an excellent placement. The site supervisor must have a minimum of a master's level degree in Counseling, Clinical Psychology, Social Work or a similar area and 2-years' post-graduate experience in the field. \*\*Bring copies of your updated résumé and the CMHC practicum/internship contract. The contract does not need to be signed at the interview. At the beginning of the practicum/internship semester, faculty supervisors conduct site visits with students and their site supervisors to discuss/complete the contract.
- c. Once a site coordinator/supervisor has agreed to host you, discuss issues related to starting dates and orientation to the agency. (You may not begin client contact until the WCU first week of classes of the next semester begins).
- d. Last, once a site is secured complete the Placement Site and Supervision Information forms in Tevera. \*\*It is advised to ask for the site supervisor's business card after the interview since it will contain much of the needed information.

The CMHC Field Placement Coordinator, Dr. Elizabeth Likis-Werle, is available to advise and consult with you and site supervisors throughout this process.

SCHOOL COUNSELING (SCH): Each applicant must identify three school sites along with site supervisor information on the application for enrollment in a field experience. Upon agreement by the faculty, a ranking of sites is determined and the SCH Field Experience Coordinator then proceeds with the placement process. Once an agreement is reached for placement, the SCH Field Experience Coordinator then contacts the appropriate person at the individual school and/or district level to arrange an interview for the student. The purpose of the interview is for both parties to evaluate the potential for an excellent placement. The site supervisor must be a licensed school counselor with a minimum of 2 years' post-graduate experience in school counseling. If both parties indicate agreement, the Field Placement Coordinator then authorizes the placement and sends an approval to the student via Tevera.

Once a site coordinator/supervisor has agreed to host you, discuss issues related to starting dates and orientation to the school. (You may not begin student-client contact until the WCU first week of classes of the next semester begins). Last, once a school is secured, the student must complete the Placement Site and Supervision Information forms in Tevera. \*\*It is advised to ask for the site supervisor's information at the interview since it will contain much of the needed information.

The SC Field Placement Coordinator, Dr. Lisen Roberts, is available to advise and consult with you and site supervisors throughout this process.

#### Continuity of Training During Field Placement

Continuity of training and professional responsibility are important issues in counselor training programs. Faculty in our program constantly monitor continuity of the training received by our students by reviewing the program-related activities conducted in the classroom, laboratory, agency, and school sites.

Counseling faculty are professionally responsible to counselors-in-training, personnel at the field placement sites, and clients who are served by our students. Responsibility to students includes seeing that each student is provided with appropriate classroom, laboratory, and field experience opportunities to develop skills and expertise required of a beginning-practicing counselor. Responsibility to the personnel at field placement sites includes assigning students who are developmentally ready to be at the site and assuring the site that the student will be present for a specified period. It is also the professional responsibility of the program to ensure that students are aware of and uphold the ethical standards set forth by the American Counseling Association when counseling with clients.

Becoming a counselor is a process that develops over time. Students and faculty realize that the period of 15 weeks at a field placement site is a minimal amount of time for the student to receive the fullest benefits of the training experience. If significant disruption occurs during the field experience, the student's continuity of training and the overall maintenance of professional responsibility will be examined. To ensure continuity of training and professional responsibility during a student's field experience, the following policy exists:

1. A student is expected to complete field experiences requirements at the field placement site that is assigned. If satisfactory practicum recordings are not submitted during the semester in which the student is enrolled in practicum, the student will receive a grade of Incomplete and be required to continue in practicum the following semester and will be ineligible to begin

internship during that same semester. Internship will be delayed until the subsequent semester after practicum is successfully completed.

2. Students are discouraged from requesting a change from an assigned placement site prior to beginning the field experience. However, should a student need to request a change, it must be made in writing to the Field Placement Coordinator. The request must be received by December 15<sup>th</sup> for the spring semester and by August 1<sup>st</sup> for the fall semester. The Field Placement Coordinator will explore with the student the feasibility of the proposed change of placement sites.
3. If a student, for personal reasons, leaves the placement site before completion of field experience, she or he will be expected to withdraw from the field experience course or receive an unsatisfactory grade. The student must understand that because of program demands, she or he may not be assigned a placement site for the following semester. A student who chooses to withdraw from a field placement site should discuss options for future field placement assignment with his/her advisor to determine when it would be best to reapply for field placement. Students who withdraw from the field experience course must follow the procedures established by the Registrar to be removed officially from the class roll.
4. If the field placement site fails to provide adequate opportunities for the student's training, it is possible that faculty will move a student to a different site or require the student to spend additional time at the current site to obtain the needed client contact hours. Should this occur during the student's practicum experience, it is possible that a student could be delayed from entering the internship experience or the student (at the discretion of the faculty supervisor) could be given an Incomplete. Specific guidelines for completion of practicum requirements during the early stages of the internship experience will be presented to the student and the on-site supervisor. **Client contact hours acquired during practicum cannot be counted toward completion of internship.**

#### Field Placement Retention

In the case of unsatisfactory performance, the student may be required to leave a field placement site before completion of the requirements. The site or faculty supervisor could make this request for reasons including the following:

- Unprofessional behavior by the student\*
- Unethical behavior by the student\*
- Student shows a lack of satisfactory progression in the acquisition of clinical skills

\*Professional and ethical behavior is defined by the current editions of the American Counseling Association Ethical Standards and the WCU Graduate Catalog.

In situations where a possibility exists that a student could be removed from the field placement site, the following steps will be followed:

- a. The faculty supervisor will alert the appropriate Field Placement Coordinator and the student's advisor to the situation.
- b. The faculty supervisor will talk with the field placement site supervisor to gather information about the behaviors in question.
- c. The faculty supervisor will discuss the situation and the questionable behaviors with the student.
- d. If it appears that removal of the student from the site is the most appropriate action to take, then the site and the student will be informed. A failing grade may result from the student's removal from the field experience.
- e. The student will meet with his or her advisor to process the events. When appropriate, possible plans for continuing in the program and remediation required by the faculty will be discussed.

### **PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS**

Before students enter the program, they receive the document below, the Informed Consent for WCU Counselors in Training, which they are to read and to sign a statement indicating they understand this consent.

#### Informed Consent for WCU Counselors in Training

The faculty members in the Western Carolina University counseling programs are dedicated to the personal growth and development of our counselors in training. We consider personal development to be at least as important as the professional and educational development of the counselor. Counseling involves the full integration of self throughout the counseling process with the client. Therefore, understanding of one's own personal characteristics is as critical as the knowledge and skills related to "being" an effective counselor. There will be an emphasis in many of your courses on identifying and exploring personal issues and concerns, especially those which may impede your effectiveness as a counselor. Examples might include: exploring family-of-origin experiences and unresolved issues; identifying successful and unsuccessful movement through developmental transitions; identifying group membership situations that might lessen your ability to effectively lead groups; etc. You need to know specifically, as part of your group methods class, you will be expected to engage in "here and now" self-exploration and interpersonal issues with your peers within a group experience with your professor present. This experience in the group methods class will be an un-graded but required experience for all students in the program.

It is not uncommon for people in our profession to feel uncomfortable with a focus on personal development even though, as counselors, we routinely ask our clients to focus on themselves. We encourage you as a counselor-in-training to stretch and to risk more than you might normally be prepared to do. When coursework asks for self-exploration, creating comfort may not be the desired goal; however, the faculty is committed to creating a safe environment for all students. You can contribute to your own safety by understanding, while personal self-disclosures are part

of your coursework, only you can decide what aspects of your personal life you are willing to share. **You, as do clients, have the right to personal privacy. You have the right to choose what you share with faculty and students as well as the right to pass in situations in which you feel uncomfortable without reprisal from a faculty member.** You have the right to expect not to be judged or graded negatively for disclosures you make in class or in an assignment. If at any time, you feel a faculty member has not honored this agreement, you may follow the academic appeals procedure as stated in the WCU Graduate Catalog.

Because the counseling program has a professional responsibility (current CACREP and ACA Ethical Standards) to monitor a student's development as a professional counselor, if you disclose information that indicates you are engaging or have engaged in unprofessional or unethical behavior, a faculty member may present a concern to the program faculty for review. This review could result in (1) a program faculty discussion and a decision that the matter does not warrant action, (2) a program faculty discussion and a decision to pursue the concern by beginning a dialogue with you that is educational in nature and might lead to a remediation plan. If a remediation plan is implemented and if the remediation plan is not achieved within a given time limit the student will not be approved to enroll in additional coursework (Counseling Student Handbook, Progress Evaluation and Retention). This process is consistent with the program's ongoing policy of evaluation for all students as stated in the Counseling Program's Student Handbook, The WCU Graduate Record, and current ACA Ethical Standards.

### Faculty Expectations of Student Progress

The Counseling faculty review each student at the end of each semester in a process called "End of Semester Review." After semester review, except for the final internship/graduation semester, each student receives a formal letter via email outlining faculty perceptions of student progress and behavior. Occasionally, when there are significant concerns, faculty will require a meeting with the student and all available faculty. At this meeting, designed to be supportive in the student's professional development, faculty will share concerns and students will have the opportunity to respond. Typically, students having Semester Review meetings improve their behavior immediately and no further action is taken, other than the continued faculty monitoring applicable to all students. However, if faculty continue to have concerns at the following Semester Review, the student will be called to meeting again and placed on a formal action plan to remediate behaviors.

The Counseling faculty is committed to supporting students as they progress through the program. Faculty systematically review progress of each student, each semester. Areas considered for review are:

- Academic Performance
- Professional and Personal Development
- Clinical Skill Development/Performance

### Academic Performance

It is the expectation of the Counseling faculty that students' academic performance in all courses will be B or above. A GPA of 3.0 is required for graduation. The student's advisor and the

Counseling Program Director have access to the student's academic record, which is used to monitor the student's academic progress.

A student who earns a final course grade of C in COUN 605: The Helping Relationship course must repeat the course. A student who accumulates two grades of C or any grade of F (in any courses) will automatically be dismissed from the Counseling program; this supersedes the Graduate School requirement of three Cs. A student who has been admitted provisionally and fails to meet the terms of the provisional admission will also be dismissed from the Graduate School and the counseling program.

Counseling students are expected to comply with the WCU Academic Honesty Policy which states: Western Carolina University, as a community of scholarship, is also a community of honor. Faculty, staff, administrators, and students work together to achieve the highest standards of honesty and integrity. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense at WCU because it threatens the quality of scholarship and defrauds those who depend on knowledge and integrity. Academic dishonesty includes:

- A. Cheating-intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.
- B. Fabrication-intentional falsification or invention of information or citation in an academic exercise.
- C. Plagiarism-intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of someone else as one's own in an academic exercise.
- D. Facilitation of academic dishonesty-intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help someone else to commit an act of academic dishonesty, such as knowingly allowing another to copy information during an examination or other academic exercise.

Cases of academic dishonesty will be dealt with per university procedures outlined in the WCU Graduate Catalog.

### Professional and Personal Development

Successful students are expected to develop professionally and personally during their time in, and after, completion of the Counseling Program. Faculty encourage, as well as monitor, the professional and personal development of each student during her or his academic coursework and field experiences.

Professionalism includes professional attitude, professional demeanor, and knowledge and application of ethical and professional standards. In accordance with the WCU Graduate Catalog, "Graduate students are expected to be familiar with and to adhere to the professional and ethical guidelines appropriate to their area of study. Failure at any time to adhere to the guidelines may result in immediate dismissal from the Graduate School."

Ultimately, counseling professionalism is the ability of a counselor to work with a variety of clients, with coworkers, and within and between agencies, schools, and other community organizations. All academic and field experience courses focus on the student's professional development.

Indicators of a student's professionalism include: class attendance, active participation in class discussion, on-time completion of class assignments, attendance at professional meetings, appropriate appearance, ability to engage in an open dialogue with faculty, and ability to work within an agency or school to deliver appropriate client services.

### Clinical Skill Development/Performance

Clinical skill strategies are taught and practice opportunities are made available throughout the student's program. Laboratory and other curricular experiences are designed to promote clinical skill development. Course syllabi indicate required competencies and methods of evaluation.

Courses that focus on key skill development components are at least COUN 605, 630, 633, 635, and field experiences, 686 and 687. Students' skills are evaluated through oral and/or written instructor critiques of audio and/or visual recordings. In COUN 605: The Helping Relationship, interpersonal helping skills are taught and role-playing peer sessions occur. COUN 630: Theories and Techniques of Counseling introduces counseling theories and provides opportunities for students to observe and practice various theoretical counseling approaches. COUN 635: Group Methods provides opportunities for students to learn and practice leadership skills for group work. Additional courses have in-class counseling skill components and requirements.

Students are reviewed as to their readiness for field experience upon application. Professional and clinical performance is assessed throughout the student's practicum and internship field placement experience. In practicum, the student meets weekly for individual supervision and bi-weekly for group supervision with a university faculty supervisor. The student will also meet regularly with his or her on-site supervisor. In internship, the student will meet weekly for individual supervision with his or her on-site supervisor and weekly for group supervision with his or her university faculty supervisor. The purpose of supervision is to review and encourage clinical skill development. Supervision will also involve discussion of client progress, work environment, and issues of professional development. Students are expected to demonstrate a developmental progression of clinical skill acquisition and responsiveness to supervision. If progression toward clinical skill acquisition does not occur and the student seems unresponsive to supervision, then the student's professional and clinical performance will be considered unsatisfactory.

Satisfactory academic performance does not always ensure satisfactory clinical performance. In other words, a student may make all As and Bs in their academic course work and have an unsatisfactory performance in their field experience. Clinical performance and professionalism are the defining criteria for a student's satisfactory completion of field experiences.

## **PROGRESS EVALUATION AND RETENTION**

Progress through the program for each student is systematically reviewed and evaluated by the faculty each semester with respect to academic performance, professional and personal development, and clinical skill development/performance.

Following discussion of pertinent information and observations concerning each student's progress, students will be notified via email indicating one of the following actions:

- Progress is determined to be developmentally appropriate and faculty have no current concerns.
- Minor concerns have been noted and the student is requested to meet with their advisor and/or the full faculty to discuss these concerns.
- Major concerns have been noted and the student is requested to meet with their advisor and/or the full faculty to discuss these concerns and to develop a remediation plan acceptable to the faculty with a set probationary time limit.
- When concerns have been noted, the faculty will review student's progress.
- When a major concern has been noted and a remediation plan goes into effect, if the remediation plan is not achieved within the probationary time limit, the student will not be approved to enroll in additional coursework.

## ACADEMIC POLICIES OF THE WCU GRADUATE SCHOOL

**Academic Integrity Policy and Process.** *This policy addresses academic integrity violations of undergraduate and graduate students. Graduate students should read inside the parenthesis below to identify the appropriate entities in charge of that step of the process.*

Students, faculty, staff, and administrators of Western Carolina University strive to achieve the highest standards of scholarship and integrity. Any violation of the Academic Integrity Policy is a serious offense because it threatens the quality of scholarship and undermines the integrity of the community. While academic in scope, any violation of this policy is by nature, a violation of the Code of Student Conduct and will follow the same conduct process (see Article VII.B.1.a.). If the charge occurs close to the end of an academic semester or term or in the event of the reasonable need of either party for additional time to gather information timelines may be extended at the discretion of the Department of Student Community Ethics (DSCE).

Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy include:

**Cheating** - Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.

**Fabrication** - Creating and/or falsifying information or citation in any academic exercise.

**Plagiarism** - Representing the words or ideas of someone else as one's own in any academic exercise.

**Facilitation** - Helping or attempting to help someone to commit a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy in any academic exercise (e.g., allowing another to copy information during an examination)

The procedures for cases involving allegations of academic dishonesty are:

### **Graduate Process**

1. Faculty members have the right to determine the appropriate sanction(s) for violations of the Academic Integrity Policy within their courses, up to and including a final grade of "F" in the course. Within five (5) days of the instructor's knowledge of the alleged



violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, the instructor will inform the Associate Dean of the Graduate School in writing of the allegation and proposed sanction(s).

2. The faculty member will meet with the student to inform him/her orally and in writing of the allegation and the sanction(s) imposed within ten (10) days of knowledge of the alleged violation. If the student is part of a distance learning program and does not have face-to-face interaction with the faculty member, the meeting may take place over the phone. Should either the student or faculty member feel uncomfortable about this meeting, either party may bring an advisor with them. Prior to this meeting, the faculty member will contact the DSCE (phone 828-227-7234) to establish if the student has any record of previous academic integrity violations. If a previous academic integrity violation exists, the matter must be referred directly to the DSCE.
3. If the case is a first offense, the student can choose to accept the allegation and proposed sanction(s) from the faculty member by signing a Mutual Resolution or can choose to have a hearing with the Graduate Academic Integrity Board. Prior to the meeting with the student, the faculty member will complete the Academic Integrity Violation Form ([dsce.wcu.edu](http://dsce.wcu.edu)). Once complete, the faculty member will present it to the student, who must choose to either accept the proposal or go to a hearing. After the student has made his or her decision the faculty member is responsible for submitting copies to the student, department head, and the DSCE. The DSCE should also receive any supporting documentation such as the assignment in question, the course syllabus, etc. Mutual Resolutions are final and are not subject to further review or appeal. The DSCE will maintain these files and give the faculty member and department head confirmation of receipt.
4. In instances of second offenses, or when the student chooses a hearing, the DSCE and student will schedule a hearing orientation meeting to discuss the hearing process and schedule a hearing. The date of the hearing will not be fewer than ten (10) days after receipt of written notice. The student can waive minimum notice of a hearing; however, extensions are at the sole discretion of the DSCE. Should the student choose not to attend his/her hearing orientation meeting, a hearing date will be assigned to the student.
5. Hearings shall be conducted by the Graduate Academic Integrity Board according to the following guidelines:
  - (a) Hearings shall be conducted in private.
  - (b) Admission of any person to the hearing shall be at the discretion of the chair of the Graduate Academic Integrity Board and/or the DSCE.
  - (c) Charges against multiple students involved in the same incident may be heard in a single hearing only if the accused student(s), complainant(s), and the DSCE consent to such a proceeding.
  - (d) The complainant and the accused have the right to be assisted by any adviser they

choose, at their own expense. The complainant and the accused are both responsible for presenting his or her own case. Advisers are not permitted to speak or to participate directly in any hearing before the Graduate Academic Integrity Board.

(e) The DSCE and the Graduate Academic Integrity Board must assure that the accused student has the capability to present his/her information and defense at the hearing. The method for assuring this capability may vary depending on the nature of the case. Upon a determination of incapability, the DSCE must advise the accused to seek assistance or may assign an adviser to the accused.

(f) Prior to the hearing, the complainant, and the accused have the right to review any written information that will be used at the hearing and to obtain a list of witnesses intended to be called.

(g) Pertinent records, exhibits, and written statements may be accepted as information for consideration by a hearing body to the extent that the information is relevant, credible, not prejudicial to the fairness of the proceedings, and does not otherwise infringe upon the rights of other students.

(h) All procedural questions are subject to the final decision of the chair of the Graduate Academic Integrity Board.

(i) During the closed deliberations of the hearing, the Graduate Academic Integrity Board shall determine by majority vote whether the student has violated each section of the code with which the student has been charged.

(j) The Graduate Academic Integrity Board's determination shall be made on the basis of whether it is more likely than not (a preponderance of the information) that the accused student violated the code.

(k) The following order of presentation is recommended for use in formal hearings. The order may be changed at the discretion of the chair of the Graduate Academic Integrity Board.

1. Presentation of formal charges.
2. Opening statements by the complainant and by the accused.
3. Presentation of information and witnesses, and cross-examination by the complainant and by the accused.
4. Closing statements by the complainant and then by the accused.
5. The Graduate Academic Integrity Board will then go into closed deliberations. The accused student, complainant, and all witnesses, unless released by the chair, are required to remain in close proximity to the hearing, should the Graduate Academic Integrity Board need to recall.
6. When deliberations are complete, the accused student and complainant are recalled and the chairperson verbally delivers the finding of the hearing body. If the student is found not-responsible the hearing is then complete. If the student is found

responsible for the violation(s) the board will once again go into closed deliberations to determine sanctioning.

6. There shall be a single verbatim record, such as a recording, of all hearings before the Graduate Academic Integrity Board. The record shall be the property of the University.
7. In all cases, the information in support of the charges shall be presented and considered. Thus, if the accused student chooses not to be present at his/her hearing, the hearing will continue in absentia. A student's absence at his/her hearing is not a violation of the code; however, it prevents that student's voice from being heard.
8. During the closed deliberations of the hearing, the Graduate Academic Integrity Board shall deliberate to determine if the accused is responsible for violations of the code. If responsibility for a violation is found, the hearing body will impose appropriate sanction(s) as outlined in Article VIII of the Code of Student Conduct. After a finding of responsibility and before determination of sanction(s), the hearing body may review the disciplinary history of the accused student and/or victim-impact statements. If the hearing body determines that expulsion is an appropriate sanction, that finding must be in the form of a recommendation to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, who makes the final administrative decision in all expulsion cases. Final administrative decision must be reached within forty-five (45) days and transmitted in writing to the student within ten (10) days of the decision.
9. In cases other than those which result in a recommendation of expulsion, the final administrative decision must be transmitted to the student in writing within ten (10) days of the date the decision is made, and it must contain a brief summary of the information upon which the decision is based and appeal rights must be specified by the DSCE.
10. The Graduate Academic Integrity Board will consist of two (2) Graduate Student Representatives) and three (3) Graduate Faculty Representatives. The DSCE faculty fellow may be one of the faculty members and may serve as the chair. The other two (2) faculty members will be chosen by the DSCE from a pool of twelve (12) faculty hearing officers. Each academic year, each college dean will appoint two (2) faculty members from his/her college to comprise the pool of twelve (12) faculty hearing officers. In the event that there is no DSCE faculty fellow the third faculty member on Graduate Academic Integrity Board will be chosen from the pool. The Graduate Academic Integrity Board may impose any sanction(s) as outlined in Article VIII in the Code of Student Conduct. Students given a sanction of probation for a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy will remain on probation at WCU until graduation. In the event the Graduate Academic Integrity Board assigns a sanction which requires review, the chair of the Graduate Academic Integrity Board will determine if the sanction is satisfactory. These educational sanctions are independent from course work and do not have any bearing on a student's evaluative grade.
11. Following a decision from the Graduate Academic Integrity Board, the DSCE will inform the student of the outcome of the hearing in writing. If a student is found responsible, the

DSCE will inform him/her of the sanction(s) to be imposed and of his/her right to file an appeal with the University College Academic Action Committee. If the student does not file an appeal within five (5) days of the hearing, the sanction(s) from the hearing body will be imposed. The appeal is limited to the following rules, procedures, and existing verbatim record.

12. Upon final resolution of a case involving suspension or expulsion, the DSCE will inform the appropriate dean, graduate program director, and the administrator in the One Stop Office who is responsible for University Withdrawals of the sanction(s).

Any violation of the Academic Integrity policy, including a first offense, may place the student in jeopardy of suspension from the university. A repeated violation or more serious first offense may result in expulsion. Disciplinary records for any act of academic dishonesty are retained by the DSCE for at least eight (8) years from the date of final adjudication. These records are available to prospective employers and other educational institutions in accordance with federal regulations. Students may inspect their conduct files in accordance with University Policy #72 - Student Records.

#### **Grounds for Appeal:**

An appeal shall be limited to review of the verbatim record of the initial hearing and supporting documents for one or more of the following purposes to be included in the letter of appeal:

- A violation of due process
- A material deviation from Substantive and Procedural standards adopted by the Board of Governors.

#### **Process for Appeal:**

- Based on the grounds listed above, any decision reached or sanction(s) imposed by the Graduate Academic Integrity Board shall be afforded at least one level of appeal. In cases that do not result in University suspension/expulsion the decision made by the College Academic Action Committee is final and there will be no further appeals.
- Cases that result in a sanction(s) of university suspension/expulsion can be appealed to the College Academic Action Committee, and then to the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, and then to the Chancellor.
- Cases can be appealed by the accused student or the complainant.
- A formal notice of appeal shall be in writing and shall be delivered to the appellate body within five (5) days of the decision.

#### **Timeline for Appeal:**

- A formal written appeal is due to the College Academic Action Committee\* within five (5) days of the hearing, or receipt of the hearing findings letter, whichever is first.
- Upon receipt of the appeal, the College Academic Action Committee must render a decision within five (5) days and notice of the appellate decision must be communicated within ten (10) days of the decision.

- Should the student have the ability and wish to appeal that decision, a formal written appeal is due to the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs within five (5) days of the receipt of the hearing findings letter.
- Should the student have the ability and wish to appeal the decision of the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, a formal written appeal is due to the Chancellor within five (5) days of the receipt of the hearing findings letter.
- At all times the DSCE reserves the authority to make exceptions to timelines on a case-by-case basis (e.g. university closures, holidays, ends of semester, etc.).

### **Outcomes for Appeal:**

- If an appellate body upholds the findings of the hearing body, the review of the case may result in reduced or adjusted sanctions but may not increase the sanction(s) imposed by the original hearing body.
- Procedures for appeals are determined by the appellate body and shall be communicated to the appealing student in advance of the appeal.
- If the appeal is denied, the student must comply with the original sanction(s).
- Students are not expected to complete any assigned sanctions during this process until they have exhausted their appellate process and the case is complete.

\*The College Academic Action Committee (CAAC) will consist of faculty members (who do not teach in the program from which the appeal originated) and students as designated by the academic college (graduate or undergraduate based upon appeal) appointed by the appropriate Academic Dean or Associate Dean. At least two of the faculty members shall be selected from “allied” disciplines or programs. The Associate Dean will serve as ex officio (non-voting) chair of this committee.

**Academic Dismissal Policy.** There are two levels of academic dismissal: (a) Dismissal from a graduate program, or (b) Dismissal from the Graduate School. Individual programs set criteria and make decisions related to program dismissal. The Graduate School sets criteria and makes decisions for dismissal from the Graduate School.

### **Dismissal from the Graduate School:**

A graduate student who accumulates three grades of C or any grade of F will be dismissed from the Graduate School. Students will be informed in writing by the Graduate School at the time of dismissal.

### **Request for Readmission after Dismissal from the Graduate School:**

A student may be readmitted to the Graduate School only once following academic dismissal. A student must contact the Graduate School in writing to request readmission after dismissal from the Graduate School. A request for readmission after dismissal from the Graduate School will be evaluated by program faculty and the Graduate School, taking into account the student’s performance in graduate school and the student’s potential for improved performance. Program faculty will make a readmission recommendation to the Graduate School which will be used in the Graduate School’s decision to approve or deny the student’s request for readmission. The Graduate School will notify the student of the

readmission decision. Approval of readmission may be accompanied by additional requirements. Upon re-admission, the student must meet all requirements under the catalog in effect at the time of his/her readmission unless the program requires the student to meet the requirements of a previous catalog. A readmitted student who receives an additional grade of C or F will be permanently dismissed from the Graduate School.

### **Dismissal from a Graduate Program:**

Individual programs may have program-specific grounds for program dismissal, including but not limited to failure to adhere to technical standards, failure to pass comprehensive examinations, professional misconduct, or failure to successfully pass other programmatic requirements. The Program Director will notify the Graduate School in writing of the decision to dismiss a student from the program. Students will be informed of the program dismissal by the Graduate School. Program dismissal does not automatically result in dismissal from the Graduate School; the student may apply to another WCU graduate program as long as they are in good academic standing (GPA of 3.0 or better and fewer than three Cs or one F). However, registration for future terms will be dropped and a registration hold will be applied to the student's record until s/he applies for and is accepted into another program. (A student of the WCU Counseling program will be dismissed after accumulating two final course grades of C or one F; this supersedes the Graduate School's policy of three Cs).

### **Request for Readmission after Dismissal from a Graduate Program:**

A student may be readmitted to a program only once following dismissal from that program. A student must contact the Graduate School in writing to request readmission after dismissal from a program. A request for readmission after dismissal from the program will be evaluated by program faculty, taking into account the student's potential for improved performance in the program. The Program Director will inform the Graduate School of the decision to approve or deny the student's request for readmission and the Graduate School will notify the student of the readmission decision. Approval of readmission may be accompanied by additional requirements. Upon re-admission the student must meet all requirements under the catalog in effect at the time of his/her readmission unless the program requires the student to meet the requirements of a previous catalog.

## **Academic Action Appeal Policy**

A student has the right to appeal a final assigned grade or dismissal from a program level. A student may only appeal a final grade or program dismissal if they can show the grade or program dismissal was assigned arbitrarily or impermissibly. A student who wishes to appeal a grade on a particular assignment or exam can do so if it affects their final assigned grade or dismissal from a program. A final grade or program dismissal is deemed to have been assigned arbitrarily or impermissibly if, by a preponderance of the evidence, a student establishes that:

1. The final grade or dismissal was impermissible based in whole or in part upon the student's race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, or for some other arbitrary or personal reason unrelated to the instructor's reasonable

exercise of his or her professional academic judgment in the evaluation of the academic performance of the student; or

2. The final grade or program dismissal was assigned in a manner not consistent with the standards and procedures for evaluation established by the instructor, the program, or the University in the Catalog, in the course syllabus, or during the class/program in written or oral communications directed to the class/program as a whole; or
3. The final grade or program dismissal was the result of a clear and material mistake in calculating or recording grades or other evaluation.
4. Individual elements (e.g., assignments, tests, activities, projects) which contribute to a final grade are generally NOT subject to appeal or subsequent review during a final grade appeals procedure. However, individual elements may be appealed under these procedures providing all of the following conditions are met:
  - a) The student presents compelling evidence that one or more individual elements were graded on arbitrary or impermissible grounds;
  - b) Grounds can be established for determining a professionally sound grade for the appealed element(s); and
  - c) The ensuing grade for each appealed element would have resulted in a different course grade than that assigned by the faculty member.

If dismissal from the Graduate School is a result of grades (3 Cs or an F), the student may appeal the grade causing the dismissal. If the appeal is unsuccessful, the dismissal stands; the student cannot appeal the dismissal as well as the grade because dismissal is based upon the grades. If the appeal is successful, the dismissal will be rescinded. If a student is appealing dismissal from a program, or a final assigned grade that results in dismissal, the student shall be allowed to continue taking courses until the appeal is resolved (with the approval of the program in which the classes are taken), with the exception of clinical placements or internships, or when the students' continued participation is deemed by the program director or department head to be harmful or disruptive to other students and/or the program. If the appeal is unsuccessful and the dismissal stands, the student will be removed from any classes in which he or she is registered and will be responsible for any tuition and fees accrued as a result of registration during the appeals process.

### **Academic Action Appeal Overview:**

Students who wish to appeal a final assigned grade or dismissal from an academic program for any reason other than academic dishonesty should follow, in order, the academic appeal procedure outlined below. Appeals of a final assigned grade and appeals of dismissals from an academic program follow similar procedures:

1. Appeal to Instructor
2. Appeal to Department Head
3. Appeal to Academic College - Associate Dean - may dismiss appeal or send to:

4. College Academic Action Committee Review
5. Academic Dean Review

An Appeal to Provost is only allowed for (1) alleged violations of procedures, (2) discrimination based on a protected class, or (3) the student's exercise of rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution. No right of appeal is available beyond the Provost.

### **Final Grade Appeal Procedures:**

The following procedures detail the steps for appealing a final assigned grade (whether or not that grade results in dismissal from the Graduate School). The student is encouraged to meet/talk with the instructor prior to filing a formal appeal. The student must demonstrate that the grade was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned (see Academic Action Policy). That the student simply disagrees with the assigned grade does not constitute a basis for a review.

#### **(Step 1) Appeal to Instructor:**

Within 35 calendar days after the student receives notification of the academic action (grade) the student should submit a formal written appeal to the instructor. This appeal must include:

- a) a statement of the reason(s) why the student believes the grade was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned (see policy Academic Action Appeal Policy)
- b) the resolution sought.

If the grade being appealed is leading to dismissal from the Graduate School, the Dean of the Graduate School should be copied on the student's initial appeal. All correspondence should include contact information. The instructor must respond to the student's request in writing as soon as possible (no later than ten working days after receiving the student's written appeal). This response should detail whether or not the instructor is approving or denying the appeal.

#### **(Step 2) Appeal to Department Head:**

If the student is unable to resolve the grievance through the appeal to the instructor, the student should submit a written appeal to the department head within 10 working days of receiving the instructor's written response (from Step 1). If the department head is the instructor for the grade assigned, the associate dean of the department's college will serve this function. Students appealing to the department head assume the burden of proof. Therefore, the appeal must include:

- a) A statement of the reason(s) the student believes the grade was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned;
- b) The steps taken to resolve the disagreement over the assigned course grade; and
- c) The resolution sought.

The appeal must be accompanied by evidence the student believes supports the conclusion that the grade was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned. Evidence might include papers, tests, syllabi, or written documentation. Within ten working days of receiving this appeal, the department head will attempt to resolve the appeal. If the department head is unable to resolve the appeal within ten working days, the department head will notify the student of



the decision, and the student has 10 days to appeal to the associate dean of the academic college.

**(Step 3) Appeal to the Academic College (Associate Dean Review):**

If appealing to the academic college, the student should forward (to the associate dean of the academic college) his/her initial Appeal to the Instructor and response from the instructor (from Step 1), the subsequent Appeal to the Department Head, and the department head's written notification (from Step 2). Upon receipt of the appeal and aforementioned materials the associate dean may request further information from the student, the instructor, and/or the department head. If the associate dean concludes that the facts alleged by the student do not constitute permissible grounds for appeal as set forth in this Academic Action Appeal Policy or Procedures, the associate dean may, in consultation with the Dean and Graduate Dean if applicable, dismiss the review. The student will not be allowed any further appeal. If the associate dean determines that the facts alleged in the student's written appeals could, if true, constitute a violation of the Academic Action Appeal Policy or Procedures, the associate dean, within ten working days of receiving all information, shall refer the case to the College's Academic Action Committee.

**(Step 4) Academic Action Committee Review:**

The College Academic Action Committee (CAAC) will consist of faculty members (who do not teach in the program from which the appeal originated) and students as designated by the academic college (graduate or undergraduate based upon appeal) appointed by the appropriate Academic Dean or Associate Dean. At least two of the faculty members shall be selected from "allied" disciplines or programs. The Associate Dean will serve as ex officio (non-voting) chair of this committee. The purpose of the CAAC is to determine whether the facts support the student's contention that the grade was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned, or there was material procedural deviation, as defined in the policy. It is not the function of the Committee to re-evaluate the student's work to determine whether the CAAC agrees with the professional judgment of the faculty member who assigned the grade.

The CAAC Chair shall convene the Committee not later than ten working days from the request by the associate dean to examine the student's appeals to the instructor and department head. The CAAC will also take into consideration any written statements received by the associate dean from either the student or the instructor, and any additional relevant documentation. Additionally, the CAAC may request oral presentations from both parties. Other relevant parties may be questioned.

Neither the student nor the faculty member may be accompanied or represented in the hearing by legal counsel or other advisor. The CAAC may consider only such evidence as is offered by the parties and at the hearing(s) and need consider only the evidence offered that it considers fair and reliable. The burden of proof shall be on the student to satisfy the Committee that a preponderance of the evidence supports a conclusion that the grade was awarded arbitrarily or impermissibly as defined. All recommendations of the CAAC shall be made by a simple majority vote.

Within ten working days from the conclusion of its hearing(s) on the matter, the CAAC Chair will provide a written report to the academic dean and to the graduate dean (for graduate-level grade appeals). The Committee report must include the Committee's finding as to whether or not the grade assigned was awarded arbitrarily or impermissibly as defined in the policy. If such a determination is made, the CAAC shall recommend a course of action which could include recommending assignment of a specific grade to replace the one originally assigned or implementation of some process to re-evaluate the student's work

**(Step 5) Review by the Dean:**

Within ten working days after receiving the CAAC's report, recommendations and other documentation assembled in the review, the academic Dean will, in consultation with the faculty member and department head, determine a final course of action. S/he will then communicate the final action in writing to the student, faculty member, department head, and (for graduate-level grade appeals) the dean of the Graduate School.

***Appeal to the Provost:*** An appeal to the Provost is only allowed if the student can establish a reasonable basis that the appeal procedures were not followed, discrimination of a protected class has occurred, and/or a student's exercise of rights guaranteed by the First Amendment has been violated. If the student feels one of these conditions applies, s/he must file a written appeal to the Provost explaining the situation that warrants this level of appeal. The Provost shall provide his/her written decision to the student within ten calendar days of receipt of the appeal. No appeal is available beyond the Provost.

***Substitution Provisions:*** In the event that the faculty member whose grade is being reviewed is also a department head/school director, the associate dean shall do those things required by the head or director. In the event that the faculty member whose grade is being reviewed is also an associate dean, the academic dean or Provost can name an appropriate substitute to perform the functions of the associate dean as required by this policy.

**Program Dismissal Appeal Procedures:**

The following procedures detail the steps for appealing a dismissal from a program for any reason other than final assigned grade(s), including failure to adhere to technical standards. Dismissal from the Graduate School (and therefore dismissal from the program) based on bad grades may not be appealed. In this case, the affected student must appeal the final grade(s) resulting in the dismissal from the Graduate School. The student is encouraged to meet/talk with the program director prior to filing a formal appeal. The student must demonstrate that dismissal was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned (see Academic Action Policy). That the student simply disagrees with the dismissal does not constitute a basis for a review.

**(Step 1) Appeal to Program Director:**

Within 35 calendar days after the student receives notification of the academic action (cause for program dismissal) the student should submit a formal written appeal to the instructor. This appeal must include:

- a) a statement of the reason(s) why the student believes the dismissal was impermissibly or

arbitrarily assigned (see policy Academic Action Appeal Policy)

b) the resolution sought.

When appealing a dismissal from a graduate program, the student must copy the Dean of the Graduate School on this initial appeal. All correspondence should include contact information. The program director must respond to the student's request in writing as soon as possible (no later than ten working days after receiving the student's written appeal). This response should detail whether or not the program is approving or denying the appeal.

### **(Step 2) Appeal to Department Head:**

If the student is unable to resolve the grievance through the appeal to the program director, the student should submit a written appeal to the department head within 10 working days of receiving the program director's written response (from Step 1). If the department head is the instructor for the grade assigned, the associate dean of the department's college will serve this function. Students appealing to the department head assume the burden of proof. Therefore, the appeal must include:

- a) A statement of the reason(s) the student believes the dismissal was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned;
- b) The steps taken to resolve the disagreement over the dismissal; and
- c) The resolution sought.

The appeal must be accompanied by evidence the student believes supports the conclusion that the dismissal was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned. Evidence might include papers, tests, syllabi, or written documentation. Within ten working days of receiving this appeal, the department head will attempt to resolve the appeal. If the department head is unable to resolve the appeal within ten working days, the department head will notify the student of the decision and copy the dean of the Graduate School, and the student has 10 days to appeal to the associate dean of the academic college.

### **(Step 3) Appeal to the Academic College (Associate Dean Review):**

If appealing to the academic college, the student should forward (to the associate dean of the academic college) his/her initial Appeal to the Program Director and the program director's response (from Step 1), the subsequent Appeal to the Department Head, and the department head's written notification (from Step 2). Upon receipt of the appeal and these materials the associate dean may request further information from the student, the program director, and/or the department head. If the associate dean concludes that the facts alleged by the student do not constitute permissible grounds for appeal as set forth in this Academic Action Appeal Policy or Procedures, the associate dean may, in consultation with the academic Dean and Graduate Dean if applicable, dismiss the review. The student will not be allowed any further appeal. If the associate dean determines that the facts alleged in the student's written appeals could, if true, constitute a violation of the Academic Action Appeal Policy or Procedures, the associate dean, within ten working days of receiving all information, shall refer the case to the College's Academic Action Committee.

### **(Step 4) Academic Action Committee Review:**

The College Academic Action Committee (CAAC) will consist of faculty members (who do not teach in the program from which the appeal originated) and students as designated

by the academic college (graduate or undergraduate based upon appeal) appointed by the appropriate Academic Dean or Associate Dean. At least two of the faculty members shall be selected from “allied” disciplines or programs. The Associate Dean will serve as ex officio (non-voting) chair of this committee. The purpose of this Committee is to determine whether the facts support the student’s contention that the dismissal was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned, or there was a material procedural deviation, as defined in the policy. It is not the function of the CAAC to re-evaluate the student’s work to determine whether the Committee agrees with the professional judgment of the program director or faculty member(s).

The CAAC Chair shall convene the Committee not later than ten working days from the request by the associate dean to examine the student’s appeals to the program director and department head. The committee will also take into consideration any written statements received by the associate dean from either the student or the program director, and any additional relevant documentation. Additionally, the Committee may request oral presentations from both parties. Other relevant parties may be questioned.

Neither the student nor the program director may be accompanied or represented in the hearing by legal counsel or other advisor. The CAAC may consider only such evidence as is offered by the parties and at the hearing(s) and need consider only the evidence offered that it considers fair and reliable. The burden of proof shall be on the student to satisfy the Committee that a preponderance of the evidence supports a conclusion that the dismissal was awarded arbitrarily or impermissibly as defined. All recommendations of the CAAC shall be made by a simple majority vote.

Within 10 working days from the conclusion of its hearing(s) on the matter, the CAAC Chair will provide a written report to the academic dean and to the graduate dean (for graduate-level grade appeals). The Committee report must include the Committee’s finding as to whether or not the dismissal assigned was awarded arbitrarily or impermissibly as defined in the policy. If such a determination is made, the CAAC shall recommend a course of action which could include recommending readmission or implementation of some process to re-evaluate the student’s actions/work that lead to the program dismissal.

**(Step 5) Review by the Dean:**

Within ten working days after receiving the CAAC’s report, recommendations, and other documentation assembled in the review, the academic Dean will, in consultation with the program director and department head, determine a final course of action. S/he will then communicate the final action in writing to the student, faculty member, department head, and the dean of the Graduate School.

***Appeal to the Provost:*** An appeal to the Provost is only allowed if the student can establish a reasonable basis that the appeal procedures were not followed, discrimination of a protected class has occurred, and/or a student’s exercise of rights guaranteed by the First Amendment has been violated. If the student feels one of these conditions applies, s/he must file a written appeal to the Provost explaining the situation that warrants this level of appeal. The Provost shall provide

his/her written decision to the student within ten calendar days of receipt of the appeal. No right of appeal is available beyond the Provost.

***Substitution Provisions:*** In the event that the faculty member whose grade is being reviewed is also a department head/school director, the associate dean shall do those things required by the head or director. In the event that the faculty member whose grade is being reviewed is also an associate dean, the academic dean or Provost can name an appropriate substitute to perform the functions of the associate dean as required by this policy.

## **ENDORSEMENT AND CREDENTIALING**

The transcripts of individuals who successfully complete an M.A.Ed. or M.S. degree program in counseling indicate the degree and the program area (School Counseling or Clinical Mental Health Counseling).

Letters of reference in support of employment applications may be requested from the Counseling program faculty members. Professional employment endorsements provided by faculty members will reflect the program emphases, prior training, and experience of the applicants.

Students should keep accurate records of all academic coursework, including course descriptions, a copy of the graduate catalog, and documentation of supervision hours, and professional development activities. These materials may be essential for future evidence of eligibility for professional credentials.

### National Certified Counselor (NCC) and National Counseling Exam (NCE)

Graduates of the M.A.Ed. and M.S. programs in the professional School and Clinical Mental Health Counseling are eligible for credentialing as National Certified Counselors (NCCs) by the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC). An examination, the National Counseling Exam, is required and may be taken prior to graduation because WCU's programs are CACREP accredited. When students become eligible to take the National Counseling Exam (NCE) from NBCC, the WCU Counseling faculty NBCC liaison will provide the necessary forms and information. NBCC also offers specialty certifications in School, Clinical Mental Health Counseling, and Addictions Counseling for which certification as a NCC is prerequisite. Professional School counseling students can apply for certification as Nationally Certified School Counselors when they apply for the NCC and are encouraged to do so. No additional examination is required. Information about NBCC can also be secured by visiting the website or contacting:

NBCC

3 Terrace Way

Greensboro, NC 27403

[http:// www.nbcc.org](http://www.nbcc.org)

### Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor (LCMHC)

Graduates of the M.A.Ed. and M.S. programs in School and Clinical Mental Health Counseling are also eligible to apply to the North Carolina Board of Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors (NCBLPC) for credentialing as Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors (LCMHC) in North Carolina. Such licensure, however, is contingent upon attaining sufficient additional counseling experience to meet the Board's 3000-hour post-master's supervised experience requirement. During this period of time, applicants may be approved to practice under Board-approved supervision and use the designation LCMHCA. The National Counseling Exam (NCE) used for NCC credentialing can be used for LCMHC credentialing. Beginning July, 2022, all applicants must have a master's degree in Counseling (or related degree) from a CACREP-accredited program. Information and applications can be secured by downloading an application from the website or writing to:

North Carolina Board of Licensed Professional Counselors  
PO Box 77819  
Greensboro, NC 27417  
Phone: 844-622-3572  
<http://www.ncblpc.org>

### North Carolina Department of Public Instruction: Licensed School Counselors

Individuals who meet all requirements for licensure in the WCU 60-hour school counseling M.A.Ed. are recommended to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI) for licensure at the advanced degree level. To meet licensure, students must take the counseling portion of the PRAXIS II exam. This can be taken prior to or during enrollment in practicum or internship. Students should apply for DPI licensure early in their last term of enrollment. For information about the licensure process, students should contact the Teacher Licensure Office at WCU:

Ms. Rachel Wike, Licensure Officer  
(828) 227-3431  
Suite 201, Killian  
[rwike@email.wcu.edu](mailto:rwike@email.wcu.edu)  
<http://teacherlicensure.wcu.edu>

### Continuing Education

All licenses and credentials for counseling professionals will need to be periodically renewed. Graduates will need to keep very accurate records of continuing education credits and to be sure to meet the deadlines for renewal. Failure to renew can result in additional fees and forfeiture of credentials. Additional training and/or experience and/or supervision requirements may be needed if graduates choose credentials in addition to LCMHC licensure (e.g., LCAS certificate) and are awarded by the proper certifying agencies.

## PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Affiliation with professional counseling organizations provides students, graduates, and licensed counselors opportunities for professional development and involvement, networking, and paths to advance the counseling profession. Students are encouraged to participate in local, state, regional, and national organizations to remain current in the profession by attending and/or presenting at seminars and conferences, serving on committees and in leadership positions, and writing for professional newsletters and journals. Members of professional organizations receive benefits such as reduced registration fees, access to publications, eligibility for services (e.g., professional liability insurance, legal assistance, etc.), and more. Students are encouraged to meet with faculty and discuss participating and presenting at counseling conferences while in the program.

### American Counseling Association (ACA)

<http://www.counseling.org>

Founded in 1952, ACA is the world's largest professional counseling association. Headquartered at 5999 Stevenson Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia, ACA provides leadership training, continuing education and professional development opportunities, and advocacy services for its members. Information regarding student membership is available from the faculty in the Counseling Program or from the web site (<http://www.counseling.org>). The 20 national divisions (organizational affiliates) of ACA include:

Association for Assessment in Counseling and Education	AACE
Association for Adult Development and Aging	AADA
Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling	ACAC
Association for Creativity in Counseling	ACC
American College Counseling Association	ACCA
Association for Counselors and Educators in Government	ACEG
Association for Counselor Education and Supervision	ACES
Association for Humanistic Counseling	AHC
Society for Sexual, Affectional, Intersex, and Gender Expansive Identities (formerly ALGBTIC)	SAIGE
Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development	AMCD
American Mental Health Counselors Association	AMHCA
American Rehabilitation Counseling Association	ARCA
Assoc. for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling	ASERVIC
Association for Specialists in Group Work	ASGW
Counselors for Social Justice	CSJ
International Association of Addictions and Offender Counselors	IAAOC
International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors	IAMFC
National Career Development Association	NCDA
National Employment Counseling Association	NECA

The counseling faculty at Western Carolina University are members of ACA and a number of its divisions and fully subscribe to the code of ethics under which the organization operates. The

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is now a solely independent organization and no longer a subdivision of ACA. School counseling faculty are also members of ASCA.

The faculty encourages students in the program to join ACA and/or ASCA for their professional development. In addition to obtaining professional insurance via WCU as students prepare to enter field experiences, liability insurance is also available through ACA and ASCA.

North Carolina Counseling Association (NCCA)  
<http://www.nccounseling.org>

The NCCA is the state branch of ACA and seeks to unite all persons engaged or interested in the field of counseling in North Carolina. Through NCCA, counselors from diverse work settings can further their own professional development and promote the field of professional counseling. A student membership is available to students presently engaged in studies in counseling during the current academic year for NCCA and its divisions (similar to ACA's divisions). Applications for membership in NCCA and its divisions may be obtained from their website.

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)  
<http://www.cacrep.org>

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) was created in 1981 to be the independent accrediting arm for the American Counseling Association, a membership organization for over 50,000 practicing counselors. From its inception, CACREP has provided an effective measure of quality assurance for counselor preparation programs.

Western Carolina University's school and clinical mental health (formerly community) counseling programs have been CACREP accredited since 1993. We are currently accredited through October 2023.

### **THE COUNSELING ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Since the spring of 1991, the counseling program hosts an advisory council meeting which is composed of graduates of the program, employers of counselors, field experience supervisors, and students who are currently in the program. Participants represent various levels of involvement in the counseling field (e.g., K-12 schools, college/universities, clinical mental agencies, behavioral health agencies, hospital settings, full- and part-time status, alumni, private and public sector, etc.). Since 2015, the tasks of the Counseling Advisory Council are incorporated into an annual site supervisor symposium meeting. A list of past members on the committee and their terms of appointment can be obtained from the counseling program director (Dr. Melodie Frick) or via the CEAP website: <https://www.wcu.edu/learn/departments-schools-colleges/ceap/about-the-college/index.aspx>

#### Purpose/Tasks of the Advisory Council Meetings:

1. Assist in the development and review of counseling program policies and procedures.
2. Assist in program activities such as recruitment, orientation for new students, and in service training for off-campus practicum and internship supervisors.



3. Serve as resource persons for prospective and current students.
4. Participate in program review and accreditation activities.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### New Student Orientation

At the beginning of each Fall semester, all students newly admitted into the Counseling program receive orientation to the program. Students are given information concerning all aspects of the counseling program. This is an excellent opportunity for students to meet the faculty as well as the other students who are new to the program. Attendance at New Student Orientation is required.

### WCU Student Centers and Support Services

Western Carolina University offers a number of supports for students. Below are current web addresses for WCU Centers as of publishing of this Handbook. Please visit the WCU Homepage for links to the various other campus centers and resources.

### Hunter Library

General website - <http://library.wcu.edu>

Josh Rakower serves as the Reference Librarian for the Counseling program

### Instructional Technology Tools

Canvas – link through main university site – <http://www.wcu.edu>

### Student Support

My WCU – link through main university site – <http://www.wcu.edu>

Writing and Learning Commons - <http://walc.wcu.edu>

Information Technology Help Desk – phone (828) 227-7487

### Student Directory and Email

Early in each fall semester, a student directory is updated by the program director and distributed to all current counseling students via email attachment. If your contact information (postal mail, telephone, or email) change during the year, please contact the Counseling Program Director Melodie Frick ([mhfrick@email.wcu.edu](mailto:mhfrick@email.wcu.edu)), and Student Support Specialist Denise Royer ([droyer@email.wcu.edu](mailto:droyer@email.wcu.edu)). An email distribution list is also used by the Counseling Program Director to communicate programmatic information to students. Students will have the opportunity to opt in or out of this Directory communication system.

The university will use only students' *catamount email* accounts for official communication (including university-wide announcements, individual course scheduling changes, and tuition billing). **It is crucial that students regularly access their catamount email.**

### Counseling Connections newsletter

A program newsletter is published 2-3 times per semester. The editor of the newsletter is a Graduate Assistant position, assigned by faculty. All students and faculty contribute to the content of the newsletter. *Counseling Connections* is distributed to current students via email

attachment and is available on the program's website.

### Financial Aid

Financial aid is available in the form of graduate assistantships, Chancellor's Fellowships, Graduate School Study Grants, and student loans. General information and details concerning financial aid can be found through the WCU Graduate School and/or the financial aid office.

Only full-time students are eligible for graduate assistantships. These assistantships are for the academic year and carry a stipend commensurate with the number of hours the student works. Students with assistantships must maintain an overall 3.0 GPA, and full-time registration in courses (min. 9 hours). With a few exceptions, assistantships offered through the program are available only in Cullowhee and include opportunities for working with faculty, assisting in the office, and/or teaching COUN 140. Teaching assistants are expected to teach one or two sections of COUN 140 per semester at WCU in Cullowhee. COUN 140 is a one semester-hour college transition course for undergraduates. Office, telephone, and clerical support are provided. For more information on graduate assistantships, contact the Counseling Program Director. Graduate Assistantships are highly competitive.

The College of Education and Allied Professions offers scholarships to continuing students. Applications are due by February 1 for awards the following academic year. Access the WCU scholarship application through your MyWCU account.

The Daniel Saddler Scholarship is a Counseling program scholarship endowed by family and friends of Dr. Dan Saddler, WCU Counseling faculty member 1973-1988. This (approximately) \$500 scholarship (exact value varies year to year) was awarded annually 1999-2009, and again 2012-present, to a student who has completed at least 18 hours in the program and has been actively involved in the counseling program and in community activities. Preference is given to part-time students. Recipients of the Dan Saddler Scholarship have included Kelly Moser, Dana Estill, Judy Holt, Roddy Alt, Linda Harrison, Tianbin Fang, Latesha Wiggins, Ilene Procida, Maggie Donahue, Shelley Tom, Jennifer Laite, Sarah Broughton, Tiffany Kinnaird, Hayley Durham, Susan Daily, Laura Alexander, Alex Bass, Chelsea Cumming, and Britta Jones.

The Carole Hearn Curtis Scholarship is a Counseling program scholarship, endowed by family and friends of Carole Hearn Curtis, the late mother of current WCU Counseling faculty, Dr. Russ Curtis. This (approximately) \$500 scholarship (exact value varies year to year) is awarded each spring semester to a student enrolled in internship. The Carole Hearn Curtis Scholarship is awarded annually since in 2011. Past recipients are Amber Henning, Megan Denis, Tiffany Franzo, Maggie Lee, Sam Pranger, Sara Hunter, Hayley Durham, Eduardo Fabian Moreno, Caitlin MacLeod, Jennifer Sutherlin, John Karolewics, and Tyler Oreskovic.

The Mary Deck/Break by the Lake Scholarship is a Counseling program scholarship endowed through the program's Break by the Lake conference and in honor of retired WCU Counseling faculty, Dr. Mary Deck. It is awarded each fall semester to a student with a history in civic/community engagement and enrolled in field experience. The (approximately) \$500 Mary Deck/Break by the Lake Scholarship (exact value varies year to year) is awarded annually since 2011. Past recipients are Jennifer Belham, Autumn Rumfelt, Maegan Brown, Jordan Atkinson,

Allyson Frick, Lauren Myers, Clifton Price, Megan Mastro, Ashley Waters, and Tiffany Owens.

The Mary Wayte Scholarship is a College-wide scholarship available for international students and preference is given to those applicants from the Caribbean and Central and South America. Past counseling program recipients include Lalagay Steelman.

### Advisement and Registration

The program director assigns a student's advisor at the time of admission to a program. It is the responsibility of the student to contact his/her advisor for a conference to plan the course of study. This meeting must take place early in the first semester of enrollment and it should involve planning a tentative schedule of classes to be taken to complete the degree.

Details about WCU Graduate School registration processes, as well as current course scheduling are available on line at <http://registrar.wcu.edu>

### Inactive Status or Leave of Absence

Circumstances may cause students to miss one or more semesters during their course of study. When this occurs, students should contact both their advisor and the program director to discuss options for future continuation in the program. The university requires a full and complete application for re-entry into the program after three consecutive (including summer) non-enrollment semesters. See the grid below to determine when you would have to reapply to the university and program. Please note that there is no guarantee of readmission.

<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer</b>	<b>Fall</b>
<b>Enrolled</b>	Not Enrolled	Not Enrolled	Not Enrolled	<b>Reapply</b>		
	<b>Enrolled</b>	Not Enrolled	Not Enrolled	Not Enrolled	<b>Reapply</b>	
		<b>Enrolled</b>	Not Enrolled	Not Enrolled	Not Enrolled	<b>Reapply</b>

Newly admitted students with extenuating circumstances may defer enrollment for one semester with faculty approval. Students should discuss this with their advisor and Counseling Program Director. For example, if a student is accepted to begin in the Fall semester (August), they may defer to begin in the Spring semester (January) with approval from faculty and based on the extenuating circumstances and contact the Graduate School to defer enrollment to January; however, if they do not begin in January, they must withdraw from the program and re-apply with a full application to be reviewed by February 1. Students re-applying to the program are not guaranteed acceptance back into the program.

### Program Change Procedure

A student wishing to change program emphasis from school to clinical mental health or vice versa should meet with the advisor and counseling program director to discuss change in goals

and implications for the program plan. If the student decides to change program emphasis, a full reapplication to the WCU Graduate School is required as a formality.

### Credit Transfer

In the counseling program, up to 6-hours of graduate credit may be transferred into a degree program provided certain conditions are met. According to the Graduate Catalog, courses accepted for transfer credit must (1) be appropriate to the student's program and be approved by the student's advisor, (2) be completed within the 6-year limit for course work applicable toward the degree, and (3) have been offered by a regionally accredited institution for graduate credit. Coursework used for another completed master's degree may not be transferred into the WCU counseling program.

### Application for Graduation

You must apply for graduation in your penultimate semester or at the start of your final semester. Access the Apply for Graduation link through the university's myWCU system. When you register for your final semester courses (October for Spring; March for Summer/Fall), it is time apply for graduation. Delaying your application for graduation may to delay your degree conferral.

### Counseling Services

Counseling services are available without charge to students in the Counseling programs at Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) on the WCU campus and at the Biltmore Park instructional site.

The main Counseling Center is on campus in Cullowhee on the second floor of Bird Building. It is open from 8:00am to 5:00pm Monday through Friday. Counseling services at the Biltmore Park location are available on select days and times each semester. For more information and/or an appointment at either site, call CAPS at 828-227-7469.

### Career Planning and Placement Services

Career planning and placement services are available to students in the Counseling programs at the Career and Academic Planning Center on the WCU campus and at the Biltmore Park instructional site.

The services provided by the WCU Career and Academic Planning Center include on-campus interviewing, resume referral, letters of reference, interviewing skills assistance, job search assistance, career job listings, and career counseling. For information and/or an appointment on either site, go to <http://careers.wcu.edu> or call 828-227-7133.

## PROGRAM CHECKLISTS

Program advising sheets, checklists, blank semester-by-semester plans, and course offerings conclude this handbook. Students should bring the following checklists to their advising appointments.

### Western Carolina University M.A.Ed. in School Counseling

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Date of admission:</b>
<b>Advisor:</b>	<b>Date of initial planning session:</b>
	<b>Date attended orientation:</b>
<b>Career goal:</b>	
<b>Transfer credit (6 hrs max):</b>	
<b>Other:</b>	

Scheduled	Taken	Grade	Course
			COUN 602: Professional and Ethical Issues in Counseling
			COUN 605: The Helping Relationship
			COUN 610: Family Counseling
			COUN 615: Cross-Cultural Counseling
			COUN 617: Addictions Counseling (or SOCW 520)
			COUN 620: Counseling Children and Adolescents
			COUN 625: Developmental Perspectives of Counseling
			COUN 630: Theories & Techniques of Counseling
			COUN 633: Crisis Intervention and Trauma Therapy
			COUN 635: Group Methods in Counseling
			COUN 640: Assessment in Counseling
			COUN 645: Consultation and Collaboration
			COUN 650: Career Development
			COUN 660: School Counseling Program Development
			COUN 667: The DSM & Effective Treatment Planning in Counseling
			EDRS 602: Methods of Research
			<b>Counseling elective:</b>
			COUN 686: Practicum in Counseling
			COUN 687: Internship in Counseling (6 hours)
			COUN 500: Comprehensive Examination
			<b>Professional development (workshops, conferences, etc.)</b>
			<b>Liability insurance</b>
			<b>Application for graduation</b>
			<b>School Counseling licensure application</b>
			<b>Counseling comprehensive exam</b>
			<b>Praxis II: Guidance and Counseling</b>
			<b>National Counselor Exam (recommended)</b>

### School Counseling Checklist

The following checklist is provided for school counseling students to assist you in monitoring requirements you are to complete as you move through the school counseling program. Review the Student Handbook and talk with your advisor for more details about these requirements.

<u>Requirement</u>	<u>Date completed</u>
✓ Attend required counseling orientation meeting; read handbook thoroughly.	
✓ Meet with advisor during first semester of coursework to overview program plan and program requirements.	
✓ Read handbook for field experience application requirements; attend required practicum informational meeting; meet with advisor prior to submitting <b>application for practicum</b> . Deadlines for applying: September 15 for spring; February 15 for fall.	
✓ Participate in professional development.	
✓ Obtain student liability insurance for field experiences before beginning practicum.	
✓ Read handbook for field experience application requirements; meet with advisor prior to submitting <b>application for internship</b> . Deadlines: September 15 for spring; February 15 for fall.	
✓ Sign up for comprehensive exams early in the semester in which you will be taking comps.	
✓ Take the school counseling portion of the PRAXIS exam, which is required for NC Department of Public Instruction licensure as a school counselor. (Take this exam during practicum or internship.)	
✓ Register for the National Counselor Exam (NCE) the semester prior to entering internship. This is an optional exam, but it is the licensure exam for being a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor (LCMHC) in North Carolina. (Applications will be distributed by faculty.)	
✓ File <b>an application for graduation</b> the semester prior to completing your program, specifically at the time you register for your final semester courses.	
✓ Complete an application and required fee for NC DPI School Counseling Licensure the semester you are completing internship. Secure an application from Rachel Wike, Licensure Specialist, Suite 201 Killian, WCU, 828-227-3431.	

## Western Carolina University

### M.S. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Date of admission:</b>
<b>Advisor:</b>	<b>Date of initial planning session:</b>
	<b>Date attended orientation:</b>
<b>Career goal:</b>	
<b>Transfer credit (6 hrs max):</b>	
<b>Other:</b>	

Scheduled	Taken	Grade	Course
			COUN 602: Professional and Ethical Issues in Counseling
			COUN 605: The Helping Relationship
			COUN 610: Family Counseling
			COUN 615: Cross-Cultural Counseling
			COUN 617: Addictions Counseling (or SOCW 520)
			COUN 623: Introduction to Clinical MH Counseling
			COUN 625: Developmental Perspectives of Counseling
			COUN 630: Theories & Techniques of Counseling
			COUN 633: Crisis Intervention and Trauma Therapy
			COUN 635: Group Methods in Counseling
			COUN 640: Assessment in Counseling
			COUN 650: Career Development
			COUN 667: The DSM & Effective Treatment Planning in Counseling
			EDRS 602: Methods of Research
			<b>Counseling elective 1:</b>
			<b>Counseling elective 2:</b>
			<b>Counseling elective 3:</b>
			COUN 686: Practicum in Counseling
			COUN 687: Internship in Counseling (6 hours)
			COUN 500: Comprehensive Examination
			<b>Professional development (workshops, conferences, etc.)</b>
			<b>Liability insurance</b>
			<b>Application for graduation</b>
			<b>Counseling comprehensive exam</b>
			<b>National Counselor Exam (strongly recommended)</b>

## Clinical Mental Health Counseling Checklist

The following checklist is provided for community counseling students to assist you in monitoring requirements you are to complete as you move through the community counseling program. Review the Student Handbook and talk with your advisor for more details about these requirements.

<u>Requirement</u>	<u>Date completed</u>
✓ Attend required counseling orientation meeting; read handbook thoroughly.	
✓ Meet with advisor during first semester of coursework to overview program plan and program requirements.	
✓ Read handbook for field experience application requirements; attend required practicum informational meeting; meet with advisor prior to submitting <b>application for practicum</b> . Deadlines for applying: September 15 for spring; February 15 for fall.	
✓ Participate in professional development.	
✓ Obtain student liability insurance for field experiences before beginning practicum.	
✓ Read handbook for field experience application requirements; meet with advisor prior to submitting <b>application for internship</b> . Deadlines: September 15 for spring; February 15 for fall.	
✓ Sign up for comprehensive exams through your advisor early in the semester in which you will be taking comps.	
✓ Register for the National Counselor Exam (NCE) the semester prior to entering internship. This is an optional exam, but it is the licensure exam for being a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LCMHC) in North Carolina.	
✓ File an <b>application for graduation</b> the semester prior to completing your program, specifically at the time you register for your final semester courses.	



## Semester-by-Semester Plan

Originally created:
Updated:
Updated:

Summer	Fall	Spring

Summer	Fall	Spring

Summer	Fall	Spring

Summer	Fall	Spring

Summer	Fall	Spring

Summer	Fall	Spring

## **Appendix A**

(Suggested Course Planning Example as Full-Time Student / 2-Year Plan)

\*Course Schedule Subject to Change

### **COUNSELING CURRICULUM**

CMHC and SCH Tracks

**2-year Plan** (3+ courses/semester)

Note: May not take more than 5 courses per semester; 9 hours required for financial aid  
Fall/Spring (min. 3 hrs in summer); 6 hours required for student health insurance

**Summer Before Year 1** (Must have Summer admission term; may take 1-2 courses; 1 recommended)

#### **CMHC track:**

COUN 640: Assessment in Counseling (online)

COUN 650: Career Development (online)\* register for CMHC section

Electives (need three before graduate):

COUN 612: Sexuality in Counseling (elective)

COUN 693: Grief & Loss Counseling

(Additional electives may be available Fall, Spring, and Summer)

#### **SCH track:**

COUN 640: Assessment in Counseling (online)

COUN 650: Career Development (online)\* register for School coun section

Elective (need one before graduate):

COUN 612: Sexuality in Counseling (elective)

COUN 693: Grief & Loss Counseling

(Additional electives will be available Fall, Spring, and Summer)

### **Year 1 Fall**

#### **CMHC track:**

**COUN 602: Professional and Ethical Issues in Counseling**

COUN 605: The Helping Relationship

COUN 623: Introduction to Clinical MH Counseling

COUN 625: Developmental Perspectives of Counseling

#### **SCH track:**

**COUN 602: Professional and Ethical Issues in Counseling**

COUN 605: The Helping Relationship

COUN 625: Developmental Perspectives of Counseling

COUN 660: School Counseling Program Development

### **Year 1 Spring**

#### **CMHC track:**

COUN 615: Cross Cultural Counseling

COUN 617: Addictions Counseling

COUN 630: Theories & Techniques of Individual Counseling

COUN 667: Diagnosis and Treatment Planning in Counseling

\*\*Take COUN 605 if not taken in first Fall semester; if only taking 3 courses- take 605 in lieu of 617 or 667

Optional (select one):

COUN 633: Crisis Intervention and Trauma Therapy (Spring-evening class / Fall-day class)

COUN 640: Assessment in Counseling (online; Spring or Summer)

Elective

### **Year 1 Spring continued**

#### **SCH track:**

COUN 615: Cross Cultural Counseling

COUN 620: Counseling Children and Adolescents

COUN 630: Theories & Techniques of Individual Counseling

COUN 633: Crisis Intervention and Trauma Therapy (Spring-evening class / Fall-day class)

\*\*Take COUN 605 if not taken in first Fall semester in lieu of 633

Optional (select one):

COUN 640: Assessment in Counseling (online; Spring or Summer)

Elective

### **Summer Between Year 1 & 2**

#### **CMHC track:**

COUN 640: Assessment in Counseling (online)

COUN 650: Career Development (online- register for CMHC section)

Electives (need three before graduate)

#### **SCH track:**

COUN 640: Assessment in Counseling (online)

COUN 645: Consultation and Collaboration (online)

COUN 650: Career Development (online- register for School section)

Elective (need one before graduate)

### **Year 2 Fall**

#### **CMHC track:**

COUN 610: Family Counseling

COUN 633: Crisis Intervention & Trauma Therapy (day class; if not taken previous Spring)

COUN 635: Group Methods of Counseling

COUN 686: Practicum in Counseling

Optional (select one):

If already took Crisis, may take EDRS 602

**SCH track:**

COUN 610: Family Counseling

COUN 633: Crisis Intervention and Trauma Therapy (day class; if not taken previous Spring)

COUN 635: Group Methods of Counseling

COUN 686: Practicum in Counseling

If already took Crisis, may take EDRS 602

**Year 2 Spring****CMHC track:**

COUN 500: Comprehensive Exam (zero credit course)

COUN 617: Addictions Counseling (if not already taken)

COUN 687: Internship in Counseling

And if not taken prior to this semester:

EDRS 602: Methods of Research (online)

Elective if offered

**Year 2 Spring continued****SCH track:**

COUN 500: Comprehensive Exam (zero credit course)

COUN 617: Addictions Counseling

COUN 687: Internship in Counseling

COUN 667: Diagnosis and Treatment Planning in Counseling

EDRS 602: Methods of Research (if not already taken)

## Appendix B

### When Courses Offered (Subject to Change)

\*\*Students must discuss course selection with their advisors prior to registering for courses:

#### Fall

COUN 500 Comps (taken last/next to last semester)  
 COUN 602 Professional and Ethical Issues in Counseling  
 COUN 605 The Helping Relationship (prereq for 621, 630, 633, 635, 686, 687)  
 COUN 610 Family Counseling (prereq 630)  
 COUN 623 Introduction to CMH Counseling (evening section only)  
 COUN 625 Developmental Perspectives of Counseling  
 COUN 633 Crisis Intervention and Trauma Therapy (day section only; prereq 605)  
 COUN 635 Group Methods of Counseling (prereq 605 and coreq 630; preferable to take 630 prior to course)  
 COUN 660 School Counseling Program Development (evening section only)  
 COUN 686 Practicum (prereqs needed 602, 605, 615, 623-CMHC, 630, 660-SCH)  
 COUN 687 Internship (evening section only; prereq 686)  
 EDRS 602 Methods of Research (online)  
 Elective (when offered)

#### Spring

COUN 500 Comps (taken last/next to last semester)  
 COUN 605 The Helping Relationship (prereq for 621, 630, 633, 635, 686, 687)  
 COUN 615 Cross Cultural Counseling (prereq for 686)  
 COUN 617 Addictions Counseling  
 COUN 620 Counseling Children and Adolescents (evening section only; required sch course, CMHC elective)  
 COUN 630 Theories & Techniques of Individual Counseling (must have prereq 605; prereq for 610; coreq for 635)  
 COUN 633 Crisis Intervention and Trauma Therapy (evening section only; prereq 605)  
 COUN 635 Group Methods of Counseling (evening section only; prereq 605 and coreq 630; preferable to take 630 prior to course)  
 COUN 640 Assessment in Counseling (online; also offered in summer)  
 COUN 667 Diagnosis and Treatment Planning in Counseling  
 EDRS 602 Methods of Research (online)  
 COUN 686 Practicum (prereq 602, 605, 615, 623-CMHC, 630, 660-SCH)  
 COUN 687 Internship (evening section only; prereq 686)  
 EDRS 602 Methods of Research (online)  
 Elective (when offered)

#### Summer

COUN 640 Assessment in Counseling (online)  
 COUN 645 Consultation and Collaboration (online; sch or licensure-only)  
 COUN 650 Career Development (online; register for CMHC -OR- SCH sections)  
 Electives (only COUN 621: Play Therapy has prereq of 605)  
 EDRS 602 Methods of Research (online)

Electives: (SCH need 1 elective; CMHC need 3 electives and may substitute with 3 LCAS/SCWK courses if pursuing certificate or BHWET grant)

Summer: COUN 612 Sexuality, COUN 621 Play Therapy (prereq 605), COUN 693: Special Topics (when offered)

Spring (alternating topics; TBD)

As offered: COUN 619 Nature as a Metaphor (hybrid), COUN 672 Positive Psychotherapy in Integrated Care (online), and others

COUN 680: Independent Study (counts as elective; with faculty approval)

Notes:

Full-time status: 3 courses or 9+ hours

Part-time status: 1-2 courses or 3-6 hours

To keep student insurance: Need min. 2 courses or 6+ hours

May split COUN 687: Internship in two semesters (register for 3-hr internship section each semester)