

Graduate Student Handbook

Master's Degree in Counseling

East Tennessee State University

Summer & Fall 2025

Revised 4.24.25 RJM

## NOTE

This handbook was updated for students beginning in summer or fall 2025. Students who entered the program prior to summer 2025 should refer to the earlier version of the handbook for the time of your admission. If there are any questions regarding program requirements that arise from discrepancies in prior handbooks, please consult with your advisor. You can also refer to the Counseling Program website at: <http://www.etsu.edu/coe/chs/counseling>.

Though we strive to keep this handbook updated, there are program changes that result in the handbook being outdated from time to time regarding specific points. It is important to check all emails from ETSU Counseling Program faculty and staff so that you are aware of program updates and announcements and to check with your advisor regarding possible changes that have not yet been updated in the handbook.

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## THE COUNSELING PROGRAM

### Overview

The graduate program leading to a Master's degree in Counseling is administered within the Department of Counseling and Human Services. There are approximately 19 full-time members in the Department of Counseling and Human Services, six of whom comprise the counseling faculty. The counseling faculty is responsible for administering the counseling program. The school counseling (SC) program is designed to lead to licensure as a school counselor and the clinical mental health (CMH) concentration is designed to lead to licensure as an LPC-MHSP. This licensure acronym is specific to Tennessee, and our coursework provides the educational foundation needed for equivalent licensure in most states. Course work options are also available under the CMH program of study to be eligible for licensure as a LMFT.

The School Counseling and Community Agency Counseling (now Clinical Mental Health; CMH) options were accredited by The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) for seven years beginning July 1, 1999 and continuing through June 2006. The School Counseling, Clinical Mental Health, Couple and Family (C&F), and Higher Education Counseling (renamed College Counseling and Student Affairs; CCSA) concentrations were re-accredited by CACREP for 8 years continuing through March 2015. The Counseling Program updated the program for the next accreditation cycle, moving to 60 credit hours and updating the names of the concentrations. In July 2015, all four concentrations were accredited for eight years. The Counseling Program updated the program during the next accreditation cycle, moving to the CACREP 2016 Standards and removing the C&F and CCSA concentrations. In July 2023 the program received full accreditation through October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2031.

### Data from Graduates of the Program

The ETSU Graduate School regularly surveys recent alumni in an effort to attain feedback about graduate programs. We also seek feedback from site supervisors (every other year) and alumni and employers (annually). Most recently, site supervisors were surveyed in Fall 2023 and employers and alumni were surveyed in Fall 2024. In general our graduates, site supervisors, and employers of our graduates are pleased with the counseling program. Of the graduates that responded and actively sought counseling positions, the vast majority was successful. The complete results of our latest evaluation and program vital statistics are available on our website under Counseling Program Reports.

## MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

### The Counseling Program

The East Tennessee State University Graduate Program in Counseling is in the Department of Counseling and Human Services within the College of Health Sciences. As part of ETSU, the Counseling Program is committed to diversity and does not discriminate against applicants or students based on age, sex, race, ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, disability, veteran status, gender identity, or sexual/affectional identity.

**The mission of the ETSU Counseling Program is to prepare students to function as knowledgeable, ethical, and effective counselors in a pluralistic society.**

Although each of our counseling faculty have various specialties and interests, the faculty teach and supervise across concentration areas and make every attempt to focus on excellence in the preparation of professional counselors regardless of the setting in which they will be employed. Counseling faculty are committed to creating teaching-learning environments that encourage the active participation of students. Instruction in counseling is founded upon commitment to the following beliefs held by the counselor education faculty at ETSU:

- That the work of the professional counselor is to promote mental health, social and physical well-being, and development of the person, families, organizations, and community with whom the counselor interacts as a professional.
- That counseling is a unique, interactive relationship process which focuses on prevention, problem resolution, mental health, and development by using an understanding of individual, systemic, and social contexts.
- That it is important to aspire to create an atmosphere that promotes self-examination, self-determination, and critical and reflective thinking to facilitate intellectual and emotional development.
- That counselors should continue their own growth, study, and learning throughout their career.
- That a heightened awareness of a multicultural and diverse world and the impact of the dominant culture, the family, and individual behavior on the clients with whom we work, the students we are training, and ourselves is critically important.
- That counselors are called to actionable steps that promote social justice at the client, community, system, and macro levels, which also requires adequate reflection and careful consideration of the interest and welfare of the persons affected by said actions.

The ETSU Counseling Program has traditionally served full-time and part-time students since 1963. Two master's level concentrations are offered – Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling – with the option to take elective coursework in areas such as couple and family counseling, play therapy, telemental health, loss and grief, and nature-based therapy.

**Program Goals:**

The goals of the ETSU Counseling Program are connected to the Program Mission to prepare students to function as knowledgeable, ethical, and effective counselors in a pluralistic society. Thus, all graduates of ETSU's Counseling Program will demonstrate the following:

1. Comprehensive knowledge and skills necessary for success as professional counselors;
2. Ability to form and maintain culturally responsive, developmentally informed, and ethically therapeutic relationships;
3. Knowledge of and adherence to professional counseling dispositions and competent ethical practice; and
4. Awareness of and engagement in professional social justice advocacy.

Additionally, *Clinical Mental Health Counseling Concentration* graduates will be well-skilled in the full range of tasks needed for clinical mental health counseling including interventions for prevention and treatment of a broad range of mental health issues; roles of mental health counselors; and settings and service delivery models, while *School Counseling Concentration* graduates will be well-skilled in the full range of tasks needed to coordinate a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program that addresses the academic, career, and social-emotional development of K-12 students.

The objectives of the M.A. Program in Counseling concentrations are reviewed and updated regularly to reflect the field's ongoing development of knowledge, skills, experiences, and values necessary for counselors to function effectively in the roles for which their program prepare them, as well as to assess successful achievement of Counseling Program goals. These objectives are assessed on a regular basis using feedback from community partners, faculty, students, alumni, field supervisors, and employers of graduates.

**Clinical Mental Health Counseling Concentration Objectives:**

1. Students will demonstrate development of an identity as a professional counselor, which includes knowledge of ethical and legal standards and licensure/credentialing requirements specific to clinical mental health counseling.
2. Students will demonstrate social justice counseling competence, which includes, but is not limited to, areas of multicultural sensitivity, diversity, equity, and inclusion in professional practice.
3. Students will demonstrate knowledge of and effectiveness using essential counseling strategies and techniques for establishing and maintaining ethical and culturally competent therapeutic relationships.
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to consume and critique research to inform counseling practice.
5. Students will demonstrate knowledge of theories and models of clinical and mental health counseling as well as skills for the prevention and treatment of a broad range of mental health issues within a culturally diverse context.

**School Counseling Concentration Objectives:**

1. Students will demonstrate development of an identity as a professional school counselor, which includes knowledge of ethical and legal standards and licensure/credentialing requirements specific to school counseling.
2. Students will demonstrate social justice counseling competence, which includes, but is not limited to, areas of multicultural sensitivity, diversity, equity, and inclusion in professional practice.
3. Students will demonstrate knowledge of and effectiveness using essential counseling strategies and techniques for establishing and maintaining ethical and culturally competent therapeutic relationships.
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to consume and critique research to inform counseling practice within the school setting.
5. Students will demonstrate knowledge of theories and models of school counseling as well as skills necessary for developing and implementing comprehensive school counseling development plans, interventions, and strategies to promote equity across professional school counseling settings.

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## **PROGRAM INFORMATION**

While the information below covers much of the information needed for maneuvering through graduate school, it is by no means complete. Candidates are responsible for being familiar with and following all graduate school admission and retention requirements as stated in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

**1. ADMISSIONS CRITERIA**

Applicants to East Tennessee State University's graduate program in counseling must be a graduate of a regionally accredited college or university. Applicants must submit a completed application, official transcripts of all academic work previously completed, a personal statement, and three letters of reference. Applicants who do not meet the minimum GPA requirement (i.e., GPA below a 3.0) may be considered for admission (a) upon the submission of valid Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores indicating an aptitude for success in graduate school; OR (b) completion of at least 9 hours of graduate coursework with a GPA of at least 3.5 (coursework must be accomplished before applying to the Counseling program).

After a review of the application materials, applicants whose documents indicate a higher potential for success will be invited for an interview with the counseling program faculty for the second round admission review. Students are admitted into the counseling program once a year in the summer and fall semesters. To be considered for summer or fall enrollment, the admission deadline is

February 1<sup>st</sup>.

Because of the importance of interpersonal characteristics in the field of counseling, the interview is a significant component of the admission process of the counseling program. After interviews, candidates will receive a letter regarding admission status. Graduate school policy states that all course requirements for full admission must be completed, "...prior to the completion of 15 graduate credit hours or one calendar year, whichever is later." If a student is conditionally or provisionally admitted for any reason, those conditions or provisions of retaining student status will be specified. The counseling program does not condone or engage in discrimination based on age, color, culture, disability, ethnic group, gender identity, race, religion, sexual/affectional identity, marital status, or socioeconomic status.

Please note that as of 2008 in Tennessee, all approved education training programs (i.e., ETSU) that lead to Tennessee state licensure as a professional educator (including School Counseling) are subject to statute T.C.A. 49-5-5610, a criminal background check and fingerprint sample are required prior to entrance into an approved "teacher" training program. All persons in the School Counseling concentration must submit and clear a criminal background check through the Office of Educator Preparation prior to enrollment in practicum and internship. If a student cannot clear a background check, they will not be able to continue in the school counseling program. See <https://www.etsu.edu/coe/educator-preparation/background.php>

## **2. TIME LIMITS:**

As stated in the graduate school guidelines in the graduate catalog, the time limit for the use of credit for a course toward the master's degree is six years from the date of enrollment in the earliest course applied toward the degree. This time limit includes any courses which are transferred into a program of study. Please note that, unlike an MBA or an MFA, an accredited Counseling Master's degree program is 60 credit hours. Therefore, plan on a program of study that takes at the absolute minimum two years, and most likely will take 2 ½ to 3 years to complete.

## **3. CONCENTRATIONS:**

The Counseling Program offers two concentrations: Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMH) and School Counseling (SC). Emphasis is placed upon assisting students to develop a broad range of counseling skills that are applicable in a variety of professional settings. A minimum of 60 semester hours is required to receive a Master of Arts (M.A.) degree, which can be completed with or without a thesis. Students who change concentrations after acceptance into the program or who change the degree sought must complete change of option/degree forms with the graduate school regarding these changes. See the Graduate Studies website.

Although the ETSU graduate school only allows students to have one concentration, students can opt to take coursework to fulfill requirements needed for licensure in both school and clinical counseling. If a student is pursuing licensure in both school and clinical counseling, the student must be enrolled in the school counseling concentration. Students who pursue this option should consult with their advisor immediately about arranging their program of study to fulfill licensure requirements, especially if they are using federal financial aid to pay for coursework.

### **Clinical Mental Health Counseling Concentration**

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling concentration prepares students for counseling in settings such as community mental health agencies, private practice, drug and alcohol abuse centers, correctional facilities, human service agencies, psychiatric hospitals, religious organizations, and hospice services. The Clinical Mental Health Counseling option was accredited by The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) beginning July 1, 1999 and has maintained accreditation since then, currently continuing through October 2031. This concentration is designed to prepare students for eligibility in Tennessee as a Licensed Professional Counselor with the Mental Health Service Provider designation (LPC-MHSP) and equivalent licensure most other states. Students are eligible to complete the National Counseling Exam in their final semester and are encouraged to do so as part of their preparation toward meeting the requirements for state licensure, including temporary licensure, as professional counselors. See the section on Licensure Information for additional information concerning state licensure requirements.

### **School Counseling Concentration**

The School Counseling concentration prepares individuals for employment as counselors in entry-level positions in public elementary, middle, and high schools (K-12). The School Counseling option was accredited by The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) beginning July 1, 1999 and has maintained accreditation since then, currently continuing through October 2031. Graduates will be adequately prepared to design, implement, and evaluate school counseling programs consistent with the current models of school counseling described by the Tennessee Department of Education and the American School Counseling Association. Per Tennessee State regulations, a cleared background check is required for all School Counseling students. In addition to counseling program requirements, student must take and pass the PRAXIS II to be eligible for school counseling licensure in TN. Graduates will meet requirements for licensure as Pre-K through 12 school counselors in Tennessee as established by the Tennessee Department of Education (reciprocity exists with Virginia and North Carolina as well).

## **4. ADVISEMENT:**

Upon acceptance into the Counseling program, each candidate is assigned a faculty advisor. The student can work with their advisor to prepare a tentative plan of study. Students are advised to define their career goals and to select electives relevant to those goals to supplement the required courses. Students are encouraged to refer to the Approved Electives document and can also pursue

additional elective options with advisor approval. Elective coursework can be taken in other graduate programs, including Individual, Family, and Community Sciences (IFCS), Social Work, Psychology, Women Gender and Sexuality Studies, Criminal Justice, Special Education, and Early Childhood Education. **Click to move to the [list of Counseling courses and when they are offered](#), and click to move to the section with the [concentration specific program of study forms](#).**

For a 60-credit hour program, full-time students require a minimum of six to seven semesters to complete their program and part-time students require eight to ten semesters to complete their program. Graduate full-time status is nine credit hours in fall and spring, and six credit hours in summer. As you plan your program of study, keep in mind that each credit hour of a course approximates 2-3 hours of work outside of class per week (e.g., a 3-credit hour course equates to 6-9 hours of coursework outside of class meetings). Therefore, if you have a full time Graduate Assistantship (i.e., 20 hours/week) and take 9 credit hours of courses, that equates to a full-time job. Clinical courses require even more time outside of class: plan for an additional 6-10 hours per week during practicum and 15-20 hours per week during both semesters of internship.

### **5. TRANSFER OF CREDIT:**

As stated in the graduate school guidelines, candidates may petition for the transfer of a maximum of fifty percent of the total required hours of graduate credit from ETSU prior to admission to the counseling program or from other regionally accredited institutions (if grades of "A" or "B" were received). Transfer credit must be less than six years old at the time of program completion in order to be applied toward degree requirements. For additional information concerning transfer of credit, see the graduate school guidelines in the front of the Graduate Catalog and ask your advisor about the Counseling Program Transfer Credit Policy. \*Although the Graduate School policy allows for a maximum of fifty percent of the total required hours, any requests for transfer credit must be approved by the Counseling Program faculty and be in accordance with the Counseling Program Transfer Credit Policy, which limits transfer credit to nine (9) graduate credit hours.

Students may pursue taking elective coursework at other institutions and transferring the credit. For example, if there is an area of specialization that is not offered at ETSU, students may look for a course at another CACREP accredited program and submit the course syllabus to their advisor for potential approval as an elective. Students who are interested in this option and/or would like more information, please consult with your advisor.

As stated in the Graduate Catalog, the graduate school allows students to take up to nine hours of graduate course work prior to entering the program; however, enrollment in a class without being admitted to the program is on a space available basis only. Due to excessive class enrollments, candidates admitted to the program will be given priority over students not admitted to the program for counseling class admission. Therefore, students who take classes with intentions of being admitted into the program should seek admission into the program at the earliest possible date. These courses, taken prior to admission, are considered transfer classes.

### **6. THESIS OPTION:**

Students may obtain a Master of Arts (M.A.) degree with or without completing a thesis. If the thesis is not completed within the semester in which thesis (5960) hours were first registered, students are required to register for one hour of "Readings and Research" (5990) every semester until the thesis is completed. Students who choose to do a thesis must pass a Thesis Defense during the semester they are enrolled in COUN 5960. Students who are interested in completing a thesis are encouraged to talk with their advisor as early as possible to prepare their program of study accordingly.

### **7. EXIT REQUIREMENTS/COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS:**

As stated in the Graduate Catalog, candidates must complete the program with at least a 3.0 GPA. In addition, all candidates must pass a comprehensive examination. Students are required to take the Counselor Education Comprehensive Exam (CECE), which is a standardized test created by a cooperative of counselor educators. The CECE is offered on campus once every fall, spring, and summer semester. Students are encouraged to take the CECE the semester before they intend to graduate, so that there is an opportunity for one retake of the exam if needed without delaying graduation. Information about registration for the CECE will be announced early each semester via email and it is the student's responsibility to register for the exam by the deadlines provided in informational emails. The CECE can be expected to be offered around the end of October, the end of March, and mid-July. An announcement of the specific dates and procedures will be made via the program D2L newsfeed. Students have two opportunities to take and pass the CECE. Any potential exceptions to this policy may be considered on a case by case basis. Students requesting an appeal need to contact the faculty CECE coordinator.

### **8. INTENT TO GRADUATE AND COMPLETED DEGREE WORKS:**

Students are required to file a **Graduate Application form** that can be found on the graduate school forms page under "Forms Initiated by Students." This form does not require faculty signatures and is completed online. This form must be submitted early; it is important that students check emails from the ETSU Graduate School so that they do not miss deadlines, including the deadline for the application to graduate. **Important note:** The Graduate Application form does not "roll over" from semester to semester. That is, if you do not graduate in the semester for which you first filed the form, you must file the form again for the semester that you do graduate.

Prior to graduation, the ETSU Graduate Specialists will complete a final review of each student's Degree Works for completion of program requirements. Students will likely need their advisor to complete a Change in Program-Courses form to have approved electives and/or course substitutions populate in their Degree Works. This form can be found on the [School of Graduate Studies forms](#) webpage under the Coordinator tab. This form is used (a) for course substitutions and (b) for entering electives toward your program

of study. You must request your advisor complete this form in order for electives and course substitutions to be included in Degree Works (necessary for graduation).

- (a) Course substitutions: If you take a class that is an approved substitution for a required course in your program of study, then you need to email your advisor and request that they complete the form. Provide your advisor with the following information: the course code, ID number, and title for the course you took; and the course code, ID number, and title for the course that is being substituted.
- (b) Electives: Degree Works will populate your program of study with your electives in some circumstances. However, if your electives do not populate in Degree Works (i.e., they will be listed at the bottom as “free electives”), you will need to request that your advisor enter your electives via the Change in Program-Course form. In addition, if you take more than 60 credit hours, then your advisor will need to complete the Change in Programs-Courses form and enter in only the electives that satisfy the requirements for your concentration. When you request your advisor complete this form, you need to send the following information: the course code, ID number, title, number of credit hours, and term (semester/year) for each elective to be added.

## **9. PROGRESS EVALUATION AND RETENTION:**

**As stated in the Graduate Catalog:** To remain in good standing, a graduate student (degree or non-degree), must maintain an overall grade point average of 3.0 (B) or better on all graduate work attempted. In order to graduate, students must have a minimum 3.0 grade point average overall, and on the program of study. When the cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0, the graduate student will be placed on academic probation. If the student does not achieve a 3.0 cumulative grade point average at the conclusion of one probationary semester, the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and appropriate college/departamental/program officials will determine whether the student should be dismissed from graduate study at East Tennessee State University or allowed to continue on probation. No student will be allowed more than two probationary semesters, whether consecutive or cumulative. At the end of a second probationary semester a student whose cumulative grade point average is still below 3.0 will be dismissed from graduate study. Students whose performance results in a GPA so far below 3.0 as to make it mathematically impossible to attain an overall GPA of 3.0 after one semester may be subject to dismissal without a probationary term. A student will be removed from probationary status upon attaining a cumulative 3.0 grade point average. When an “I” grade converts to an “F” after one calendar year, the GPA is adjusted retroactively; consequently, a student may be subject to dismissal without a probationary term.

**Additional program retention/dismissal information:** A Master’s degree in counseling is not granted on the basis of a collection of credits in prescribed courses. Multiple criteria, including professional dispositions, are used in admission to the program, continuance in the program, and graduation (see criteria as follows). Admission to the program does not guarantee continuance in the program, nor does successful completion of academic work. Practicum and Internship course work is typically completed last in the program and it is here that the most direct measures of counseling ability are assessed. In an effort to avoid having students reach this point in the program only to meet with failure or dismissal, and in agreement with the Ethical Guidelines of the American Counseling Association (ACA), the ETSU Counseling Program has developed a student evaluation procedure and a dismissal policy.

**Evaluation Procedures:** Every student will have a Professional Development Plan that will be used to monitor and support the student’s growth in the Counseling Program. The Professional Development Plan is an ongoing, continuous process the Counseling Program engages in to identify, acknowledge, and attend to each student’s strengths and growth areas as they progress in their program of study. At minimum, each student will participate in the Professional Development Plan review process three times during their program of study, including one in-person meeting with faculty. The review process involves formal feedback from faculty about the student’s progress in the counseling program and is completed with the intention of facilitating student growth and development. It is also possible that students will receive formal feedback and the implementation of a professional development plan (i.e., a remediation plan) from faculty at additional times during the student’s program of study, including but not limited to additional meetings with faculty.

**Dismissal Procedures:** If a problem arises which is ongoing or is considered critical, it may warrant probation or dismissal. Faculty will meet with the students and provide verbal and written documentation of concerns and issues. The student will be given the opportunity in the meeting to respond, a plan will be made for resolution, and a timeline established to allow for changes prior to determining further action. ***There may be cases where the critical nature of the problem will lead to immediate dismissal.*** If, after discussion, the faculty believe that sufficient and timely progress toward resolution of the identified problem(s) has not taken place, and if the faculty agree that the student will not be able to successfully achieve the academic progress, counseling skills, professional and ethical behaviors, and/or intrapersonal and interpersonal effectiveness objectives needed to be successful in the program and in the profession, then a recommendation for dismissal of the student will be communicated to the student. This action will take place only after a majority vote of the faculty has supported the recommendation of dismissal. The student has the right to an appeal process as detailed in the ETSU Graduate Catalog.

**ACA Codes of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Section F: Supervision, Training, and Teaching:** The ETSU Counseling Program faculty abide by the ACA 2014 Codes of Ethics and Standards of Practice. See Section F.6 Counseling Supervision



Evaluation, Remediation, and Endorsement and Section F.9 for Evaluation and Remediation of Students. Section F.9.a. states, “Counselor educators clearly state to students, prior to and throughout the training program, the levels of competency expected, appraisal methods, and timing of evaluations for both didactic and clinical competencies. Counselor educators provide students with ongoing feedback regarding their performance throughout the training program.” Section F.9.b. states, “Counselor educators, through ongoing evaluation, are aware of and address the inability of some students to achieve counseling competencies. Counselor educators do the following: 1. assist students in securing remedial assistance when needed, 2. seek professional consultation and document their decision to dismiss or refer students for assistance, and 3. ensure that students have recourse in a timely manner to address decisions requiring them to seek assistance or to dismiss them and provide students with due process according to institutional policies and procedures.”

**Criteria for Student Evaluation (Counseling Professional Development Plan):** As stated above, student evaluations for retention in the program will include criteria other than academic performance. The primary consideration in determining the student’s suitability for the counseling profession is the ability to facilitate the client’s growth and development. The counseling faculty is committed to retaining students who demonstrate the ability to be effective and ethical with clients. To achieve these ends, the following attributes are taken into account the duration of the program, including at designated times of professional development evaluation:

Ethical Behavior: Behaves in accordance with the 2014 *Code of Ethics* of the American Counseling Association.

Professional Behavior: Relates to peers, faculty, staff, clients, and others in an appropriate professional manner.

Academic Behavior: Demonstrates academic integrity, professionalism, and a commitment to learning, including such things as class attendance, punctuality, collaboration, active participation, promptness, honor, and diligence.

Professional Maturity: Able to apply values and beliefs that reflect sound decisions.

Professional Boundaries: Maintains appropriate boundaries with supervisors, peers, clients, and others.

Integrity: Does not exploit or mislead other people during or after professional relationships.

Awareness of Limitations: Demonstrates awareness of personal and professional limitations as these relate to service provision.

Self-Awareness: Explores and addresses any personal issues that may impair counseling performance.

Self-Control: Appropriately controls anger and other impulses in relationships with peers, faculty, staff, clients, and others.

Avoidance of Imposing Values: Takes appropriate precautions to avoid imposing one’s personal beliefs and values on others.

Use of Feedback: Invites, receives, integrates and uses feedback from peers, faculty, and supervisors.

Honoring Rights: Honors the rights of others to privacy, confidentiality, and choices regarding self-determination.

Embracing Diversity: Affirms cultural and individual differences in professional interactions, demonstrates the ability to work effectively with diverse populations, and appreciates and values the richness that can extend from diversity.

Contributions to the Learning Environment: Contributes to others’ sense of personal safety and security by promoting the classroom as a safe haven.

Openness to Suggestions and New Ideas: Displays openness to recommendations for enhancing academic performance and intellectual curiosity.

Responsiveness: Reacts and adapts quickly and effectively in the present moment, including changing circumstances, unexpected events, and new situations.

Initiative: Able to assess the needs of a variety of circumstances and act on them independently.

Attentiveness: Able to attend and listen with clients, peers, faculty, supervisors, and others.

Genuineness: Able to be honest and congruent with oneself and others.

Acceptance: Able to treat all persons as worthy and deserving.

Openness: Able to be real and immediate with clients, peers, faculty, supervisors, and others.

Empathy: Able to see the world from another’s frame of reference in a manner that fosters acceptance and growth.

Affect: Able to be emotionally available to clients, peers, faculty, supervisors, and others in appropriate ways.

Cognition: Able to work effectively with clients, peers, faculty, supervisors, and others in the cognitive domain.

Self-Disclosure: Able to share appropriate personal experiences with clients and others when to do so results in growth and awareness for the other individual.

Evaluation concerning the above attributes is based, in part, on course work that involves class participation and activities, role playing situations, interactions among students, and responses to discussion of issues concerning development in relation to the role of counselor. Although this evaluation typically takes place in a formal classroom situation, it is possible that the evaluation of personal development as a counselor may be separated from the academic evaluation upon which a grade is derived. **Thus, it is possible that a student may receive a passing academic grade—even a top academic grade—and still have difficulty demonstrating appropriately the characteristics necessary to become an effective counselor.**

The counseling faculty have a professional and ethical responsibility to carefully consider any characteristics or behaviors which may influence work with clients. Some additional areas that may lead to a concern are: addictive behaviors, current illegal behaviors, beliefs and behaviors that are oppressive to individuals or groups, and behaviors which suggest possible danger to self or others. Additionally, the faculty reserve the right to consider data regarding student attitudes and behaviors from a variety of sources including public records, professional communications, and direct observation. Students are expected to develop ongoing ways of addressing personal issues, coping effectively with stresses as they arise without interference of professional functioning, expanding knowledge and skill, and taking full advantage of learning opportunities provided by supervision.

## **10. PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE:**

Students are required to complete practicum in which they must demonstrate a minimum level of counseling skills through direct counseling. The ability to counsel using appropriate communication skills is demonstrated through face-to-face interaction with clients. All students must complete one, three credit hour counseling practicum. Each student must accrue a minimum of 100 practicum hours of which 40 hours will be direct service to clients. The counseling practicum will be completed simultaneously at ETSU under the supervision of the course instructor and at a field site under the supervision of a site supervisor. Counseling sessions are critiqued and feedback is provided by the course instructor and site supervisor. Prior to practicum, ALL students must complete COUN 5555: Counseling Process and Skills; COUN 5430: Legal, Ethical, and Professional Issues in Counseling; and one theories course (either COUN 5420: Theories and Practice-Couples and Families or COUN 5550: Theories and Practice-Individuals) with a grade of B or better. Students are required to take the other theory course prior to or as a co-requisite with COUN 5570 and prior to COUN 5880: Internship in Counseling. School counseling students who plan on completing their practicum in a K-12 school must have a clear background check prior to being placed in a school. See <https://www.etsu.edu/coe/educator-preparation/background.php>

COUN 5570: Supervised Counseling practicum is a permit-only course, meaning that students will only be able to register for this course if a permit has been issued. As a result, ALL students intending to take COUN 5570 during the upcoming semester MUST complete and submit the Counseling Program Practicum and Internship Application by the deadline to secure a spot in practicum. Students are required to apply for practicum well in advance so that the program can plan the number of practicum sections in accordance with CACREP required faculty-student ratios. The application is submitted online to the Director of Field Experience. Discussing practicum and internship with faculty, your advisor, or the Director of Field Instruction does not constitute admission into the course; a completed application is required. After the application deadline, the Director of Field Experience will review the applications to ensure that students have successfully completed all prerequisites prior to taking practicum (or will have successfully completed requirements by the start of the practicum semester). If approved, students will be placed in a section of practicum. If a student decides not to enroll in practicum during the semester for which they applied, the student should notify the Director of Field Experience as soon as possible. Students are required to attend the Field Experience Orientation Meeting the semester prior to enrolling in practicum. The dates and times of the meeting will be sent to students via email, and it is the responsibility of students to make note of the time and date and to make arrangements to attend.

**\*\*See the Practicum Handbook on D2L for more information.**

## **11. INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE:**

All students are required to complete two semesters of internship (3 credits for each course – 6 credits total) after the successful completion of practicum. The total completed internship consists of 600 clock hours of supervised work in a setting appropriate to the student's concentration. A minimum of 240 clock hours of the 600 are to be direct service to clients. Students are also required to receive one hour per week of individual clinical supervision from their site supervisor and an average of one and a half hours of group supervision per week from their course instructor.

Prior to internship, ALL students must complete COUN 5555: Counseling Process and Skills; COUN 5430: Legal, Ethical, and Professional Issues in Counseling; COUN 5550: Theories and Practice-Individuals; COUN 5420: Theories and Practice-Couples and Families; COUN 5100: Groups-Process and Practice; and COUN 5570: Supervised Counseling Practicum with a grade of B or better. Students in the clinical mental health concentration are required to take COUN 5825: Developmental Psychopathology for Counselors prior to or as a co-requisite with the first semester of COUN 5880. Students in the school counseling concentration must complete COUN 5561: Counseling Techniques with Children and Adolescents; COUN 5010: Principles and Trends of School Counseling; and COUN 5020: School Counseling Program Development and Implementation (encouraged as a co-requisite with COUN 5880). In addition, school counseling students must have a current, clear background check prior to being placed in a K-12 school. See <https://www.etsu.edu/coe/educator-preparation/background.php>

Students have a number of locations from which to choose to complete their internship experience and are encouraged to discuss available opportunities with the Director of Field Experience. Summer internships may be available for students enrolled in the clinical mental health concentration. School counseling internships during the summer are discouraged. **It is ultimately the student's responsibility to make certain that their internship site and experience meets the standards of licensure they will be seeking after graduation.**

COUN 5880: Internship in Counseling is a permit-only course, meaning that students will only be able to register for this course if a permit has been issued. As a result, ALL students intending to take COUN 5880 during the upcoming semester MUST complete and

submit the Counseling Program Practicum and Internship Application by the deadline to secure a spot in internship. Students are required to apply for internship well in advance so that the program can plan the number of internship sections in accordance with CACREP required faculty-student ratios. The application is submitted online to the Director of Field Experience. Discussing practicum and internship with faculty, your advisor, or the Director of Field Instruction does not constitute admission into the course; a completed application is required. After the application deadline, the Director of Field Experience will review the applications to ensure that students have successfully completed all prerequisites prior to taking internship (or will have successfully completed requirements by the start of the internship semester). If approved, students will be placed in a section of internship. If a student decides not to enroll in internship during the semester for which they applied, the student should notify the Director of Field Experience as soon as possible. Students are required to attend the Field Experience Orientation Meeting the semester prior to enrolling in internship. The dates and times of the meeting will be sent to students via email, and it is the responsibility of students to make note of the time and date and to make arrangements to attend.

**\*\* See the *Internship Handbook on D2L* for more information.**

## **12. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Financial assistance for graduate students is available through graduate assistantships, federal and state grants, other scholarships, loans, and campus employment. This Handbook provides brief information about the most common student employment positions that offer tuition waivers: Graduate Assistantships (GA). However, see the ETSU Graduate School webpage for the most current information on GA positions, the GA Handbook, and a regularly updated listing of available positions:

<https://www.etsu.edu/gradschool/funding/gats.php>

There are a variety of GA positions across campus. GA positions can be full time, part time, 9-month, or 12-month. It is important to pay attention to the GA description and discuss the specifics about each position with the GA supervisor at the time of interview or hire. Students with a GA are required to maintain full time student status (i.e., 9 credits during fall and spring; 6 credits during summer if the GA is a 12-month position). If a student's GPA drops below 3.0, they will not be allowed to continue their GA. Students who receive a GA are given six semesters of eligibility. Out-of-state students who have a GAs during the spring semester can take summer courses at in-state prices during that same year. Students might need to contact the graduate school to have their summer tuition adjusted.

Grants, loans, scholarships, and campus employment are all handled through the financial aid office. There are many possibilities for financial aid and students are encouraged to call and make an appointment with the financial aid office for forms, information, and counseling. Information about possible scholarships, grants, loans, and student service positions can be found here:

<https://www.etsu.edu/finaid/typesaid/default.php>.

## **13. ENDORSEMENT**

When seeking an internship placement site and upon graduation, students are endorsed and recommended only for placements and positions for which they are prepared by education, training, and personal qualifications. Licensure standards specifically require certain course and practicum/internship work and hours and, likewise, the counseling program only endorses students for licenses for which they are qualified. The specific requirements for school counselor's license, LPC-MHSP, and LMFT are distinct. However, students occasionally desire to attain all of the necessary requirements for licensure in more than one area. The counseling faculty will work with students and help them plan a curriculum which can make this possible with the least amount of additional course work and practicum/internship placements.

On occasion, school counseling students may find possible job opportunities (or be recruited) and be encouraged to apply for a school counseling position prior to degree completion under the auspices of "alternative licensure" or a "job embedded position." Our counselor education program does not endorse students for alternative licensure or embedded positions unless they are in internship and meet other requirements. There are very limited circumstances under which a student can be placed in an embedded position without jeopardizing their potential for licensure. Students who are approached about alternative licensure or an embedded position should contact their advisor. See the section on Licensure for School Counselors for more details.

## **14. PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Within mental health, there are a number of professional organizations which work to support professionals in the field through conferences, publications, legislative agendas, etc. Students are encouraged to join the professional organization which best suites their professional goals. While not an exhaustive list, below are some professional organizations that students might consider joining that support the various options in the program.

American Counseling Association (ACA)  
6101 Stevenson Ave., Suite 600  
Alexandria, VA 22304-3303  
1-800-347-6647 [www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org)

American School Counselors Association (ASCA)  
1101 King Street, Suite 310  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
(703) 683-ASCA [www.schoolcounselor.org/](http://www.schoolcounselor.org/)

American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA): <http://www.amhca.org>  
American Association for Marriage & Family Therapy (AAMFT) [www.aamft.org](http://www.aamft.org)  
American College Counseling Association (ACCA) [www.collegecounseling.org](http://www.collegecounseling.org)  
American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA) [www.amhca.org](http://www.amhca.org)

American College Personnel Association (ACPA) [www.myacpa.org](http://www.myacpa.org)  
 National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) [www.nbcc.org](http://www.nbcc.org)  
 Tennessee Counseling Association (TCA) [www.tncounselors.org](http://www.tncounselors.org)  
 Tennessee Licensed Professional Counselors Association (TLPCA) <https://tlpca.net/>  
 Watauga Counseling Association (WCA) <https://wataugacounseling.wordpress.com/>

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## LICENSURE INFORMATION

Licensure is separate from earning a degree. There are post-degree requirements to obtaining licensure, which is standard practice and vary by state. We continue to work to meet TN state requirements. This section offers students an introduction to the licensure process. However, the final word on the necessary requirements for licensure is with the state and the appropriate licensing bodies. Students should refer to their state licensing boards and the most current laws as the ultimate sources of information. As the current laws are written, those who plan to work in community agencies, private practice, or the schools and who are not specifically excluded from licensure by the law (e.g. ministers), will be required to obtain licensure in at least one area. Licensure in one area will, in most instances, eliminate the need for licensure in another area. One of the reasons for licensure is to establish a credential which may lead to third party payments from insurance companies. While some insurance companies may not pay master's level practitioners, most companies do. In Tennessee there is no law requiring insurance companies to reimburse master's level practitioners for services rendered.

### **Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and LPC – Mental Health Service Provider (LPC-MHSP) in Tennessee**

This is the license that carries the word "Counselor" in the title and is, thus, created and maintained by counselors in the state. Licensure with the mental health service provider designation (LPC-MHSP) is the top tier of licensure in Tennessee and allows for full practice privileges (i.e., prevent, diagnose, and treat mental, emotional or behavioral disorders and associated disorders which interfere with mental health). The LPC-MHSP is important because most jobs require the aforementioned full practice privileges, and it will be the type of licensure required to participate in the Counseling Compact, which should go into effect in 2025. Licensure without the mental health service provider designation will be phased out by the Tennessee board. Therefore, in this handbook we provide information solely about the LPC-MHSP in Tennessee.

To qualify as a LPC-MHSP students must obtain a minimum of 60 graduate hours in counseling, including 9 graduate credit hours in course work pertaining to assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of DSM disorders. Our program is designed to meet these standards; see the chart below. To obtain an LPC-MHSP, applicants need a minimum of 500 clock hours in a supervised field experience (practicum or internship), of which at least 300 hours must be completed in a mental health or community agency setting. This is accomplished during the program. In addition, applicants must have at least two years post master's supervised professional experience, pass licensing exams and the state jurisprudence exam, and complete a criminal background check. Graduates who have passed the NCE can apply for a temporary license while attaining their two years post-masters degree experience. The temporary license should grant virtually all of the status of the full license except the need for supervision. Although historically it has rarely been necessary to obtain temporary licensure for residency employment in TN, future trends indicate that temporary licensure will become more common in TN. Therefore, graduates are encouraged to consider applying for temporary licensure upon completion of all coursework and passing of the NCE.

Tennessee rules and regulations for LPC-MHSPs require certain standards for the post master's work settings. Note that elementary and high school settings do not qualify as appropriate post-masters settings for LPC-MHSP. School counselors seeking LPC-MHSP must meet the course requirements and have two years post-masters experience in a clinical mental health setting. Consequently, school counselors seeking LPC-MHSP typically must extend their program of study to also meet the requirements for LPC-MHSP licensure.

Students are strongly encouraged to become familiar with the Board of Licensed Professional Counselors, Licensed Marital and Family Therapists and Licensed Pastoral Therapists website (<https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/health-professional-boards/pcmft-board/pcmft-board/licensure.html>), where you can find current information on types of licensure, requirements for each type of licensure (including fees), and apply online for licensure.

In order to become an LPC-MHSP in the state of Tennessee you need to take three exams: the National Counselors Exam (NCE), the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Exam (NCMHCE), and the Tennessee Jurisprudence exam. Below is an outline of options for taking the NCE. Please note that prices current at the time of writing and may change over time.

1. You can take the NCE before you graduate via a collaboration between our counseling program and NBCC. The test is offered twice a year, in April and October, and you have to sign up about four months in advance. It currently costs \$335.00 for both the NCE and the National Certified Counselor (NCC) credential, which is the "package deal" offered to students while they are still enrolled in a counseling program. Announcements typically go out in December and January for the April test date and in June for the October test date. After applying to take the exam, you will receive more information from NBCC about scheduling this exam at the local Pearson VUE testing center during a designated five-week window. The advantage of taking the NCE while in the program is that you get the exam done while the material is fresh in your mind and you get the NCC credential at reduced cost. However, you can opt to take the NCE with or without the package deal to get the NCC credential. Being an NCC does not mean you have a national

license; it is a voluntary credential that has different implications in different places. Some states do require the NCC credential for licensure and some states (e.g., NV, MS, SD) give school counselors a salary increase if they have the credential. Some states and employers prefer counselors in residency (pre-licensure) to have an NCC. Although the NCC can be a nice addition to your resume and an indicator that you have passed a licensing exam, it is currently not critical for getting a job in TN. However, it is required for temporary licensure, which is becoming more common in TN during the residency period.

2. You can also take the NCE after you graduate, during your post master's experience. To do this you register for the NCE "for the purposes of state licensure" through the NBCC website (<http://www.nbcc.org/Licensure/ExamRegistration>), which will take you to the ProCounselor website where you will need to create an account. You will be required to pay for the exam (\$275) before being able to see information about testing dates and locations, and you will have six months from when you pay for the exam to take it at a Pearson VUE testing center. Information about the NCE, including the content covered and sample questions, can be found on the NBCC website (<http://www.nbcc.org/Exams/NCE>). You can choose to also apply for the NCC at the same time when you take the NCE after graduation; applying for both at the same time after graduation will cost \$375. If you decide to take the NCE after graduation and not apply for the NCC credential, and later you decide you want or need it, you can apply later to get the NCC. Applying later (after graduating from a CACREP accredited program and after passing the NCE) costs \$250. Please keep in mind that all licenses and certifications that you obtain typically require continuing education and annual or biannual fees to maintain. Maintaining your status as an NCC will cost \$85 per year. See here for FAQs about the NCC: <https://www.nbcc.org/resources/nccs/faq>.

In summary, you can choose to take the NCE (exam) as a student or after you graduate. You can choose whether or not you want to obtain the NCC (credential) and can do so after you graduate. If you want the NCE + NCC package deal, then you need to register to take the NCE while you are still a graduate student.

#### Summary Quick FAQs about the NCE and NCC:

##### National Counselor Examination (NCE)

- Required for licensure as a professional counselor in Tennessee, including temporary licensure.\*
- Required for licensure in many states but not all states.
- You can take the NCE while you are a student or during your residency.
- Costs \$275 (in TN) to take it after you graduate.
- If you take it while a student, you get a "package deal" with the NCC.
- You can find information about the NCE, including the exam handbook and study guide information, at the NCE website: <https://www.nbcc.org/exams/nce>.

*\*Temporary licensure is not typically required for most residency jobs in TN. Temporary licensure may be required for jobs in other states. Temporary licensure requirements in other states (like NC) may differ, so it is always best to check the licensure boards of states where you are interested in seeking employment).*

##### National Certified Counselor (NCC)

- It is not a part of the licensure process.
- This is a voluntary certification that is beneficial in some states.
- If you register to take the NCE as a student, you get this as a package deal (NCE + NCC) for \$335.
- If you apply for it later, after you are licensed, it costs \$250.
- Certifications like this typically have annual maintenance fees.
- There is additional information in the program handbook about the NCC. You can make the decision that is right for you about whether or not to pay for this credential.

After passing the NCE and graduating from the program, you can then apply and register for the NCMHCE (\$275) and the Jurisprudence exam (\$100). You cannot take the Jurisprudence without first passing either the NCE or the NCMHCE. Information about the NCMHCE, including an exam handbook, can be found here (<http://www.nbcc.org/Exams/NCMHCE>) and information about the Jurisprudence exam can be found here (<https://www.cce-global.org/AssessmentsAndExaminations/Jurisprudence>). The Jurisprudence is a 30-question true/false exam. To prepare, review the ACA Code of Ethics and the Rules Governing Professional Counselors found here (<https://publications.tnsosfiles.com/rules/0450/0450.htm>).

**When completing LPC-MHSP licensure applications, courses must be listed to fulfill certain requirements. Use the chart below to determine which courses fulfill the state's required areas of training.**

Areas Required by TN for LPC-MHSP	ETSU Equivalent Course	Areas required by NBCC for NCC
Theories of counseling and psychotherapy	COUN 5550 Theories & Practice: Individuals COUN 5420 Theories & Practice: Couples & Families	Helping relationships; Theories in counseling
Evaluation and appraisal procedures	COUN 5810 Psychological Assessment in Counseling	Assessment in counseling
Group dynamics, theories and techniques	COUN 5100 Groups: Processes and Practice	Group counseling theories and processes
Counseling techniques	COUN 5555 Counseling Process & Skills: Individuals,	Helping relationships



	Couples, and Families	
Ethics	COUN 5430 Legal, Ethical, & Professional Issues in Counseling	Professional orientation to counseling, ethics
Research	COUN 5950 Research and Evaluation for Counseling and Human Services	Research and program evaluation
Clinical practicum and internship	COUN 5570 Supervised Counseling Practicum; COUN 5880 Internship in Counseling	Counseling field experience (two semesters)
Theories of human behavior, learning, and personality	HDAL 5230 Advanced Developmental Psychology	Human growth and development
Abnormal Behavior and psychopathology	COUN 5825 Developmental Psychopathology for Counselors	
Use of the diagnostic and statistical manual	COUN 5825 Developmental Psychopathology for Counselors	
Treatment and treatment planning	COUN 5255 Clinical Issues in Mental Health Counseling COUN 5549 Substance Abuse: Counseling Individuals & Families	
Multicultural counseling	COUN 5110 Social and Cultural Foundations in Counseling	Social and cultural foundations
	COUN 5150 Career Development: Theory, Research, and Practice	Career counseling and lifestyle development

For information from the state on becoming a LPC-MHSP contact:

Board for LPC/MFT/CPT

665 Mainstream Drive, Nashville, TN 37243

(615) 741-5735

<http://tennessee.gov/health/topic/pcmft-board>

For information about the NCE & NCMHCE contact:

NBCC

3-D Terrace Way, Greensboro, NC 2740

1-800-398-5389 or 910-547-0607

<http://www.nbcc.org/Exams/>

### **Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT)**

Students who take the Couple & Family electives are also eligible to apply for licensure in Tennessee as a Marriage & Family Therapist (LMFT). From the TN licensure information: “LMFTs may practice marital and family therapy. Marital and family therapy involves the professional application of psychotherapeutic family systems theories and techniques in the delivery of services to individuals in the context of family systems theory and practice, couples and families. It includes the diagnosis and treatment of cognitive, affective and behavioral problems and dysfunctions within the context of marital and family systems. They may administer and utilize appropriate assessment instruments which measure and/or diagnose cognitive, affective and behavioral problems and dysfunctions of individuals couples and families as part of the therapy process or in the development of a treatment plan (in the context of marital and family systems). LMFTs may not perform psychological testing intended to measure and/or diagnose mental illness or prescribe medications.” Students complete all coursework that is necessary for licensure, as long as they take the C&F electives and accrue 300 client contact hours over their Practicum and two Internships (vs. the total of 280 total that are required by the program). Requirements for licensure in Tennessee as a MFT are:

- 1) Complete a graduate degree in marriage and family therapy or related field that includes 3 courses in marriage and family therapy, 3 courses in family studies, 3 courses in human development and personality, a legal and ethical course, a psychopathology or DSM course, a research methods course, and a year of supervised practicum/internship that includes 300 client contact hours.
- 2) Be of good moral character, as shown by letters of recommendation and a background check.
- 3) Complete two (2) years of professional experience which consists of at least 1000 hours of face-to-face clinical practice and 200 hours of supervision by an approved AAMFT supervisor.
- 4) Take the AAMFT national examination and a state jurisprudence examination. The written exam is a national AAMFT exam administered by Professional Examination Service (PES), and consists of 200 multiple choice questions drawn from a knowledge base consistent with the educational requirements in (1) above. After successful completion of the written exam, the jurisprudence exam may be taken. The jurisprudence exam covers legal and ethical issues, the laws governing marriage and family therapy in Tennessee, and clinical practice issues.

With completion of certain electives, students can meet the educational course work required (as specified in (1) above), but graduates must fulfill requirements (3) and (4) following graduation. Students are strongly encouraged to become familiar with the Board of Licensed Professional Counselors, Licensed Marital and Family Therapists and Licensed Pastoral Therapists website (<https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/health-professional-boards/pcmft-board/pcmft-board/licensure.html>), where you can find current information becoming an LMFT, application requirements and fees, and apply online for licensure. The professional organization for MFTs is called the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (information regarding this organization may be obtained at [www.aamft.org](http://www.aamft.org) or by calling 703-838-9808).

### **Licensure for School Counselors**

The Tennessee State Department of Education requires that all school counselors be licensed. Our School Counseling program is approved by the state and the paperwork and tests for licensure can all be completed within Clemmer College of Education and Human Development. All program graduates will be prepared to be licensed to counsel in grades Pre K-12. Graduates of the School Counseling program must apply for licensure at the end of their program and must complete all course work, supplementary course work (if required), and tests before the School Counselor's license is applied for. See the chart below for pathways for receiving licensure as a School Counselor. In accordance with TN requirements, candidates without prior teaching experience **must** complete the following courses: SPED 5500, History, Issues, & Trends in Educating Exceptional Learners (3 hours) and SPED 5401 Positive Behavior Supports and Classroom Management (3 credits).

2) All School Counselors must take the counseling portion of the PRAXIS II (Professional School Counselor) exam. PRAXIS II should be taken 1 semester (Fall/Spring) prior to graduation (e.g., if graduating in Spring it should be taken in the Fall; if graduating in the Fall it should be taken the prior Spring). \*If you need to discuss summer administration please see your advisor.

Applications for the PRAXIS II are obtained in room 428 Warf Pickel. The exam is also given in Warf Pickel on the designated dates. The ETSU code required on the application is unique for paper/pencil (0421) or computer format (5421). **Always check for Praxis TENNESSEE information at [etsu.org/praxis](https://etsu.org/praxis) (choose Tennessee even if you intend to move to a different state). The test should be taken in Tennessee.** Be sure that you designate Clemmer College of Education and Human Development at ETSU as an official recipient of your PRAXIS II score report. In addition, the TN Department of Education should be designated as a recipient (Code: 8190). If you would like to also become licensed in a different state, consult with one of the school counseling faculty.

3) After the above requirements are completed you must apply for licensure. Licensure applications can be obtained in room 305 Warf Pickel from the Office of Educator Preparation Certification Coordinator. Only candidates who successfully complete the program, complete the above necessary requirements, and receive a favorable endorsement by the program are qualified for school counselor licensure. For more information and who to contact, see <https://www.etsu.edu/coe/educator-preparation/certification.php> and <https://www.etsu.edu/coe/educator-preparation/contactus.php>.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ETSU STUDENTS SEEKING SCHOOL LICENSURE:** Tennessee Teaching or other School Licensure/Endorsement requires an application made directly to the Certification Coordinator in Clemmer College of Education and Human Development. Application should not be made until all relevant coursework, degrees and qualifying test scores are completed. A complete set of official transcripts from all colleges or universities attended will be required for the application. Students must have their test results reported to East Tennessee State University, Recipient Code 1198, by the testing company. Every effort will be made to send students up to date application forms and instruction near the end of their final semester. However, if you do not receive this information by the end of your program, you will need to contact the Certification Coordinator (see contact information webpage above).

**Criminal Background Check Requirement:** In Tennessee, all approved education training programs (i.e., ETSU) that lead to state licensure as a professional educator, including School Counseling, are subject to statute T.C.A. 49-5-5610, which requires a criminal background check and fingerprint sample prior to entrance into an approved "teacher" training program. In other words, all students in the school counseling concentration must supply a fingerprint sample and submit to a criminal history records check to be conducted by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI). If a student cannot clear a background check, they will not be able to continue in the school counseling program. See <https://www.etsu.edu/coe/educator-preparation/background.php>

[Tennessee Department of Education School Counselor Licensure Pathways Chart:](#)

School Counselor						
	In-State			Out-of-State		
	Practitioner					Professional
	Pathway 1	Pathway 2	Pathway 3	Pathway 1	Pathway 2	
<b>Minimum Education</b>	Hold an advanced degree in school counseling from a regionally-accredited college or university	Hold a bachelor's degree or higher from a regionally-accredited college or university	Hold an advanced degree in a counseling field	Hold an advanced degree in school counseling from a regionally-accredited college or university	Hold an advanced degree in school counseling from a regionally-accredited college or university	Hold an advanced degree in school counseling from a regionally-accredited college or university
<b>Assessments</b>	Submit qualifying scores on all required assessments as defined in the <a href="#">Professional Assessments for Tennessee Educator Policy</a>	Submit qualifying scores on all required assessments as defined in the <a href="#">Professional Assessments for Tennessee Educator Policy</a>	Submit qualifying scores on all required assessments as defined in the <a href="#">Professional Assessments for Tennessee Educator Policy</a>	Submit qualifying scores on all required assessments as defined in the <a href="#">Professional Assessments for Tennessee Educator Policy</a>	N/A	N/A
<b>Licenses Held</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Hold a full and valid out-of-state initial level school counselor license from a state that is a partner in the NASDTEC interstate agreement	Hold a full and valid out-of-state professional-level school counselor license from a state that is a partner in the NASDTEC interstate agreement
<b>Education Preparation</b>	Has completed a State Board-approved educator preparation program in school counseling	Is enrolled in a State Board-approved educator preparation program in school counseling with a job-embedded clinical practice	Is enrolled in a State Board-approved educator preparation program in school counseling	Has completed an educator preparation program in school counseling approved by a state other than Tennessee	N/A	N/A
<b>Recommendation</b>	Is recommended by the approved educator preparation provider	Is recommended by the approved educator preparation provider	Is recommended by the approved educator preparation provider	Recommendation from the <a href="#">out-of-state educator preparation provider</a> where the educator completed preparation	N/A	N/A
<b>Additional Requirements</b>	N/A		Has completed a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours of coursework in school counseling and	N/A	N/A	N/A

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## Counseling Faculty

**Dr. Jon Borland**, PSC (OH), Assistant Professor, (Ph.D., Counselor Education and Supervision, University of Central Florida, 2020). Dr. Borland (he/him) is a licensed Professional School Counselor in the state of Ohio and has over a decade of experience working with students and their families in educational and private settings. He has been part of the Counseling Program faculty since 2021 and teaches a variety of courses in both the school counseling core and concentration. His research interests include school counselor training and competencies, youth mental health and educational policy, instrument development, and HIV awareness and education. He is an active member of the American Counseling Association (ACA), American School Counselor Association (ASCA), and the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES).

**Dr. Jennifer Kirsch**, LPC (VA), NCC, Registered LPC Supervisor (VA), Assistant Professor (Ph.D., Counselor Education and Supervision, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University [Virginia Tech], August 2022). Jenny (she/her) joined the counseling program at ETSU in 2022 and will teach courses across the counseling core and electives specializing in couple and family therapy. She is an active member of the American Counseling Association (ACA), Association for Counseling Education and Supervision (ACES), with regional membership to its Southern branch (SACES), as well as membership to two ACA-affiliated organizations: the Association of Counseling Sexology and Sexual Wellness (ACSSW) and the International Association for Resilience and Trauma Counseling (IARTC). She also serves on the education and webinar committee for the Society for Sexual, Affectional, Intersex, and Gender Expansive Identities (SAIGE) and is a member of the SACES Women's Interest Network. Her areas of research and professional interest include wellness, professional quality of life, COVID-19 stress, trauma-informed care and practices, supervisee development, and instrument development – particularly toward the creation of an inclusive and culturally representative measure for wellness.

**Dr. Christine Lewis**, LPC (MS), NCC, NCSC, Assistant Professor (Ph.D., Counseling and Supervision, The University of Mississippi, 2021). Dr. Lewis (she/her) is a Licensed Professional School Counselor in the state of Mississippi and has been part of the Counseling Program faculty since 2021. She teaches courses in both the school counseling and clinical mental health counseling core and concentration. She is a member of the American School Counseling Association (ASCA), Association for Counseling Education and Supervision (with local membership in SACES). Her professional interests include advocacy of school counselor training to work with students with disabilities, promotion of adolescent mental health awareness, K-12 collaboration and connection to resources, and multicultural and social justice awareness.

**Dr. Rebecca Milner**, LPC (VA), LPC-MHSP (TN), Associate Professor (Ph.D., Counseling and Supervision, James Madison University, 2014). Dr. Milner (she/her) has been part of the Counseling Program faculty since 2016 and regularly teaches courses in both the clinical mental health counseling core and concentration. She is a member of the Association for Counseling



Education and Supervision (with local membership in SACES), the American Counseling Association, and the Counselors for Social Justice division of ACA. Her professional interests include crisis intervention and disaster response, intercultural development, social justice and anti-racism, mindfulness, international service-learning, and expressive arts. Dr. Milner currently serves as the Counseling Program Coordinator.

**Christy Oaks, LPC-MHSP (TN)**, Clinical Instructor/Clinical Director (M.A. Clinical Mental Health Counseling, East Tennessee State University; Ph.D. Counseling Education and Supervision, University of the Cumberland, In Progress). Oaks (she/her/they/them) joined the counseling program at ETSU in 2022 and teaches counseling courses in addition to directing the program's Community Counseling Clinic. She is an active member of American Counseling Association (ACA), Association for Counseling Education and Supervision (with a local membership in SACES), Sexual Affectional Intersex and Gender Expansive (SAIGE), and Southeastern Women's Studies Association (SEWSA). She has experience working with various populations including outpatient work with substance abuse, mood disorders, trauma, and other presenting concerns; individual and group counseling with youth, adolescents, and adults; in-school counseling with elementary age children. Her professional interests include wellness, self-care, social justice, and advocacy and empowerment of the LGBTQIA+ community and other identities with histories steeped in marginalization and discrimination.

**Dr. Mickey E. White, NCC, BC-TMH**, Associate Professor, (Ph.D., Counseling, University of North Texas, 2019). Dr. White (he/they) currently serves as the program's CACREP liaison and clinical mental health program coordinator. He has been part of the Counseling Program faculty at ETSU since 2019 and regularly teaches courses in substance use counseling, social and cultural foundations, telemental health, and clinical skills. He is an active member of professional counseling organizations, including the Society for Sexual, Affectional, Intersex, and Gender Expansive Identities (SAIGE) and the Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (SACES). His areas of research center around the intersections of gender identity/expression and other marginalized identities, broader LGBTQ+ issues in counselor preparation, professional issues in counselor education, decolonization and liberation practices in counseling and counselor education, and animal-assisted therapy.

## Department Staff

**Trish Lowe**, Executive Aide for the Department of Counseling and Human Services. Trish (she/her) has been with ETSU since 2006 and specifically with our department since 2009, through many changes in the Department make-up and transition from the Clemmer College of Education and Human Development to the College of Health Sciences. Trish oversees all of the department needs from budget, travel, class schedule, adjuncts, to everything else that comes up. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling with her daughter to comic con conventions to promote her work.

**Kade Emerson, B.A.**, is the Secretary for the Department of Counseling and Human Services. Kade (they/he) graduated from ETSU in 2011 with a B.A. in Spanish and has been in their current role as department secretary since 2014. Professionally Kade provides faculty with support, manages incoming calls, assists with general inquiries about our academic programs, maintains the website, helps coordinate and administer the CECE, and is the NCE liaison. Outside of the office, they enjoy video games, comic-cons, Netflix binges, and other geeky activities.

**Kelsey Shubert, LPC-MHSP (TN)**, Director of Field Instruction for Counseling and Human Services (M.A. Clinical Mental Health Counseling, East Tennessee State University). Ms. Shubert (she/her) joined the counseling program in 2025. She is an active member of the American Counseling Association (ACA), the Association for Counseling Education and Supervision (ACES), with regional membership to its Southern branch (SACES), and Postpartum Support International (PSI), with regional membership to its Tennessee Chapter (PSI-TN). Her areas of professional and clinical interest include wellness, stress and anxiety, depression, supervisor/supervisee best practices, perinatal mental health care, and working with parents during pregnancy and the postpartum period.

## Counseling Program Class Offering Schedule

The term in which courses are offered is subject to change. Check with your advisor for updated schedule.

<b><i>Counseling Core (39 credits)</i></b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spr</b>	<b>Sum</b>
<b>COUN 5100 Groups: Processes and Practice</b>	x	x	
<b>COUN 5110 Social and Cultural Foundations in Counseling</b>	x	x	
<b>COUN 5150 Career Development: Theory, Research, &amp; Practice</b>	x	x	
<b>HDAL 5230 Advanced Developmental Psychology</b>	x		x
<b>COUN 5420 Theories and Practice: Couples and Families</b>	x	x	
<b>COUN 5430 Legal, Ethical, and Professional Issues in Counseling</b>	x	x	
<b>COUN 5550 Theories and Practice: Individuals</b>	x	x	
<b>COUN 5555 Counseling Process and Skills: Individual, Couples, Families</b>	x	x	
<b>COUN 5570 Supervised Counseling Practicum</b>	x	x	x
<b>COUN 5810 Psychological Assessment in Counseling</b>	x		x

<b>COUN 5880 Internship in Counseling</b>	x	x	x
<b>COUN 5950 Research and Evaluation for Counseling and Human Services</b>	x	x	x
<b><i>Concentration and Elective Courses</i></b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spr</b>	<b>Sum</b>
COUN 5010 Principles and Trends of School Counseling	x		
<b>COUN 5020 School Counseling Program Development and Implementation</b>		x	
<b>COUN 5250 Introduction to Clinical Mental Health</b>		x	
COUN 5255 Clinical Issues in Mental Health Counseling		x	
COUN 5440 Treating Trauma and Abuse in the Family		x	x
<b>COUN 5549 Substance Abuse: Counseling Individuals and Families</b>	x	x	
COUN 5561 Counseling Techniques with Children and Adolescents	x		
COUN 5825 Developmental Psychopathology for Counselors	x		x

*Key assessment courses are bolded*

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## Clinical Mental Health Curriculum – Program Advisement Form (60 hours)

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

Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester

Clinical Mental Health Curriculum	Sum	Fall	Spr	Sum	Fall	Spr	Sum	Fall	Spr
<b>Core requirements (39 credits)</b>									
COUN 5555 Counseling Process & Skills: Individuals, Couples, and Families (prereq) (F, Sp)									
COUN 5430 Legal, Ethical, & Professional Issues in Counseling (prereq) (F, Sp)									
COUN 5550 Theories and Practice: Individuals (prereq) (F, Sp)									
COUN 5420 Theories and Practice: Couples and Families (prereq) (F, Sp)									
COUN 5100 Groups: Processes and Practice (prereq) (F, Sp)									
COUN 5950 Research and Evaluation for Counseling and Human Services (F, Sp, Sum)									
HDAL 5230 Advanced Developmental Psychology (F, Sum)									
COUN 5110 Social and Cultural Foundations in Counseling (F, Sp)									
COUN 5810 Psychological Assessment in Counseling (F, Sum)									
COUN 5150 Career Development: Theory, Research, and Practice (F, Sp)									
COUN 5570 Supervised Counseling Practicum <sup>*1</sup> (prereq) (F, Sp, Sum)									
COUN 5880 Internship in Counseling <sup>*2</sup> (F, Sp, Sum)									
COUN 5880 Internship in Counseling <sup>*2</sup> (F, Sp, Sum)									
<b>Concentration requirements (21 credits)</b>									
COUN 5825 Developmental Psychopathology for Counselors (prereq) (F, Sum)									
COUN 5250 Introduction to Clinical Mental Health (Sp)									
COUN 5440 Treating Trauma and Abuse in the Family (Sp, Sum)									
COUN 5549 Substance Abuse: Counseling Individuals & Families (F, Sp)									
COUN 5255 Clinical Issues in Mental Health Counseling <sup>*3</sup> (Sp)									
Elective									
Elective (or COUN 5960 for Thesis option)									

<sup>\*1</sup>-Prerequisites for Practicum: COUN 5555, COUN 5430, and either COUN 5550 or COUN 5420 (one theory course may be taken as a coreq). All Practicum prerequisites must be passed with a grade of B or better.

<sup>\*2</sup>-Prerequisites for Internship: COUN 5570, COUN 5555, COUN 5430, COUN 5550, COUN 5420, COUN 5100, and COUN 5825 (may be co-req). All Internship prerequisites except COUN 5825 must be passed with a grade of B or better.

<sup>\*3</sup>-Prerequisites for COUN 5255: COUN 5420, COUN 5550, COUN 5555

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### School Counseling Curriculum - Program Advisement Form (60 hours)

<b>Counseling core (39 credits)</b>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spr</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spr</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spr</i>
COUN 5555 Counseling Process & Skills: Individuals, Couples, and Families (prereq) (F, Sp)									
COUN 5430 Legal, Ethical, & Professional Issues in Counseling (prereq) (F, Sp)									
COUN 5550 Theories and Practice: Individuals (prereq) (F, Sp)									
COUN 5420 Theories and Practice: Couples and Families (prereq) (F, Sp)									
COUN 5100 Groups: Processes and Practice (prereq) (F, Sp)									
COUN 5950 Research and Evaluation for Counseling and Human Services (F, Sp, Sum)									
HDAL 5230 Advanced Developmental Psychology (F, Sum)									
COUN 5110 Social and Cultural Foundations in Counseling (F, Sp)									
COUN 5810 Psychological Assessment in Counseling (F, Sum)									
COUN 5150 Career Development: Theory, Research, and Practice (F, Sp)									
COUN 5570 Supervised Counseling Practicum <sup>*1</sup> (prereq) (F, Sp, Sum)									
COUN 5880 Internship in Counseling <sup>*2</sup> (F, Sp, Sum) <i>Grades K-8 internship</i>									
COUN 5880 Internship in Counseling <sup>*2</sup> (F, Sp, Sum) <i>Grades 9-12 internship</i>									
<b>concentration requirements (21 credits)</b>									
COUN 5010 Principles and Trends of School Counseling (prereq) (F)									
COUN 5020 School Counseling Program Development <sup>*3</sup> (coreq) (Sp) <i>To be taken with second internship</i>									
COUN 5561 Counseling Techniques with Children and Adolescents (prereq) (F)									
Elective or SPED 5500 <sup>*4</sup> <i>Typically offered fall &amp; spring</i>									
Elective or SPED 5401 <sup>*4</sup>									
Elective									
Elective (or COUN 5960 for Thesis option)									

<sup>\*1</sup>-Prerequisites for Practicum: COUN 5555, COUN 5430, and either COUN 5550 or COUN 5420 (one theory course may be taken as a coreq). All Practicum prerequisites must be passed with a grade of B or better.

<sup>\*2</sup>-Prerequisites for Internship: COUN 5570, COUN 5555, COUN 5430, COUN 5550, COUN 5420, COUN 5100, COUN 5010, COUN 5561, and COUN 5020 (co-req with internship). All Internship prerequisites except COUN 5010 and COUN 5020 must be passed with a grade of B or better.

<sup>\*3</sup>-Prerequisite for COUN5020: COUN 5010

<sup>\*4</sup>-Students who do not have a teaching certification must take these courses as electives: SPED 5500 History, Issues & Trends in Educating Exceptional Learners and SPED 5401 Positive Behavior Supports and Classroom Management.

**NOTE: School Counseling Students must take and pass the PRAXIS II to be eligible for your Tennessee School Counseling License. Plan to take this test the Fall or Spring semester prior to your graduation. Go to this site for important information:**

<https://www.ets.org/praxis/tn>. Access Test Requirements, <https://www.ets.org/praxis/tn/requirements/>, and look for Instructional Support Personnel. Find School Counselor PreK–12 in the dropdown list. You need to register for the test titled Professional School Counselor, #5421, and make a score of 156 or better. This page should answer most of your questions about registration and preparing for the test: <https://www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5421>.

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## CHECK LIST OF MAJOR STEPS FOR PROGRAM COMPLETION

Below is a check list of the necessary steps, applications, and notifications for completion of the ETSU M.A Counseling program.

Task/Step	Deadline	Completed
1. Application for admission and all related materials (i.e., GPA or GRE, recommendation letters, transcripts, personal statement, etc.) must be submitted.	Feb. 1 <sup>st</sup> for Summer or Fall admission	
2. Those students admitted with conditions or provisions (e.g., pending official transcripts confirming final undergraduate GPA, etc.) must complete these requirements.	Deadline noted in admission letter or otherwise noted by the Graduate School	
3. Attend orientation (or watch the recording of orientation if you cannot attend).	See admission correspondence from the program.	
4. Request a meeting with your advisor to plan or review your program of study.	Before registration for classes.	
5. Complete and submit the <b>Request for Graduate Program Credits/Transfer of Graduate Credits</b> form if necessary.	Check with your advisor.	
6. Complete and submit the online Counseling Program Practicum and Internship Application by the deadline for enrollment in a practicum course. <u>Make certain that all prerequisites have been or will be taken.</u>	The beginning of the fall or spring semester <u>before</u> you take practicum.	
7. Complete and submit the online Counseling Program Practicum and Internship Application by the deadline for enrollment in an internship course. <u>Make certain that all prerequisites have been or will be taken.</u>	The beginning of the fall or spring semester <u>before</u> you take internship.	
8. Sign up to take comprehensive exam (CECE).	The beginning of the semester <u>before</u> graduation semester; see email announcement & deadline.	
9. Complete the online <b>Graduate Application</b> form with the School of Graduate Studies and pay all remaining fees. Students may need to request that their advisor complete a Change in Program-Courses form online. ( <i>See the handbook section on Intent to Graduate and Completed Degree Works</i> )	Pay close attention to emails from the Graduate School with reminders and deadlines for the graduation application.	
10. School counseling students must take appropriate section of the PRAXIS II.	The Fall or Spring semester prior to your graduation semester. *If you need to discuss summer administration please see your advisor.	
11. Comprehensive exam (the CECE) must be taken.	Semester prior to graduation semester.	
12. School Counseling option students only. After completion of all program requirements and PRAXIS II, apply for Tennessee school counselor licensure with the Certification Coordinator (instructions included previously in the handbook).	After completion of all course work and PRAXIS.	
13. Graduate, get a job, pay taxes, engage in personal and professional wellness, seek continuing education, practice ethical counseling, and live happily ever after.	Retirement?	

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**PLEASE PROVIDE US WITH YOUR COMMENTS.**

This handbook was written in an effort to provide counseling graduate students with information that will help in moving through the program. However, it is a dynamic document that will be in need of continuous updating. In order for the counseling faculty to serve the informational needs of our students we welcome your comments about this handbook and additional information that it might provide. Please give us your feedback on the lines below and drop in the mailbox of one of counseling faculty. Thanks in advance for your help.

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Appendices Follow

## Appendix I –Commonly Required Graduate School Forms

These forms constitute the primary paperwork that must be completed in order to graduate from the program. See your advisor if you learn that you need to complete additional forms. Below is a brief description of each form along with some points about how each should be completed and to which office must receive it. **\*FORMS CAN BE FOUND ON THE GRADUATE STUDIES WEBSITE AT <https://www.etsu.edu/gradschool/forms.php>.** What follows is not a comprehensive list of forms but the most used forms for our students. Depending on individual situations, other documentation may be required. Please see the forms website provided above for a comprehensive list of ETSU Graduate School forms. As always, check with Graduate Studies should you have questions.

**Changes in Program-Courses:** This form is used for course substitutions and to document electives taken toward your program of study. You need to alert your advisor if you register for an approved elective, want to register for an unapproved elective, or when you have an approved course substitution so that your advisor can complete this form and have the course(s) populate the required areas in Degree Works, which is necessary to graduate. If you exceed the required 60 credit hours, additional electives that do not count toward your concentration are not required on this form. This form is to be completed by your advisor and submitted online. See the section on Intent to Graduate and Completion of Degree Works for the information to send to your advisor.

**Application for Transfer of Grad Credits:** Only use this form if one or both of the following conditions apply to you.

1. You are transferring graduate credits from another college.
  2. You were admitted to the program **after** you had already taken some graduate courses that will count as credit for our program.
- This form is submitted to the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies.

**Graduate Application:** This form lets the Graduate School know when you intend to graduate so they can get you on the graduation list and get you a degree with your name on it. See your course schedule for the strict deadline for its submission. Important note: This form does not “roll over” from semester to semester. That is, if you do not graduate in the semester in which you first filed the form, you must file the form again in the semester that you do graduate. This form is submitted online directly to the Graduate School by you.

## Appendix II –Counseling Program Informed Consent



### Informed Consent for ETSU Counselors-in Training

This document, as well as the Counseling Program Handbook, are designed to provide important information about our program and what you may expect as a student. The counseling program is committed to diversity and does not discriminate against applicants, candidates, or clients based on age, sex, race, ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, disability, veteran status, gender identity, or sexual/affectional orientation. The mission of the ETSU counseling program is to provide academic and clinical training to prepare candidates to function as knowledgeable, ethical, and effective counselors in a pluralistic society. In addition, and toward that mission, the faculty members in the ETSU counseling program are dedicated to the professional and personal growth and development of our counselors-in-training and expect that our counseling candidates will provide counseling and related services without discrimination. We want to address these expectations and subsequent policies and procedures specifically so that you are aware of our expectations, which are based on professional organization standards of the American Counseling Association, American School Counseling Association, and the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy.

### *Personal and Professional Growth and Development*

We consider personal development to be at least as important as the professional and educational development of the counselor. Counseling involves an 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; identifying biases and exploring values, etc. You need to know specifically, as part of your group counseling

course, 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 counseling course will be an ungraded but a 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 and how you are willing to communicate. **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 graded negatively for disclosures or non-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 ETSU Counseling Program Handbook and ETSU Graduate Catalog. You also have the right to, and should expect to receive feedback from, faculty regarding observed behavior and interactions.

### *Counseling Individuals, Couples, & Families with Diverse Backgrounds*

We expect that counselors-in-training will be accepting and respectful of the many varied clients who come for counseling assistance. If someone of a different race, ethnicity, nationality, or cultural background comes for counseling, we expect you to treat each person with acceptance and respect and do your best to assist the client to meet their counseling goals.

If someone comes for counseling who is Buddhist, Hindu, Baptist, Catholic, Wiccan, Agnostic, Atheist, Muslim, or any other spiritual/religious identity, regardless of your own personal beliefs on spiritual or religious matters, you are to be respectful and accepting of the person and seek to help with their personal and relational problems. Your job is not to persuade clients away from their beliefs or proselytize them toward your own beliefs. You may think non-Christians or non-Muslims will be judged less favorably by god; or you may think all religions are human projections and there is no god; or you may think your religious group has a clearer view of the truth; none of that should cause you to be anything less than accepting, respectful, and helpful to your clients.

If gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or persons/couples with expansive gender or sexual/affectional identities come to you for counseling, you are to be accepting and respectful of them and to assist them to meet their counseling goals. Whatever your upbringing or past experiences, or however your family or church views gender identity and sexual/affectional orientation, you are to provide the same quality of service and best practice to them as anyone else.

If someone comes in who is married but considering divorcing their partner, your job is not to talk the client into divorcing or into staying. You are to be accepting and respectful of your clients and their right to make their own decisions. Your personal view may be that you would only consider divorce if there has been infidelity; or that you would never divorce a partner if you have children together; or that one should be able to have an open marriage and be sexual with others outside one's marriage; but you are not to try to persuade your client to adhere to your view on the matter.

These are but a few examples of the myriad ways in which counselors and clients may differ in terms of values, beliefs, and ways of being. However, the purpose and goals of counseling remain the same. We also expect that counselors-in-training will be open to look closely at their own views about people, life, and beliefs, and be open to revising them as more information, exposure, and experience with diverse people and ideas are acquired. Our goal is not to require everyone to hold the same views, or require rigid ideologically conformity, but to encourage counselors to be thoughtful, reflective, and open-minded as they pursue knowledge and growth and effectively serve their clients. Toward this end, the counseling program faculty members are committed to model these expectations and provide instruction, supervision, and other educational experiences to facilitate competence and sensitivity in working with diverse populations.

Because the counseling program has a professional responsibility (CACREP, NCATE, and ACA Ethical Standards) to monitor a student's development as a professional counselor, if you disclose information that indicates you are (*have*) engaged in unprofessional or unethical behavior a faculty member may present a concern to the program faculty as a whole 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 ETSU Graduate Record, and ACA Ethical Standards.

### Faculty Expectations of Student Progress

The Counseling faculty is committed to supporting students as they progress through the program. The faculty systematically reviews progress of each student each semester. Areas considered for review are: Academic Performance, Professional and Personal Development, and Clinical Skill Development/Performance. The primary consideration in determining the student's suitability for the counseling profession is the ability to facilitate the client's growth and development. The counseling faculty are committed to retaining students who demonstrate the ability to be effective with clients. To achieve these ends, the following attributes are taken into account at the times of evaluation:

Professional Ethics: Adheres to the ethical guidelines of the ACA, ASCA, IAMFC, APA, & NBCC; including practices within competencies.

Professional Behavior: Behaves in a professional manner towards supervisors, peers, and clients (e.g., emotional regulation). Is respectful and appreciative of the culture of colleagues and is able to effectively collaborate with others.

Knowledge and Adherence to Site and Course Policies: Demonstrates an understanding and appreciation for all counseling site and course policies and procedures.

Record Keeping and Task Completion: Completes all weekly record keeping and tasks correctly and promptly (e.g., case notes, psychosocial reports, treatment plans, supervisory report).

Professional and Personal Boundaries: Maintains appropriate boundaries with supervisors, peers, and clients.

Multicultural Competence in Counseling Relationship: Demonstrates respect for culture (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, spirituality, religion, sexual orientation, disability, social class, etc.) and awareness of and responsiveness to ways in which culture interacts with the counseling relationship.

Flexibility and Adaptability: Demonstrates ability to adapt to changing circumstances, unexpected events, and new situations.

Motivated to Learn and Grow / Initiative: Demonstrates engagement in learning and development of their/her/his counseling competencies.

Congruence and Genuineness: Demonstrates ability to be present and "be true to oneself."

Openness to Feedback: Responds non-defensively and alters behavior in accordance with supervisory and/or instructor feedback.

Emotional Stability and Self-control: Demonstrates self-awareness and emotional stability (i.e., congruence between mood and affect) and self-control (i.e., impulse control) in relationships with clients.

**By signing this document you indicate that you have read this document and the Counseling Student Handbook and understand its contents.**

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**\*You will upload a signed copy of this document into our data management software, Tevera, once your admission to the program is official. Please do not send us a signed copy; further information and a due date will be provided.**