



Department of Counseling & Student Affairs Student Handbook

COUNSELING PROGRAMS

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THE DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELING AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

Welcome to Western Kentucky University and to the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs (CSA). The purpose of this student handbook is to provide the information necessary for students to proceed successfully through their academic programs in the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs. This handbook is subject to revision at any time, at the discretion of the University, College and/or Department. Students are responsible for understanding the contents of this handbook, as well as policies and guidelines outlined by the [WKU Graduate School](#), the [WKU Graduate School Catalog](#), and the [WKU Student Handbook](#).

Mission of the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs (CSA)

The mission of the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs is to provide graduate education, conduct research, and offer services in the fields of Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling; Clinical Mental Health Counseling; and Student Affairs. Faculty members are committed to social action and advocacy, preparing graduates to provide highly competent and culturally aware services, providing clinical and educational experiences that meet or exceed national accreditation standards, ensuring that graduates have credentials necessary to qualify for certification and licensure, and promoting the continued education of counselors and student affairs personnel. The major goals of graduate education in the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs at WKU are to instill in each student an understanding of and a capacity for scholarship, critical thinking, academic rigor, and intellectual integrity. Faculty and graduate students have a shared obligation to work together to foster these goals through relationships that advance judicious inquiry, demonstrate individual and professional integrity, and encourage common respect. The mission of the counseling programs includes the aforementioned and those aligned with CACREP accreditation.

CSA Objectives

1. Counseling and Student Affairs Programs will provide relevant, practice-oriented programs designed to build an applied, theoretical knowledge base while assisting students in the development of professional/clinical competence in a culturally diverse society.
2. As part of their programs of study, students will obtain academic course work and supervised clinical experiences necessary to seek appropriate state or national credentialing in their chosen profession.
3. Academic and clinical education will prepare graduates with the skills desired by prospective employers.
4. The Clinical Mental Health Counseling and Marriage, Couple and Family Counseling programs will maintain accreditation from CACREP.

Departmental and Program Accreditation

The Counseling and Student Affairs Counseling Programs are housed in the WKU College of Education and Behavioral Sciences. WKU is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The Clinical Mental Health Counseling and Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling programs are accredited by the [Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs \(CACREP\)](#).

Accreditation is the process by which an association or agency grants public recognition to a university, college, or academic program that has met certain established qualifications or standards. Accreditation is both a process and a condition. The criteria for evaluation are the result of extensive input from educators and practitioners. In accordance with program and department accreditation, documents associated with ongoing program review are located on the [CSA website](#).

Course Offerings

Course offerings within the CMHC-residential and the MCFC-residential concentrations are offered face-to-face, completely online or in hybrid forms. Courses offered within the CMHC-residential pathway are offered through live synchronous zoom or completely online. Some elective courses are only offered in either face-to-face or online. All face-to-face courses are offered at the main campus in Bowling Green, Kentucky. See <https://www.wku.edu/csa/> for Course Offerings.

Talley Family Counseling Center (TFCC)

The TFCC is housed within the Department and its face to face service offerings are sustained through an endowment from Betty Talley, and her late husband, Dr. Page Talley. Students from the residential Clinical Mental Health Counseling and Marriage and Family Counseling programs apply for year-long internship placements in the TFCC and provide clinical counseling and support services to community members as well as WKU students, faculty, and staff. View the [TFCC website](#) for more information.

The WKU Graduate School

The Department of Counseling and Student Affairs is subject to all of WKU's [Graduate School's](#) policies and procedures. Students are responsible for the information provided on the Graduate School's website and in the [Graduate Handbook](#).

Graduate Research. There are various opportunities to engage in research activities. Students who are interested should reach out to faculty to join them in their research projects. Such engagement can also occur virtually depending on faculty preference. See WKU Graduate School for additional opportunities and resources including: graduate student research grants, travel awards for conferences and research, Office of Sponsored Programs, and TopSCHOLAR.

Related WKU Resources

WKU offers a host of resources for both face-to-face and digital learners. Students are encouraged to review these resources prior to a problem or concern arising so that they are aware of which office to contact.

Online Student Services. Students who enroll in any of the department's online programs or courses should familiarize themselves with [WKU's Online Student Services](#).

WKU Online and Distant Learning. Students can learn more about WKU's commitment to effective teaching, quality interactions and experiences within digital delivery at <https://www.wku.edu/citl/> and <https://www.wku.edu/citl/rsi.php>.

WKU Learning Resources. While the WKU Libraries have land-based facilities and resources, they also are available via virtual means including email, phone and email. See <https://www.wku.edu/library/>.

WKU Information Technology Services. The WKU IT Department (<https://www.wku.edu/its/>) offers a full range of services for students. See <https://www.wku.edu/its/services/students.php>. Students can seek both face to face and virtual assistance during regular office hours, <https://www.wku.edu/its/service-desk/>.

Financial Aid. Tuition fees vary depending on the delivery of the program and courses and are outlined at the Office of Student Billing & Account Services, <https://www.wku.edu/billing>. Tuition and fees specific for any given semester can be viewed at <https://www.wku.edu/billing/coa.php>. CMHC-digital students are advised that they are registered for courses shortly after registration opens.

DEGREES AND CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

The Department of Counseling and Student Affairs offers a counseling master's degree (MAE), a graduate certificate, as well as Joint Undergraduate-Master's programs (JUMP) in counseling.

Master's Degree Programs

- [Clinical Mental Health Counseling \(CMHC\)](#) – Residential and Digital
- [Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling \(MCFC\)](#)

Elective courses are selected in consultation with one's advisor and are offered pending faculty availability and enrollment.

Residencies

Per CACREP, all counseling students, including digital and residential, must attend two mandatory Counseling Skills Residencies held at WKU's Bowling Green campus. These (face-to-face) residencies are embedded within the CNS 559 Techniques in Counseling course (offered fall semester, first Friday & Saturday in November) and CNS 554 Group Counseling (offered spring semester, first Friday & Saturday in April) in addition to the regular weekly meetings required within the courses. Attending each Residency is required to earn a grade in the respective course and to graduate from the program. Students are responsible for securing transportation and hotel arrangements.

Online Graduate Certificate Programs

A certificate program is a coherent course of study that is compatible with the stated mission and goals of WKU and appropriate to the field of higher education (SACSCOC). Certificates lead to the acquisition of a defined set of skills or expertise that will enhance employability or meet a professional development need. A certificate earned at WKU does not imply licensure or credentialing to practice. See the Department's website for more information.

Joint Undergraduate Master's Program (JUMP)

The Department of Counseling and Student Affairs offers a Joint Undergraduate-Master's Programs (JUMP) in Counseling – residential only. Undergraduate students in good standing (must have a GPA of 3.00 or above) can apply to either program, and after being admitted can take graduate courses towards both their undergraduate and graduate degree. See [WKU Graduate Catalog](#) and [CSA website](#) for details.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESS

Non-degree Seeking Students

The Department does not recommend that those who are interested in pursuing a degree in counseling enroll as a non-degree seeking student. Given the clinical nature of this degree (i.e., necessity of supervision throughout the entire program), accreditation requirements, as well as the need for formal advising, those interested in pursuing a counseling degree should apply to the respective CMHC or MCFC concentration by the application deadline.

Students who wish to enroll in counseling courses but who are not interested in degree completion (i.e., for licensure purposes) are considered on a case-by-case basis. Students who have not been admitted to a program are not eligible to enroll in any of the department's clinical courses (CNS 554, 559, 590, 591, or 596) without departmental approval. Many counseling courses are capped for accreditation reasons and are guaranteed to admitted students only. Academic success as a non-degree seeking student in courses does not assure acceptance into the counseling program.

Financial Assistance

There are a variety of ways to secure financial assistance. Many funding opportunities are located on the [CNS website](#). For general information regarding loans, grants, scholarships, and up-to-date information regarding financial assistance, visit [WKU Student Financial Assistance](#).

- **Graduate Assistantships (GAs).** Western Kentucky University awards graduate assistantships (GA) to select graduate students in programs across campus. (JUMP students are not eligible for Graduate Assistantships.) Graduate Assistants must maintain a GPA of 3.0 to maintain employment contract. The Graduate Assistantship is a one-year contract that may extend to two years pending need, budgetary allowances, as well informal and formal evaluations of their previous work. Often there are graduate assistantships available in the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs. If awarded, department GA's are expected to fulfill department specific expectations and responsibilities (i.e., involvement in departmental marketing and recruitment activities) and as stated in their contractual agreements with the University and the Department.

MATRICULATION

New Student Orientation

All students are required to attend the New Student Orientation scheduled shortly after their admittance. If they are unable to attend, they must complete the Blackboard New Student Orientation before their first semester. The New Student Orientation includes information about the department, programs, faculty, as well as expectations for students. Enrollment in the Blackboard New Student Orientation includes quizzes related to the content. Students who do not attend or complete the online New Student Orientation by the end of their first enrolled semester will not be able to enroll in the subsequent semester. Throughout their tenure in the department, students are responsible for knowledge and understanding of the contents within this Handbook (as well as when updates are made), in addition to WKU policies and procedures related to student enrollment and matriculation.

Department Communication

Immediately after admission into the Department, students should use and regularly check their WKU email addresses as they are responsible for the contents of all email communications (including those sent through the respective student mailing lists).

Course Registration and Advising

Upon admission, each student is assigned a faculty advisor from the student's program area in the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs. Students may register for courses per the current directions provided in the New Student Orientation. Since courses are capped for accreditation reasons, not adhering to registration guidelines can result in preferred or required courses not being available, and delayed graduation. Residential students who register for digitally offered courses outside of the directed window can be removed from those course sections.

All students are responsible for keeping track of when WKU opens registration for any given semester. See https://www.wku.edu/regISTRATIONguide/registration_dates.php.

Students are expected to maintain contact with their advisors throughout their academic tenure to discuss their program of study, degree progression and completion, program experiences, career preparation, as well as leaves of absence. Some courses are only offered once a year and some require prerequisites. Failing to follow the plan can delay graduation, as well as create other scheduling conflicts; of which are not the responsibility of the Department.

- **Registering for Courses.** Students are responsible for being aware of the [WKU Registration Guide](#) and registering as follows: CMHC-Digital Students are expected to register for courses within one week of registration opening. CMHC-Residential and MCFC Students are expected to register for the face-to-face sections of courses (when there is an otherwise zoom option available). As a reminder, digital course offerings are reserved for CMHC-digital students for one week after registration opens for that respective semester. While residential students can register for digital courses, they must wait until at least 2 weeks after course registration opens. Registering in a digital course offering prior to this time will result in being removed from the course
- **Communication with Advisors, Faculty and Staff.** Students should always include their 800# in their email subject line. Prior to inquiring, students should first seek information from this Handbook, information listed on the Department website and/or the *Professional Practice Handbook* as many answers to frequently asked questions are included. Students should give faculty at least 2 business days to respond. Since faculty have a nine-month appointment and typically only have regular office hours scheduled during the fall and spring, students should seek to schedule advising appointments during this time. Communication should always go through the proper channels.
- **Progress through the Program.** Students are encouraged to suspend any intentions of “speeding through the program.” Depending on work schedules, family commitments, and other responsibilities, most will be able to complete their program in 2 to 4 years. Students should consult with their advisors the best course for their progress in the program. Based upon their observations of a student’s progress, faculty may notify the student that it is in their best interest to decrease credit-hour load for any given semester.
- **Course Substitutions.** Students are advised that any change to the department’s planned programs can compromise their pursuance of state licensure and credentialing. While faculty can advise students on appropriate course substitutions, it is ultimately the student’s responsibility that transferred courses meet state licensure requirements. All course substitutions for required courses within the counseling programs must address the applicable CACREP standards within the course desired to be substituted.

- ***Change in Programs.*** Students desiring to change programs within the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs should do so in consultation with their current advisor; and must apply for and be admitted to the program they want to pursue using Departmental and Graduate School admissions procedures. Requests from residential students seeking a change to the CMHC digital program will be considered only if there is availability in the digital program and after the respective admissions cycle.
- ***Withdraw from Courses and/or Program.*** Students may be advised, required and/or may elect to withdraw from courses or their program at any time during their enrollment. Courses can be dropped through TopNet and must be done so before the designated dates in order to avoid prorated charges and ensuing a “W” on their transcript. Students should refer to the Registrar’s Office for details and should communicate with the WKU Graduate School regarding withdrawing from the Department.

JUMP Students

JUMP students must maintain a GPA of at least 3.00 to remain enrolled in the Department’s JUMPs and must follow the matriculation process outlined on the Department’s website. They are responsible for enrolling only in the specified courses noted on the website and for completing an [Application for Admission to WKU Graduate School](#) when they have completed their undergraduate degree. Faculty reserve the right as gatekeepers to the profession to suspend a JUMP student’s progression if they see fit. JUMP students are not eligible for a Graduate Assistantship.

Transfer of Credit

According to the [WKU Graduate School Catalog](#) transfer credit(s) may be accepted if earned at regionally accredited institutions of higher education. Students transferring credit from an international institution must submit an official transcript evaluation of credit from an international credential evaluation service recognized by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) before equivalencies are determined. All transfer coursework must be documented on an official transcript with a grade of “B” or better. Transfer credits must be applied toward a graduate program awarded by WKU, are subject to approval by the appropriate academic department, and must comply with all other university policies. Plus, and minus grades are recorded as the letter grade only. In cooperative or joint programs with other universities, credits earned in the program at these institutions are not considered transfer credits. At least one-half of credits applied toward degree or certificate requirements must be earned at Western Kentucky University. Transfer courses must be at least 5 quarter hours of credit to satisfy transfer of credit conditions for one 3-credit semester course. Transfer credit also must have been earned within the six-year time limit for degree completion. See WKU Graduate School for additional information.

Transfer Credit into Counseling Programs are only approved pending a thorough process can include the review of syllabi from previous courses completed; a review of the applicant's transcript; and request for and contact with former instructors. Clinical courses (i.e., group, techniques, practicum, and internship) may be considered not appropriate for transfer credit. Elective course substitutions must be appropriate for degree completion. Students must ensure that the course they intend to use for transfer of credit has at least 3 semester credit hours.

UNIVERSITY AND DEPARTMENT ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

WKU's Graduate School states that graduate students must maintain a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) for all courses taken at WKU and those graduate courses transferred to WKU to fulfill graduate program requirements. Students must maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 in the academic program and a cumulative (overall) GPA to earn a degree or certificate. Graduate students who fail to maintain a 3.0 GPA in their graduate courses are automatically placed on academic probation by the Graduate School; and are not eligible for graduate assistantships. Once on academic probation, students have the equivalent of one full time semester (9 hours for graduate students) to obtain a 3.0 GPA. Students who do not achieve a 3.0 GPA at the end of this time are academically dismissed from Graduate School and cannot register for additional classes.

Students may also be dismissed from programs for reasons other than failure to maintain a satisfactory grade point average. Expectations regarding student conduct are described in the Western Kentucky University Student Handbook and apply to students in all programs. Additional program-specific policies regarding student conduct and dismissal from a program for non-academic reasons may also apply. Please refer to the Professional Performance criteria noted later in this Handbook. Those dismissed may appeal this graduate policy. For additional information and the most recent policies please visit the latest WKU Graduate School Catalog.

- **Minimal Course Grade Requirements in Counseling Program.** A grade of C or lower in the following courses may not be used in meeting graduation requirements: CNS 554 Group Counseling; CNS 555 Social and Cultural Diversity; CNS 558 Counseling Theories; CNS 559 Techniques of Counseling; CNS 560 Professional Studies in Clinical, Family and School Counseling; CNS 590 School Counseling Practicum; CNS 591 CMHC MCFC Practicum, and CNS 596 CMHC MCFC Internship. Further, some of the above mentioned are prerequisite courses for clinical experiences; that is, not earning a B or better will delay matriculation into practicum and internship experiences.
- **Course Incomplete.** Instructors may give students an Incomplete "X." This grade is given only when a relatively small amount of work is not completed because of illness or other reason satisfactory to the instructor. A grade of "X" received by a graduate student, with the exception of thesis courses or similar

projects, will automatically become an "F" unless removed within twelve (12) weeks of the next full term (summer term excluded).

- **Professional Practice Requirements.** Students cannot matriculate into the next practicum or internship course/experience unless they earn at least a B in the previous. Final grades in practicum and internship are not determined solely on academic performance. Not meeting final grade requirements can delay the student's internship another year.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI).** Permission on whether or how AI may be used to complete course requirements is up to the discretion of the instructor. That is, unless department faculty have granted permission, AI is not permitted in the creation of self-reflection assignments, case conceptualizations, and/presentation content. Using AI outside of the perimeters guidelines is considered academic misconduct. Per the *WKU Student Handbook*, students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the course work in which the act is detected or a failing grade in a course without possibility of withdrawal. The faculty member may also present the case to the Office of Student Conduct.

Course Attendance and Completion

Students are expected to understand the entire contents of each course syllabus. Since attendance is a fundamental expectation in graduate studies, reflecting a commitment to professional and academic excellence, students are expected to attend all classes punctually and should not request exceptions for missing class meetings unless facing an emergency. (Zooming-in to otherwise scheduled face-to-face classes are typically not extended.) Additionally, active participation is expected as it is essential for mastering course content, engaging in meaningful discussions, and meeting program expectations.

Per accreditation guidelines, students are required to attend all scheduled practicum and internship class meetings, as well as meet the attendance policies of their Site. If students miss a class meeting, they are not allowed to provide direct service to clients until attending the next class meeting. (In regard to Professional Practice, students are responsible for meeting any additionally related American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics, expectations outlined the Department's *Professional Practice Handbook* and their respective site's policies.)

Students should refer to WKU policies and guidelines regarding:

- Initiating the official course and program withdrawal procedures. (Non-attendance does not exempt a student from financial obligations.)
- Incomplete Grades. It is the discretion of department faculty to extend an Incomplete and your responsibility to meet the expectations by the deadline.

Digital and Technological Access. It is the responsibility of students to secure and maintain access to technology resources, including an internet connection when enrolled in digitally delivered courses and programs. Students should have a working knowledge of computers, internet use and Zoom; as well as consistent and reliable access to high-speed internet, Wi-Fi, a Mac or Windows desktop or laptop, microphone, camera, webcam, and audio equipment (i.e., earphones, earbuds, headphones). Additionally, they should also have access to administrative privileges associated with their computer in order to install and run software programs and/or updates required within the course or program. Students must use a desk-top or laptop computer to attend digital class meetings. Use of tablets and other smart devices may not provide the support necessary to meet online meeting requirements and are not permitted as a medium from which to attend class.

Virtual and Digital Class Attendance, Participation and Presence. When attending class virtually, students must have their videos on and have access to a microphone during the entirety of the class. They should secure a setting free of distractions (i.e., busy places or noise, other people or needy pets) and attend in a professional manner (i.e., sitting at a table or desk; not dressed in pajamas or other inappropriate ways). Throughout the class meeting, it should be clear to the instructor that the student is not engaging in (i.e., multitasking, attending to other business or people, web browsing, texting) or with anything other than the class meeting. Faculty have the right to remove students from the zoom room if any of the aforementioned are not followed.

Campus Closures and Fully Digitalized Course Attendance. When campus is closed due to weather conditions, any scheduled live zoom meetings offered through fully digitized courses will still proceed. Students who do not have access to wi-fi outside the regional campus and who have lost power due to the weather conditions should reach out to their instructor prior to the digital class meeting. They may be required to view the recorded class meeting at a later date or make up the time through relevant assignments. (If class does not meet, counseling practicum and internship students will not be able to see clients until attending the next scheduled class meeting.) Face to face practicum and internship courses will shift to virtual medium such as zoom in order to meet accreditation meeting requirements.

PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE AND FIT FOR PROFESSION

As credentialed and licensed gatekeepers, department faculty and staff are obligated to offer observations, make recommendations, as well as make determinations about a student's fit for the counseling profession, as well as supporting their academic, professional, and personal development. Students are expected to uphold high standards of responsibility, accountability, and dedication to their success. This expectation includes a focus on academic excellence, professional growth, self-awareness, critical thinking, ethical behavior, and collaboration in and outside the classroom (i.e., student activities and events). That is, passing courses (i.e., content based) within the program is not the only indicator of a student's fit for the profession. Often the demonstration of fit for the profession (and related skills, behaviors, and

dispositions) cannot be made until the student is engaged in clinical coursework and supervision (i.e., CNS 559 Techniques in Counseling CNS 554 Group Counseling, CNS 590 School Practicum, CNS 591 CMCH MCFC Practicum, residencies, feedback from site supervisors).

Professional Performance Review

Counseling students are informally and formally observed and reviewed by faculty and clinical staff within courses (i.e., across face-to-face, virtual and asynchronous settings), as well as outside of the classroom setting (i.e., extracurricular activities; interactions with others, in advising meetings and interactions with department staff) for potential fit for the Counseling Profession. As mentioned, academic performance alone is no guarantee of success or retention in the program. Professional Performance Reviews take place every fall and spring semester and include input from full- and part-time faculty, clinical staff, and site supervisors according to the ten criteria outlined below. Specific examples of the criteria are provided but are not exhaustive.

Students will receive a letter indicating a summary of the faculty's review and may include specific information related to meeting or not meeting expectations. If the latter, students may be called to a meeting so that observations and/or concerns can be discussed. [Some of the following information was adapted from TAMU's Distance Learning's *Orientation: Expectations for Graduate Study*, Virginia Tech Graduate School's *Building Graduate Community: Expectations for Graduate Study* and Adapted from William and Mary (2010) Criteria for Professional Performance Evaluation.] Students are encouraged to reach out to their advisors each semester to share and reflect upon how they believe they are matriculating across the criteria.

1. Respects divergent points of view
 - o Engages openly and respectfully in conversations in which divergent perspectives are being addressed
2. Effective relationships with diverse populations and backgrounds
 - o Demonstrates competence in knowledge, attitudes, skills related in individual and group contexts
 - o Demonstration of respect of differences, as well as cultural sensitivity
3. Academic performance (in both face-to-face and digital platforms)
 - o Cumulative grade meets WKU Graduate School standards
 - o Demonstrates development of knowledge and skills in both face to face and digital class environments.
 - o Meets course attendance and participation expectations (Timely attendance is required during all scheduled class meetings. Exceptions will be determined in consultation with the department head. Consequences for unexcused absences include receiving an "F" or "Incomplete" in the course; and will be determined in consultation with department head.)
 - o Students should be able to demonstrate that they are prepared for each class meeting (i.e., completed all required reading). They can expect to invest about 3-4 hours outside of class each week for each unit or credit

of coursework they are enrolled in. During this time, they can spend time studying the required reading and researching additional sources to help improve their knowledge and skill base.

- Assignments are turned in on time
 - Meets graduate writing standards. The Department of Counseling and Student Affairs requires students to follow the [Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association](#) (APA). Students should study the manual for guidance on paper format, tables and figures, in-text citations, references, mechanics of style, grammar, and use of bias-free language. Students should consult with [WKU's Writing Center](#) for further assistance and support.
 - Is proactive about academic performance
4. Appropriate in-class behavior (in both face-to-face and digital platforms)
 - Demonstrates ability to listen to others with patience
 - Able to articulate content and able to offer analysis of content
 - Tone of voice, verbal and nonverbal sharing are adequate, appropriate and respectful
 5. Collaboration, contribution to positive environment (in both face-to-face and digital platforms)
 - During class and outside of class (i.e., internship sites, with faculty, in department student organizations)
 - Works well with other students and faculty (i.e., taking personal responsibility and demonstrating openness and willingness to address any emerging conflict)
 6. Reflective practice and personal responsibility including ability to receive and integrate feedback
 - Engages in thoughtful practice (i.e., Courses, supervision, clinical work)
 - Open to self-examination; reveals insights related personal successes and areas for opportunity
 - Accepts personal mistakes; avoids blaming others
 - Invites and welcomes feedback from others
 - Demonstrates having incorporated such feedback
 7. Personal, interpersonal & professional growth
 - Seeks development opportunities outside of the classroom
 - Seeks consultation with faculty regarding growth and improvement
 - Demonstrates growth over time and in response to PPR and other feedback
 8. Engagement in digitally delivered courses and programs
 - Demonstrates evidence of meeting technology requirements; expectations for attendance, participation, and presence; reaching out to WKU services as needed in order to be successful in any digitally delivered programming and courses.
 - Adheres to related ethical and legal requirements
 9. Ethical and legal compliance (per respective profession)

- o Students are expected to adhere to their respective profession's ethical codes and standards of practice in multi-delivered course platforms and outside of the classroom.
- o Security of Media. Some courses (technique and methods courses, practicum and internship) may require recorded (audio, video) of a student's application of course content with a volunteer. Students are responsible for (a) ensuring that the individual being recorded has been provided informed consent about the purpose of the recording, its use, who it will be shared with, and when it will be destroyed; (b) formatting the recording to the instructor's or supervisor's preference; (c) keeping the recording secure from any other source by means of password protection, lock boxes; and (d) are destroyed through appropriate means.

10. Fit for the profession

- o Consistently meets *all expectations* noted above in and outside of the classroom setting; with peers, faculty, potential/current clients, as well as at internship placements and in other professional settings.
- o Demonstrates beneficence across skills, behaviors and dispositions that are developmentally appropriate for the student's place in the program, and necessary for the Counselor role.

Support Process for Success

When it is deemed necessary that a student should have additional guidance and resources to remain or be successful in the program and as a future Counselor, a Support Plan will be created that outlines goals, as well as specific ways and strategies that students can engage in to be successful. Students are encouraged to initiate their own Support Plan by contacting their advisor, faculty or staff.

Remediation Process and Dismissal

When concerns arise about how a student is meeting any of the Professional Performance criteria, the student may be placed on a Level One Remediation Plan. If additional concerns arise, if the student is not observed as meeting expectations, or if they are not demonstrating a fit for the profession, they will be placed on Level Two Remediation, which can involve a formal recommendation for dismissal. To continue matriculation through the program, students will be asked to review and sign the related document that outlines concerns and expectations.

Level One Remediation. The student may be asked to meet with the Department Chair, advisor, faculty, staff and Site Supervisors who have observed the student as needing support. During this meeting, specific concerns related to Professional Performance criteria will be discussed, and the student will have the opportunity to share context related to the concerns outlined. The student will be presented with expectations, as well as prescribed steps that will help the student address the identified concerns. The student will be expected to implement expectations immediately and should understand that Level Two Remediation can result in dismissal.

Level Two Remediation. Students placed on a Level Two Remediation (which can include recommendation for dismissal) will be called to a meeting during which the identified concerns are communicated. Appeals of dismissal from the program and Department should follow WKU policy.

Faculty/staff can require students to engage in activities designed to help them successfully matriculate through the program. Those include but are not limited to additional supervision; additional practice of and assessment in certain skills (and presentation of videos); personal mental health counseling, continuing education workshops, written reports.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE: PRACTICUM AND INTERNSHIP

Students are required to complete practicum and internship experiences and are required to adhere to the contents outlined in the *Counseling Professional Practice Handbook*. (See Department website.) Students are also required to attend the Professional Practice Orientation held during the spring prior to the summer practicum. Practicum and Internship courses are capped at 12. Practicum and Internship students are approved to register for a specified course section at the discretion of the department and after having met requirements. Students who register for a course section other than what is approved will be removed.

Prerequisite Requirements for Counseling Students (CMHC and MCFC)

A grade of B or better must be earned in CNS 554; CNS 555; CNS 558; CNS 559; CNS 560, and if taken, CNS 590, to enroll in CNS 591. A grade of B or better is required in CNS 591 to enroll into CNS 596. A grade of B or better is required in both sections of CNS 596 to meet graduation requirements. As noted, progressing into clinical courses (i.e., CNS 559, 590, 591, 596) is not entirely dependent on academic grades earned, as the student's fit for the profession is also heavily weighted and determined by the Counseling Faculty. As a consequence, students may not be permitted to continue onto the next sequential clinical course.

Matriculation

Practicum and internship students are responsible for meeting and assuring that the contents outlined in the *Counseling Professional Practice Handbook* (i.e., including that both Site and Site Supervisor meet expectations), contractual agreements, as well as the respective syllabi are met before and throughout their professional practice. Practicum and internship students are expected to meet expectations across all PPR criteria throughout their professional practice experience. Not doing so can result in being provided formal support or being placed on remediation (which can include removal from the site, requirement that the student withdraw from or retake a clinical course).

To assure CACREP accreditation compliance, the Director of Professional Practice can require meetings, as well as site visits with students, course instructors, and/or

sites at any time. The Department reserves the right to remove students from their sites, as well as sites and site supervisors from approval status.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS AND GRADUATION

Western Kentucky Graduate School policy stipulates that all students enrolled in master's-level programs in the University must successfully complete a culminating experience of their master's-level studies that measures students' mastery of knowledge in their respective sought-after profession including but not limited to social and cultural identifies and experiences, theory of practice and process, methods and techniques, research and program evaluation, ethics and legal issues. For all counseling students enrolled in the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs, the culminating experience is the [Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam](#) (CPCE). The exam is also a preparatory exam, as it is similar to the [National Counselor Exam](#) (NCE) in that it covers the following content areas:

- Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice
- Social and Cultural Diversity
- Human Growth and Development
- Career Development
- Counseling and Helping Relationships
- Group Counseling and Group Work
- Assessment and Testing
- Research and Program Evaluation

Counseling students should refer to the Department website prior to their last year of enrollment to plan ahead. Students are eligible to take the Comprehensive Exam after fulfilling the following requirements: application for graduation upon earning 18 graduate hours; completion of any required research foundations and/or specified research course(s) (i.e., CNS 598) on the program of study; be currently enrolled in the last semester of the degree program or have completed all content course work associated with the program; be in good standing academically; and completion of any additional requirements as specified by the department(s) directing the program. Students typically take their comprehensive exam during the semester they will graduate.

If order to request accommodations for either exam, a formal accommodation must have been filed with the WKU [Student Accessibility Resource Center \(SARC\)](#). Additional requirements may be outlined on the department website.

Taking the CPCE and Next Steps

The CPCE is a *land-based exam* offered only at a verified Pearson location. Students can choose the test date, time, and location. Students should check their WKU e-mail regularly as communication will be sent by the Department regarding how to apply and prepare for the exam a few months before the semester they plan to graduate. Per the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs policy, students pass the CPCE Comprehensive Exam when their scores fall above or below one standard deviation of the national average for that particular exam offering. In the event of not earning a score within the standard deviation of the national average, students are required to take an essay examination. The essay exam includes conceptual questions; more information will be provided individually to the student test-taker at the respective time. If that exam is not passed, students are required to take an oral examination. A passing score on the comprehensive examination is required to graduate.

National Certification Examination

Graduates from a CACREP-accredited counseling program meet the educational requirements to earn the [Nationally Certified Counselor \(NCC\)](#) credential after passing the multiple-choice National Counselor Exam (NCE). This certification through the National Board of Certified Counselor (NBCC) indicates to the public and employers that the counselors have met the national standards set by the counseling profession. The National Counselor Exam (NCE) is often required to obtain full licensure in many states. During their last semester in the program, students may take the exam versus waiting until after graduation. The benefits of taking the exam while still enrolled include a reduced exam fee, as well as having recently prepared for the CPCE, a similar exam. The NCE is offered mid-to-late in the last semester of enrollment. Students apply for the exam through the CPCE & NCE Application located on the CSA website.

Degree and Certificate Completion Checklist

All degree and certificate requirements must be completed by the student by the last day of the term. Graduate Studies begins auditing degrees and certificates for completion the week following the final day of the term. The degree audit confirms that the student has:

1. completed all coursework (earning a "C" or higher/no incomplete grades) in their program within the time limit;
2. earned a minimum cumulative and program GPA of 3.00;
3. published a thesis, specialist project, or dissertation approved by Graduate Studies (if required);
4. completed a comprehensive exam/capstone (degrees only); and,
5. applied for graduation.

Degree audits are completed within four to six weeks after the term concludes. Upon recommendation of the audit, the University Registrar confers the degree and/or certificate in May, August, or December. Students may check their transcript for completion on [TopNet](#) (Student Services/Student Records/Unofficial Academic Transcript) and review Degree Works to check progress. Degrees and certificates will be mailed within 3-6 weeks after the conclusion of the term. Graduate Studies does not

confirm degree or certificate completion prior to award; however, [enrollment verification](#) may be requested.

Cost and Tuition

Tuition fees vary depending on the delivery of the program and courses and are outlined at the Office of Student Billing & Account Services, <https://www.wku.edu/billing>. Tuition and fees specific for any given semester can be viewed at <https://www.wku.edu/billing/coa.php>.

INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION AND POLICIES

The Department of Counseling and Student Affairs adheres to institutional policies and guidelines. Students should become familiar with these resources including [Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), [due process](#), [Student Code of Conduct, Title IX](#), and [Kentucky State Law](#).

Academic Integrity

Students are held to the expectations related to Student Conduct noted in the latest [WKU Student Handbook](#) and in the [WKU's Graduate Catalog](#). Academic integrity is an essential component of an academic community. Every student is responsible for fostering and maintaining a culture of academic honesty by committing to the academic values of honesty, integrity, responsibility, trust, respect for self and others, fairness, and justice. In addition, students are expected to abide by the code of ethics for their profession and the student code of conduct for the university.

Academic Dishonesty Policy (also see [WKU Student Handbook](#))

An incident of [academic dishonesty](#) will lead to a failure on the assignment and possibly the course. Academic dishonesty in the form of plagiarism, cheating, or non-participation in group work is not tolerated. Violations of academic integrity include cheating, plagiarism, or lying about academic matters.

Specifically, plagiarism includes not only direct quotations of another writer's words, but also paraphrases or summaries of another writer's concepts or ideas without acknowledging the writer properly (i.e., citing them). Cheating includes behaviors such as giving or receiving data or information under any circumstances not permitted by the instructor. Lying about academic matters includes falsification of data or information as part of an academic exercise, or knowingly providing false information to a faculty member.

[Plagiarism](#) is not tolerated and will result in a grade of "F" for the specific assignment or the entire course. Plagiarism includes representing ideas and interpretations that are taken from another source as one's own work. Ideas paraphrased from another author must be attributed to that author and cited in any written presentation of such information. Refer to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th edition) for direction on proper citation formatting.

WKU defines *plagiarism* as the following:

To represent written work taken from another source as one's own is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense. The academic work of a student must be his/her own. One must give any author credit for source material borrowed from him/her. To lift content directly from a source without giving credit is a flagrant act. To present a borrowed passage without reference to the source after having changed a few words is also plagiarism.

Cheating is not tolerated and will result in the grade of “F” in the course. No student shall receive or give assistance NOT authorized by the instructor. WKU’s stance on cheating is that *no student shall receive or give assistance not authorized by the instructor in taking an examination or in the preparation of an essay, laboratory report, problem assignment or other project which is submitted for purposes of grade determination.*

Academic dishonesty is a profoundly serious offense because it involves an act of fraud, jeopardizing genuine efforts by faculty and students to teach and learn together. Students who are determined to have plagiarized an assignment or otherwise cheated in their academic work or examination may expect an “F” for the assignment in question or an “F” for the course, at the discretion of the instructor. All incidents of cheating or plagiarism, reported by the instructor, will follow the Student Remediation Process as described in the departmental handbook. Please note: The University does use web-based products to detect plagiarism.

Title IX/Discrimination and Harassment

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU’s Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (#0.070) and Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040). Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Executive Director, Office of Institutional Equity/Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir, 270-745-6867 or Title IX Investigators or Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are “Responsible Employees” of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU’s Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU’s Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159. See [Sexual Assault Resources](#).

ADA Accommodation Statement

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, Room 1074. The SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at

sarc.connect@wku.edu. Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

Pregnant and Parenting Students

Western Kentucky University does not discriminate against any student or exclude any student from its educational programs or activities, including classes or extracurricular activities, on the basis of pregnancy and/or pregnancy-related conditions such as, but not limited to, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom. Students who seek pregnancy or pregnancy-related accommodations should make their requests as soon as possible via WKU's Title IX Website at www.wku.edu/titleix/ under the heading, "Pregnancy or Pregnancy-Related Conditions." Students can also contact the Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir, via email at ena.demir@wku.edu or by phone at (270) 745-6867 to request accommodations or seek assistance. We encourage students and faculty to work together to establish a plan that allows the student to complete the class and coursework without jeopardizing academic integrity and course standards. The Title IX Coordinator can help facilitate conversations between students and faculty regarding appropriate and reasonable accommodations. If you are a WKU student and believe that you have experienced an incident(s) of discrimination or harassment based on pregnancy (or pregnancy related conditions or issues), please report it to the Title IX Coordinator via email at ena.demir@wku.edu or by phone at (270) 745-6867. Additional resources for pregnant and parenting students can be found on WKU's Title IX Website at www.wku.edu/titleix/.

Equal Opportunity and Grievances

Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action/University ADA Services (EEO) is housed within the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) and is responsible for ensuring WKU's compliance with Title IX, Title VI, Title VII, ADA, and other state and federal anti-discrimination/harassment laws.

Western Kentucky University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, marital status, age, uniformed services, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, or physical or mental disability in admission to career and technical education programs and/or activities, or employment practices in accordance with Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Revised 1992, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Individuals with disabilities who have experienced discrimination or harassment by students, employees, or third parties, or who have been denied an accommodation after complying with the process provided in WKU Student Disability Accommodations/ Section 504 and ADA Compliance Policy (#6.1010), can file a written grievance with the Section 504 Coordinator. [A grievance can also be made by complete an online form, the Student Grievance Form.] The grievance should contain the name and contact

information of the person filing the grievance, a summary of the alleged action/violation of Section 504 and Title II, and the proposed remedy or relief sought. [Click here to access the Student Grievance Form.](#)

The Section 504 Coordinator will conduct an investigation of the allegations contained within the grievance. This investigation may be informal, but it will be thorough, affording all interested persons an opportunity to present witnesses and submit other evidence relevant to the grievance. The Section 504 Coordinator will maintain documentation submitted in support of the grievance. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Section 504 Coordinator will issue a written decision, in an accessible format, to the involved parties along with the basis for the decision; if appropriate, the Section 504 Coordinator will provide a description of remedies afforded to the aggrieved party. A copy of the grievance and notice of outcome will be provided to WKU's ADA Coordinator, Vice President of Student Experience and Dean of Students, and other WKU employees, as necessary.

Individuals accused of violating this or other WKU policies may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct or Human Resources, when appropriate. The University will take steps to prevent recurrence of any prohibited actions, and correct discriminatory, harassing, and/or retaliatory effects on any party involved in this grievance process, including witnesses.

A guide to Student Complaints can also be found at:

https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/documents/guide_for_student_complaints.pdf

Important Complaint Exceptions:

- Student Disability regarding denial of accommodations, report to Student ADA Compliance Officer and follow WKU policy #6.1010
- Discrimination and Harassment concerns, see below reporting process and follow WKU policy #0.2040 and #0.2070
- Discrimination is always reported to the Office of Equal Opportunity Employment (EEO)
- Student-to-student harassment is reported to The Office of Student Conduct or the WKU Title IX Coordinator
- Student-to-faculty/employee harassment is reported to the Office of Equal Opportunity Employment (EEO)

Student Concerns and Resolutions

When students have concerns or complaints regarding an academic issue or grade, they should follow the [WKU's Student Academic and Grade Complaint Procedures](#).

The procedure generally follows the steps below:

1. Student brings the concern or complaint to the faculty member involved.
2. If the student and faculty member are unable to resolve the concern, the student contacts the Department Head
3. If the student is unable to reach a satisfactory resolution at the departmental level, the concern is brought to the college level (i.e., Deans Office).

4. Should the student want to appeal the decision made at the college level, a formal written notice of appeal can be submitted.

Students who pursue a formal complaint are responsible for ensuring they are informed and have knowledge of policies in official WKU publications.

Complete Online Course Evaluations

Students have the opportunity to provide feedback about their courses and instructors through confidential [Online Course Evaluations \(SITE\)](#). While this anonymous feedback can provide helpful information, such feedback may be more conducive to programmatic and academic improvement if shared in a respectful manner directly with the instructor. Faculty receive the course SITE report shortly after final grades are due.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Involvement in WKU Registered Student Organizations (ROIs)

The Department houses a [WKU Registered Student Organizations](#) called the Counseling Graduate Association (COGA). The purpose of these ROIs is to promote individual wellness and professional development of current and past students as well as alumni of WKU's counseling program. Through membership in these organizations, students and graduates have opportunities to engage in service, professional development, develop leadership skills and create life-long relationships among peers. The department's ROIs sponsor professional networking opportunities, social activities, academic enrichment and community support related activities. Members of ROIs also engage in departmental recruitment and informational activities for future members of the respective professions. Students should contact the department's faculty advisor and/or [CSA website](#) for additional details.

Professional Development

Students enrolled in the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs are encouraged to engage in their respective professional communities; including attending events and activities that strengthen their professional, personal and interpersonal development. For example, the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs, as well as other offices on campus sponsor free professional development workshops to students and the public. Membership in state, regional and national professional organizations also provide students with extensive opportunities to learn more about their field, to create and engage in relationships with professionals across the country, and to develop leadership skills. Examples of professional organizations that faculty, students and graduate have been active in are listed below.

Counseling-Related Associations

American Counseling Association (ACA) The American Counseling Association is an organization of counselors, students, faculty and related members interested in, or working in, the counseling profession. There are also 18 chartered divisions that provide

leadership, resources and information unique to specialized areas and/or principles of counseling.

Kentucky Counseling Association (KCA) is the state branch of the American Counseling Association and is an organization of counseling professionals who work in educational, health care, residential, private practice, community agency, government, business and industry settings.

American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA) This association works to enhance mental health counseling through licensing, advocacy, education and professional development.

Association for Play Therapy (APT) The Association for Play Therapy (APT) is a national professional society established in 1982 to foster contact among mental health professionals interested in exploring and, when developmentally appropriate, applying the therapeutic power of play to communicate with and treat clients, particularly children.

American School Counselors Association (ASCA) The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) supports school counselors' efforts to help students focus on academic, career and social/emotional development so they achieve success in school and are prepared to lead fulfilling lives as responsible members of society. ASCA provides professional development, publications and other resources, research and advocacy to school counselors around the globe.

Kentucky School Counselor Association (KSCA) is a non-profit organization that represents Kentucky school counselors. We are made up of an elected board, appointed positions, and community liaisons. We support school counselors through professional development, resources, and advocacy at the state and national level. We empower school counselors to lead systemic change by delivering to all students an ASCA National Model Program, aligned with state standards for academic, personal/social, and career development.

EMDR International Association (EMDRIA) A membership organization of mental health professionals dedicated to the highest standards of excellence and integrity in EMDR.

North American Society of Adlerian Psychology (NASAP) The North American Society of Adlerian Psychology's mission is to foster and promote the research, knowledge, training, and application of Adlerian Psychology, maintaining its principles and encouraging its growth. Founded in 1952, NASAP thrives today as a society for a broad spectrum of professionals in the fields of education, psychology, psychiatry, counseling, social work, pastoral care, business, and family education.

Somatic Experiencing International The leading authority on the SE™ method and is a major provider of training and educational programs. SE is a body-oriented therapeutic model that helps heal trauma and other stress disorders. Developed by Peter Levine, Ph.D., it is the result of the multidisciplinary study of stress physiology, psychology, ethology, biology, neuroscience, indigenous healing practices, and medical biophysics, with more than 45 years of successful clinical application.