

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM ★ NACOGDOCHES, TEXAS



PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING PROGRAM

Clinical Mental Health Counseling

Graduate Student Handbook

Academic Year 2026-2027

Effective Fall 2026

Department of Allied Health Studies
College of Health Professions
P.O. Box 13019, SFA Station
Nacogdoches, TX 75962
(936) 468-1395

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Graduate Student Handbook



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Department of Allied Health Studies

Welcome

Students are about to begin an exciting journey in the graduate Professional Counseling Program that equips graduates for rewarding careers supporting individuals experiencing mental health concerns.

Our program stands out in two ways. First, we offer a low faculty-to-student ratio, which allows for personalized attention and close faculty mentorship. Second, our in-house counseling clinic provides meaningful, hands-on training through work with real clients from the campus and surrounding communities. Students begin by observing counseling sessions and progress to seeing their own clients during supervised practicum experiences.

Professional practice in counseling requires interpersonal skill development in live, supervised clinical settings. The program emphasizes in-person training as a core component of counselor development and welcomes student participation in that learning environment.

Message to Students

This handbook addresses many of the questions students may have about the Master of Arts in Professional Counseling program. Students are encouraged to become familiar with its contents. The handbook includes information about the program's mission and objectives, admission procedures, application for candidacy, comprehensive examinations, course requirements and sequencing, as well as practicum and internship requirements.

This handbook serves as a supplement to meetings with an academic advisor and does not replace them. Students are also encouraged to consult the online University Catalog for additional and official program information.

Program requirements and policies may change and may not be immediately reflected in this handbook. For this reason, students should remain in regular contact with their faculty advisor. The Professional Counseling Program reserves the right to make program changes and to notify students accordingly. Additional information may be found on the College of Health Professions website. Questions may be directed to a faculty advisor or the Professional Counseling Program Coordinator.

Professional Counseling Program

Scope of Practice

Mental health counseling is a systematic process that assists individuals in achieving their personal, emotional, and psychological well-being through the application of therapeutic techniques and interventions. The counseling process involves communication, goal setting, and behavioral interventions tailored to the unique needs of each client. The specific techniques and modalities utilized within mental health counseling may include, but are not limited to:

- a) assessment and appraisal;
- b) diagnosis and treatment planning;
- c) individual, group, and family counseling interventions focused on improving mental health and managing emotional distress;
- d) crisis intervention and trauma-informed care;
- e) case management, referral, and coordination of services;
- f) program evaluation and research;
- g) interventions aimed at reducing psychological and environmental barriers to well-being;
- h) consultation services with other healthcare providers, educational institutions, and community organizations;
- i) advocacy for clients in various settings, including legal and social service systems; and
- j) psychoeducation and skills training to enhance coping strategies and resilience.

Mental health counselors work in a variety of settings, including private practice, community mental health centers, hospitals, schools, substance abuse treatment facilities, correctional institutions, employee assistance programs, and residential care facilities. They work with diverse populations, including individuals experiencing anxiety, depression, trauma, substance use disorders, relationship issues, and other mental health challenges.

Many mental health counselors specialize in particular areas of practice, such as working with children and adolescents, veterans, individuals with severe mental illness, or those recovering from trauma. The amount of time spent counseling each client varies depending on the severity of the issues being addressed and the size of the counselor's caseload. Some counselors may work intensively with a small number of clients, while others may manage larger caseloads, providing ongoing support to individuals at various stages of their mental health journey.

Mental health counselors are committed to staying informed about the latest research and best practices in the field, ensuring they provide the highest quality care to their clients. They often engage in continuous professional development and may collaborate with other mental health professionals to offer comprehensive care.

Career Outlook for Mental Health Counselors

According to the latest data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), employment opportunities for mental health counselors are expected to grow significantly. Employment in this field is projected to increase by 18% from 2022 to 2032, which is much faster than the average growth rate for all occupations. This growth is driven by a rising demand for mental health services, increased awareness of mental health issues, and expanded access to mental health care.

The BLS projects approximately 42,000 job openings annually for substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors over the next decade. These opportunities arise not only from new job creation but also from the need to replace workers who retire or leave the profession.

Mental health counselors are increasingly needed in a variety of settings, including outpatient mental health and substance abuse centers, hospitals, private practices, and community health organizations. This demand is also bolstered by greater recognition of the importance of mental health services in managing conditions such as anxiety, depression, and stress, as well as the integration of mental health services into broader healthcare practices.

Our Program's History

The counseling program has been housed in a succession of academic departments since 1981, reflecting a long and evolving institutional history. The department's lineage began in 1940 as the Department of English of Speech, 17 years after the founding of Stephen F. Austin State University. Over the years, the department underwent several name changes: in 1947, it became the Department of English, Library Service, Speech, and Journalism, and in 1950, it was renamed the Department of Speech. This title remained until 1969, when it briefly became the Department of School Services. In 1970, the department was split into two entities: the Department of School Services and the Department of Speech, which operated concurrently until 1972, after which the Department of School Services continued independently. In 1981, the department was renamed the Department of Counseling and Special Education, and in 1988, it became the Department of Counseling and Special Educational Programs. This designation lasted until 1999, when it was renamed the Department of Human Services, a name it held until 2019, when it was rebranded as the Department of Human Services and Educational Leadership. In September 2025, the Department of Human Services and Educational Leadership was integrated into the newly formed Department of Allied Health Studies. In July 2026, the Department of Allied Health

Studies and the Professional Counseling Program became part of the newly established College of Health Professions.

The Master of Arts program in Professional Counseling at Stephen F. Austin State University was initiated in 1981 with the aim of training mental health counselors, school counselors, and rehabilitation counselors in East Texas. In 2024, the program narrowed its focus exclusively to training mental health counselors. The program emphasizes the integration of theory, skill, and practical application in mental health counseling. Students are prepared through a combination of coursework and hands-on experience, including a 100-hour supervised in-house practicum (with 40 clock-hours of direct client service) and a 600-hour supervised external internship (with 240 clock-hours of direct client service). The MA in Professional Counseling is a 60-semester-hour program and is nationally accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The program prepares mental health counselors for practice in Texas; however, students from other states have also enrolled and completed internships or entered professional practice in their home states following graduation.

Program Highlights

The Professional Counseling Program at SFA offers a comprehensive and supportive educational experience. Manageable class sizes allow for individualized attention and meaningful engagement with faculty. The cohort model ensures that students admitted in the same semester progress through the program together, fostering collaboration and peer support.

The program includes a departmental training clinic where students apply their knowledge in real-world settings and gain hands-on experience under the supervision of experienced professionals. Faculty maintain an open-door policy and provide ongoing guidance and mentorship throughout the program.

The curriculum is designed to accommodate busy schedules. During the Fall and Spring semesters, students typically enroll in two face-to-face courses and one online course. In the summer, students take one online course in each of two consecutive sessions. This structure supports steady progress through the program while allowing many students to remain employed during their training.

Overall, the Professional Counseling Program at SFA equips students with the skills, knowledge, and support necessary for professional success and prepares graduates for meaningful and impactful careers in counseling.

Mission

The mission of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program is to provide high-quality academic and clinical training experiences for the purpose of developing licensed professional counselors who are prepared to serve the needs of a diverse client population. Program graduates will demonstrate competence in providing a wide variety of counseling services using evidence-based practices.

Vision

The Professional Counseling Program at SFA desires to develop an engaging and strong academic community that:

- Attracts a diverse group of students who desire to be ethical and effective counselors able to work with diverse populations.
- Provides intensive training to students building upon established research, evidence-based practices, theories, and current and exemplary practices.
- Fosters a learning environment that values critical thinking, diversity of viewpoints, ethical deliberation, and respectful debate.
- Advocates for wellness and mental health services

Objectives

Academic Excellence: Ensure students receive high-quality academic training by providing rigorous coursework, comprehensive theoretical knowledge and practical skill development in counseling principles and techniques.

Clinical Competence: Equip students with the necessary clinical skills and experience through supervised clinical training and practicum opportunities to effectively assess, diagnose and provide evidence-based counseling interventions to diverse client populations.

Cultural Competency: Foster cultural competence among students to understand and address the unique needs of diverse client populations, including but not limited to differences in ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, and ability.

Professional Licensure Preparedness: Prepare students for licensure as professional counselors by ensuring they meet all academic, clinical, and ethical requirements necessary for licensure, and by providing guidance and support throughout the licensure application process.

Matriculation Requirements

Upon admission to the program, students receive information about the New Student Orientation (NSO), a mandatory meeting held immediately prior to the start of the first semester in the program. The acceptance letter includes the name of the assigned advisor and additional information about NSO. At NSO, students complete a degree plan, and faculty review the degree map, which outlines a prescribed sequence of courses. The degree map assumes enrollment in 9 semester credit hours per long semester (Fall and Spring). Students who change enrollment status between full-time and part-time must meet with the assigned advisor to revise the degree map.

After completion of 12 to 18 credit hours in the program, students submit a candidacy application to the Professional Counseling Program and complete a candidacy appointment with program faculty. During the appointment, faculty discuss student performance in the program and provide support when difficulties are identified. The meeting also provides an opportunity for students to offer feedback regarding program strengths and recommendations for improvement. Upon successful completion of candidacy, students may continue in the program as candidates for the Master of Arts in Professional Counseling.

The next step is the fieldwork experience, which includes practicum in the Counseling Clinic. All required fieldwork applications must be submitted by published deadlines. Failure to submit required applications by deadlines may delay degree completion. Courses required prior to practicum approval are listed on the practicum application. In addition, during the practicum semester, students must successfully complete comprehensive examinations to be eligible to enroll in and complete internship. All required forms must be completed on time, and all published deadlines must be met (for example, applications for field placements). All other policies related to degree completion and graduate student matriculation must also be met. Early registration is recommended for required courses. Courses with insufficient enrollment are subject to cancellation by university administration.

The Professional Counseling Program

The Professional Counseling Program includes the following:

Core Classes (3 credit hours each):

PCOU 5310 Survey of Abnormalities
PCOU 5320 Professional Orientation in Counseling
PCOU 5323 Legal and Ethical Issues
PCOU 5325 Career Development and Counseling
PCOU 5328 Group Counseling
PCOU 5331 Theories of Counseling
PCOU 5333 Counseling Skills and Techniques
PCOU 5335 Multicultural Counseling
PCOU 5341 Seminar in Counseling Research
PCOU 5359 Assessment in Counseling
PCOU 5385 Lifespan Development
PCOU 5391 Mental Health Psychopathology

Emphasis Classes (3 credit hours each):

PCOU 5321 Alcohol and Drug Abuse
PCOU 5322 Family Counseling
PCOU 5330 Crisis Counseling
PCOU 5339 Business Counseling Practice

Elective Class (3 credit hours):

PCOU 5329 Child and Adolescent (This class can be replaced with another elective with the approval by the program faculty.)

Specialization Areas:

PCOU 5394 Practicum in Counseling (3 credit hours)
PCOU 5395 Internship in Counseling (6 credit hours)

The current degree map/course rotation is provided in the appendices.

Accreditation

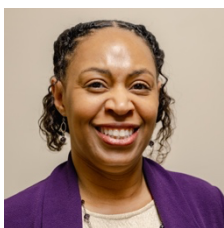
The Professional Counseling Program is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The program is accredited through April 30, 2034.

Financial Assistance

Financial Assistance for Domestic Students

Domestic students applying to the Professional Counseling Program have access to a variety of financial assistance options. These include federal financial aid such as grants, loans, and work-study opportunities, available through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Additionally, SFA offers a range of scholarships for students in the College of Health Professions, based on academic performance, financial need, and other criteria. Notably, recipients of SFA scholarships of at least \$1,000 are eligible for in-state tuition rates, regardless of their state of residence. Students are encouraged to explore these options through the university's Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships, and they may also apply for graduate assistantships, which provide stipends and tuition benefits.

Faculty and Staff



Nashae Darden-Turner, M.A., LPC-S
Counseling Clinic Director
Office: HS 201k
Phone: 936-468-6734
E-mail: nashae.turner@SFA.edu



Wendy Killam, PhD, NCC, LPC-S, CRC
Professor
Office: HS 229
Phone: 936-468-1366
E-mail: wkillam@SFA.edu



Ralf Schuster, PhD, MEd, BPsychSc, CRC
Assistant Professor
Office: HS 233
Phone: 936-468-2602
E-mail: ralf.schuster@SFA.edu



J. Scott Holder, PhD, MA, LPC-S, NCC
Assistant Professor
Office: HS 229
936-468-1102
E-mail: scott.holder@SFA.edu



Brian Hicks, PhD, LPC
Assistant Professor
Office: HS 228
936-468-1071
E-mail: brian.hicks@SFA.edu



Wycliffe W. Simiyu Njororai, PhD
Professor and Department Chair
Office: Norton HPE Complex 204c
936-468-1790
E-mail: Wycliffe.Njororai@SFA.edu

Professional Counseling Program Learning Outcomes

Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice (CACREP 2.F.1)

Students articulate the elements related to professional identity including the history and philosophy of the counseling profession, the value of professional organizations, the need for legal and ethical practice, and advocating for the profession and clients that are served.

Specialization Areas: Social and Cultural Diversity (CACREP 2.F.2)

Students demonstrate multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary for competency in working with a diverse population.

Human Growth and Development (CACREP 2.F.3)

Students differentiate the development across the lifespan and the impact on normal and abnormal functioning.

Career Development (CACREP 2.F.4)

Students analyze career development theory in the development of individualized and developmentally appropriate career development activities and interventions.

Counseling and Helping Relationships (CACREP 2.F.5)

Students apply the skills necessary to engage in an effective and therapeutic helping relationship.

Group Counseling and Group Work (CACREP 2.F.6)

Students demonstrate competency in preparing and facilitation of group counseling.

Assessment and Treatment Planning (CACREP 2.F.7)

Students identify effective assessment strategies to facilitate treatment planning.

Research and Program Evaluation (CACREP 2.F.8)

Students evaluate research methods to inform evidence-based practice.

Admissions to the Professional Counseling Program

Graduate School Admission Standards

Admission to the Professional Counseling Program is governed by the admission policies of the Stephen F. Austin State University Graduate School in conjunction with program-specific requirements. Thus, there are two steps to being admitted to the Counseling Program. Applicants must first be admitted to graduate school and then apply for admission to the counseling program.

Program Admission Standards

Clear admission to the Graduate School generally requires a minimum overall undergraduate GPA of 2.5 and a minimum GPA of 2.8 in the last 60 semester credit hours of undergraduate coursework. Applicants who meet these Graduate School standards and program criteria apply to the counseling program and will not be under any restrictions or conditions if accepted.

Potential students must apply to the counseling program and complete the required admission application. Applications are reviewed by program faculty, and selected applicants will be invited to participate in an interview for potential admission. As an accredited program that uses a cohort model, enrollment numbers are limited. This maintains accreditation standards and ensures quality instruction.

Students admitted under clear status must maintain a minimum graduate GPA of 3.0 to remain in good academic standing and to progress through the program.

The application deadlines for admission into the program are as follows:

March 1:	Fall Admission
October 1:	Spring Admission

Applications that were not completed before the above stated deadlines will not be considered for enrollment until the following semester.

International Student Visa Eligibility

Due to the program's blended format (online and face-to-face coursework), the program does not currently meet face-to-face instructional requirements necessary for student visa approval. Prospective international students should consult the Office of International Programs regarding current eligibility and options.

Provisional Admission

Applicants who do not meet the criteria for clear admission may be considered for provisional admission in accordance with Graduate School policy. Provisional admission is limited to applicants with an overall undergraduate or graduate GPA between 2.5 and 2.79.

Students admitted provisionally may enroll in up to nine (9) semester credit hours and must earn a grade of B or higher in all coursework completed during the provisional period. Failure to meet these requirements results in dismissal from the program. Upon successful completion of provisional coursework, admission status may be changed to clear admission.

Academic Performance and Continuation Standards

All students in the Professional Counseling Program, regardless of admission status, are required to maintain a minimum graduate GPA of 3.0 throughout the program. A graduate GPA below 3.0 results in academic probation. The GPA must be restored to 3.0 by the end of the following semester to continue in the program. Failure to do so results in dismissal.

Progression to Admission to Candidacy, Practicum, Internship, and eligibility to sit for the Comprehensive Examination requires maintenance of a minimum 3.0 graduate GPA, satisfactory academic progress, and acceptable professional dispositions as outlined in this handbook.

Additionally, students are expected to earn Bs or higher in all courses. Students who earn more than two Cs in the program will be dismissed from the program. To proceed to practicum, students must earn a B or higher in PCOU 5333 and PCOU 5328.

Transfer of Credits

Students who transfer to SFA from a different university may transfer 9-12 credit hours. The hours must be reviewed and approved by the Professional Counseling faculty to ensure they meet CACREP Standards and match with the courses we offer at SFA. Courses in skills and techniques, group counseling, practicum, and internship are not eligible for transfer. Once the credit hours are approved a transfer credit form must be completed

Requirements, Retention, and Readmission

Students in the Professional Counseling Program must meet specific requirements to gain and maintain their admission status. If a student fails to enroll in either a Spring or Fall semester, they must submit a letter of petition and request for re-entry to continue in the program.

Provisional Admission: Students with an undergraduate or graduate GPA between 2.5 and 2.69 may be granted provisional admission. These students can enroll in up to 9 hours of graduate study and must achieve no less than a B in each course to continue in the program. If successful, their status will change to clear admission. However, receiving a grade of C or lower while on provisional status results in suspension from the program.

Academic Performance: Students are expected to maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher throughout the program. A GPA drop below 3.0 triggers academic probation, and students must meet with their advisor to develop a plan for improvement. If a student receives three grades of C, regardless of their overall GPA, they will be dismissed from the university. Additionally, a grade of D or F in any core graduate course results in indefinite suspension from the program and loss of any academic grants or stipends.

Readmission and Appeals: Suspended students may appeal for re-entry to the program after a minimum one-semester suspension. If re-admitted, they must retake the failed course and work with their advisor to establish a retention plan.

Grades Withheld: Students must resolve any grades of WH (Grade Withheld) by the following semester. Failure to do so will result in the Incomplete being converted to a D or F on their transcript. In extenuating circumstances, students may request an extension from the course instructor, though such requests are not guaranteed to be approved.

Comprehensive Exams: Students are required to pass a comprehensive exam, typically in their final semester, to complete the program. Eligibility to sit for this exam also requires a minimum GPA of 3.0. If the GPA falls below 3.0, students must develop a plan with their advisor to improve their academic standing and ensure successful completion of the degree.

These policies are designed to maintain high academic standards and ensure that students are adequately prepared for professional practice in counseling.

Advising

Upon admission to the Professional Counseling Program, students are assigned a faculty advisor, as communicated via e-mail from the Professional Counseling administrative assistant. The advisor helps students navigate their academic journey, including completing a degree map, developing a course schedule, and selecting classes each semester.

Students are encouraged to contact their advisor before registration opens, as faculty may not be available between semesters. Timely advising is important since some courses have enrollment caps, and delayed advising may result in missing out on desired classes.

The advising relationship is collaborative, with students expected to actively engage with their advisor each semester. This includes confirming course selections and planning out the course of study at the beginning of the program. During the first full semester, students must meet with their advisor to finalize their degree plan, which outlines when each class should be taken.

Effective communication is essential for student success. Students should contact their advisor at least once each semester to ensure proper course registration and other academic matters.

Since advisors are also full-time faculty with other responsibilities, students should allow up to three workdays for a response to e-mails. Proper e-mail etiquette and timely communication are important to avoid issues like late registration and delayed course prerequisite approvals.

If a student feels that a different advisor would better suit their needs, they may request a reassignment by scheduling an appointment with the Program Coordinator or the Department Chair (if the Program Coordinator is their current advisor).

Professional Performance Development Evaluation

Students in the program are evaluated annually on various aspects of their professional development, including clinical competence, academic performance, and professional disposition. This evaluation occurs during the Spring semester, with all faculty participating in a systematic assessment. Students receive feedback during an advisement session before the end of the academic year.

Clinical Site Supervisor Evaluation: Site Supervisors conduct mid-term and final evaluations during PCOU 5394 Practicum in Counseling and PCOU 5395 Internship in Counseling. These assessments are conducted using the Clinical Site Supervisor Evaluation of Students.

Academic Performance Evaluation: Students' academic performance is evaluated based on their GPA. Maintaining satisfactory academic progress is crucial for continuing in the program.

Professional Disposition: Graduate faculty evaluate students' professional dispositions each Spring semester using the Professional Counseling Student Professional Disposition Evaluation. This evaluation considers attributes such as interpersonal skills, ethical behavior, and professional conduct.

Comprehensive Exam: In addition to ongoing evaluations, students must pass the Comprehensive Examination (CPCE) to demonstrate mastery of core counseling knowledge. The CPCE is a 160-question exam covering key content areas and is typically taken during the practicum semester. Students must pass this exam to continue in the program and eventually qualify for licensure. The exam assesses students' readiness for professional practice and provides valuable feedback on their strengths and areas needing improvement. This systematic evaluation process ensures that students develop the necessary skills and dispositions to succeed in the counseling profession.

Admission to Candidacy

Admission to Candidacy is a formal evaluation that occurs after the completion of 15 to 18 credit hours or two semesters of coursework. Candidacy reviews are conducted only during the fall and spring semesters. Students must apply for candidacy and obtain their advisor's signature.

The Candidacy Committee is composed of at least two faculty members. The committee reviews the student's academic progress, evaluates counseling dispositions, and considers any personal or professional concerns that may affect the student's ability to function effectively as a counselor-in-training. As part of this process, the committee conducts an interview during which students are asked questions about their experiences in the program. The purpose of the interview is to determine whether the student should be recommended for continuation in the program and to identify any areas requiring improvement.

Students who are not admitted to candidacy will be provided with a written remediation plan outlining specific concerns and a timeline for completion. Students who are denied candidacy may request one additional interview following completion of the remediation plan. If admission to candidacy is denied a second time, the student will not be permitted to continue in the program.

The following areas are considered in the Admission to Candidacy review:

Academic Progress: Students must demonstrate adequate academic progress to be admitted to candidacy. The program allows a maximum of two grades of C. Upon receiving a third C or a grade lower than a C in any course, the student will be dismissed from the program. Courses may be repeated to improve grades, but this does not remove the original C from the record when assessing academic progress. Additionally, students must earn a grade of B or higher in prerequisite courses before enrolling in subsequent courses. A GPA of 3.0 or above must be maintained to continue in the program. Falling below a 3.0 GPA results in academic probation for one semester; failure to raise the GPA to 3.0 within that semester leads to academic suspension, during which the student cannot enroll in classes for at least one semester.

Counselor Dispositions: The counseling profession requires strong interpersonal and communication skills, along with respect for individual values and beliefs. Faculty continuously evaluate students' fitness for the profession, addressing concerns as they arise. Each semester, faculty members complete a Student Evaluation Scale to identify early issues, which are communicated to the student's advisor. If concerns escalate, a Performance Fitness Evaluation is conducted, and a remediation plan is developed. Students are given opportunities to demonstrate growth, but failure to meet remediation goals or a persistent lack of professional fitness may result in dismissal from the program.

Personal Issues: Training or lecture materials may occasionally trigger personal issues that affect a student's effectiveness as a counseling student or counselor. In such cases, students may be required to seek individual counseling. Counseling services are available to students at no cost through SFA Counseling and Career Services.

Inappropriate Behavior: Inappropriate behavior towards peers or faculty, often triggered by personal issues, may indicate a student is unfit for collaboration or unable to accept feedback. Such behavior can interfere with a student's ability to function effectively as a counseling student or counselor. When this occurs, faculty may require the student to seek individual counseling. Persistent or severe issues, including violations of professional ethics or the SFA Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (see: <https://www.SFA.edu/docs/hops/04-106.pdf>), can lead to dismissal from the program. All students are expected to adhere to the ethical standards of the American Counseling Association.

Program Application Deadlines

Deadlines for applications are e-mailed to students each semester. These deadlines include the candidacy application, practicum application, and internship application. Students are responsible for monitoring deadlines and adhering to them. Failure to meet deadlines may delay progress through the program. Deadlines are:

September 1:

- Fall Candidacy
- Spring Practicum
- Spring Internship

February 1:

- Spring Candidacy
- Summer Practicum
- Summer Internship
- Fall Practicum
- Fall Internship

Missing a field placement deadline delays enrollment in practicum or internship until the next available term, which may extend the program timeline by one semester or more. Exceptions are considered only in documented extenuating circumstances.

Communication of Program Information

All program communications occur through the SFA e-mail system. Students must monitor SFA e-mail accounts regularly. SFA e-mail may be forwarded to another e-mail account to consolidate communications. Some employer e-mail systems may block SFA messages or route them to spam.

Experiential Process

Group Participation

Students are required to attend a group counseling experience for a minimum of 10 hours. Students are required to participate in a group counseling experience as a requirement of PCOU 5328. The group will be held after scheduled class and will be facilitated by an independent counselor.

Counseling Clinic

The departmental Counseling Clinic is a university-based training facility that provides counseling services and professional training opportunities for graduate counseling students and high-quality services for clients. The Counseling Clinic provides our graduate counseling students the opportunity to gain practical experience as a counselor in a controlled, supervised clinical setting.

The Counseling Clinic is a service provided by the Professional Counseling Program. It is a training clinic in which services are provided by graduate students who are in the Practicum and Internship portion of their education. All services are supervised by a Licensed Professional Counselor. The Counseling Clinic combines a therapeutic and community focus which offers a full continuum of counseling care. The service is geared to each person's needs. A client's progress is based on the person's ability to move through counseling according to individual readiness.

The program serves children, adolescents, and adults who are experiencing personal problems. The Counseling Clinic provides services that include individual, group, family, and couples counseling. Additional information is provided at the following link [Counseling Clinic](#).

Practicum Requirements

The program requires completion of PCOU 5394 Practicum in Counseling (3 credit hours). Practicum consists of a minimum of 100 clock hours, including at least 40 hours of direct

client service, completed in the Departmental Counseling Clinic under supervision.

Practicum

All students complete a supervised practicum in the Counseling Clinic. To support continuity of care, students remain with assigned clients until the transition period is complete. Practicum students complete 8 to 10 hours per week in the clinic, which may result in hours exceeding minimum requirements. During the practicum semester, clients are assigned through the clinic, and practicum students conduct counseling sessions. Client load depends on clinic caseload and practicum enrollment. Counseling sessions are videotaped.

Practicum students receive one hour of individual supervision with the Counseling Clinic Director, during which videos are reviewed. In addition, practicum students participate in an average of 1.5 hours of group supervision per week during the practicum semester. The practicum semester is intensive and requires on-campus attendance on multiple days each week.

The Comprehensive Exam

All candidates for graduate degrees in the Professional Counseling Program are required to successfully pass the Comprehensive Examination (CPCE) to demonstrate mastery of their coursework content. The CPCE serves multiple purposes, including assessing the quality of the program's training, providing individual feedback to students, and comparing student performance to national standards.

Examination Details: The CPCE, developed by the Center for Credentialing and Education (CCE), consists of 160 multiple-choice questions covering eight core content areas:

1. Human Growth and Development
2. Social and Cultural Diversity
3. Counseling and Helping Relationships
4. Group Counseling and Group Work
5. Career Development
6. Assessment and Testing
7. Research and Program Evaluation
8. Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice

Each section contains 20 questions, 17 of which are scored. The remaining three are pretest items used for statistical purposes and are not identified to the student. The exam provides a detailed breakdown of scores for each section, helping students identify areas where further study or improvement may be needed. The total time allotted for the exam is 3 hours and 45 minutes.

The CPCE is designed to give programs an objective view of the knowledge level of their students, allowing them to examine student functioning across various curricular areas. It encourages longitudinal self-study, compares students' performance to national data, and provides feedback on individual strengths and weaknesses. For students, the CPCE stimulates the integration of knowledge learned in separate courses and offers valuable insights for academic and professional development.

Registration and Fees: Students must register for the CPCE and pay a registration fee, as well as an additional fee for the SFA testing center. The exam is administered on campus every semester, typically around mid-semester during long semesters and in late June or early July during the summer. The specific administration dates and application deadlines are publicized each semester.

Eligibility and Attempts: To be eligible to take the CPCE, students must have an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher on at least 75% (i.e., 45 semester credit hours) of the graduate coursework completed. Once deemed eligible, students will receive further instructions on how to register, pay for, and sit for the exam.

If a student fails the CPCE on the first attempt, they may retake the exam one time during the next administration within the same semester. The exam can be taken a maximum of two times. If a student fails to obtain a satisfactory score after two attempts, they will be ineligible for graduation and will be dismissed from the Professional Counseling Program. Students who are dismissed from the program may continue their studies through the Graduate School by completing at least 24 additional credit hours to earn the fallback degree of Master of Interdisciplinary Studies (MIS).

For this reason, full attendance and active participation in all lectures, along with diligent preparation, are strongly recommended to successfully complete this important milestone. To maximize the likelihood of passing the comprehensive examination, students are encouraged to retain all course materials, including PowerPoint presentations and notes, from each course taken in the Professional Counseling program. Many students also find it helpful to use CPCE study guides, complete practice examinations, and participate in study groups.

Results: The Professional Counseling Program has set the passing score on the comprehensive examination at a raw score of 78. Students must meet this requirement to move on in their degree and enroll in PCOU 5395 Internship. Scores for each section, along with a total score, will be reported to the program. Additionally, the CPCE provides statistics on the program's students and national data, helping to maintain or improve the quality of the counseling program.

There is content overlap between CPCE content and the National Counselor Examination (NCE), so reviewing materials designed for the NCE can be beneficial. Students will be notified by the Program Coordinator of their results as soon as they become officially available. For more information about the CPCE, please visit the following link:

<https://www.cce-global.org/assessmentsandexams/cpce>

Field Experience

The Master of Arts in Professional Counseling program requires completion of a 100-hour supervised practicum in the departmental counseling clinic and a 600-hour supervised internship in an approved mental health treatment setting.

Practicum Requirements

As part of the Master of Arts in Professional Counseling program, students must complete a 100-hour supervised practicum in the Departmental Counseling Clinic.

Eligibility for Enrollment in PCOU 5394 Practicum in Counseling:

- Completion of required prerequisite coursework as listed on the practicum application, which include:
 - PCOU 5310 Survey of Abnormalities
 - PCOU 5320 Professional Orientation in Counseling
 - PCOU 5323 Legal and Ethical Issues
 - PCOU 5325 Career Development and Counseling
 - PCOU 5328 Group Counseling
 - PCOU 5331 Theories of Counseling
 - PCOU 5335 Multicultural Counseling
 - PCOU 5341 Seminar in Counseling
 - PCOU 5359 Research Assessment in Counseling
 - PCOU 5385 Lifespan Development
- Completion of the minimum number of 42 graduate credit hours required by the program prior to practicum (as listed on the practicum application).
- A minimum overall graduate GPA of **3.0** at the time of practicum enrollment.

Internship Requirements

The Master of Arts in Professional Counseling program requires completion of a 600-hour supervised internship in an approved mental health treatment setting. The internship is the final phase of the degree process and occurs after completion of all core coursework.

Preparation and Placement: Near the beginning of the practicum semester, students who are eligible for internship and plan to begin internship upon completion of practicum must submit an internship application to the program. Applications are due no later than October 1 for internships scheduled to begin in the following spring semester, or March 1 for internships beginning in the subsequent summer or fall semesters.

After applications are received, the Field Placement Coordinator contacts interested students and provides a clinical placement packet that includes orientation materials and

required approval forms. Meetings with the coordinator are recommended to discuss placement options and strategies for identifying an appropriate site. The program maintains relationships with a wide range of local clinical sites that offer supervision and a history of training counseling interns. Some internship placements may result in employment offers following graduation.

Students are responsible for contacting prospective agencies to inquire about application procedures, interviews, and additional requirements such as background checks or site-specific training.

Site Approval and Registration Clearance: Internship sites require prior approval by the Field Placement Coordinator. The site must have a current SFA Affiliation Agreement; new agreements may be established when appropriate. Formal approval of the site and internship placement is required before registration. The Field Placement Coordinator maintains a list of approved internship sites and provides written clearance to register once all placement requirements have been completed.

Eligibility for Enrollment in PCOU 5395 Internship in Counseling:

- Successful passing of the CPE examination.
- Successful completion of PCOU 5394 Practicum in Counseling.

Internship Completion: Internships are an intensive, field-based training experience. Students complete PCOU 5395 Internship (3 credit hours per semester) over the two consecutive final semesters in the program.

The internship consists of two 3-credit-hour courses requiring a total of 600 clock hours, including 240 direct client contact hours and 360 indirect service hours. Students who do not complete at least half of the required hours during the first internship semester (120 direct and 180 indirect hours), but who otherwise meet all course requirements, may receive a WH (Grade Withheld) grade for that semester. Students complete their clinical hours at an approved site and attend a weekly class that includes an average of 1 ½ hours of group supervision.

Internship placements may occur in a wide range of settings, including community agencies, private practices, schools, colleges, hospitals, nonprofit organizations, and state agencies. Students work closely with the Field Placement Coordinator to identify, secure, and obtain approval for an internship site, including completion of a formal affiliation agreement. Each site must provide a qualified on-site supervisor who holds at least a master's degree, possesses a full professional license, and has a minimum of two years of professional practice experience. On-site supervision must include one hour of individual supervision per week, with additional consultation as needed. Internship placements may be paid or unpaid; therefore, students are encouraged to plan for necessary financial resources in anticipation of the internship semesters.

Counseling Licensure

Background Checks

Students should be aware that certification and licensure processes include background checks. A history of conviction may result in denial of certification or licensure. Students are responsible for communicating with certification and licensure boards to determine whether personal legal history may result in disqualification for certification or licensure. Practicum and internship sites may also require background checks.

Licensure

The Master's Program in Professional Counseling at SFA is nationally accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). This accreditation allows students to be eligible to sit for the National Counselor Exam (NCE) during their final semester of the program or after graduation. The NCE is a requirement for becoming a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in Texas.

To obtain LPC licensure in Texas, graduates must also complete additional requirements beyond passing the NCE. These include completing 3,000 post-master's hours of supervised experience, with 1,500 of those hours involving direct client service. This supervision must be conducted by a licensed LPC supervisor in an approved setting.

The Texas Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors, designated by the Texas Legislature, is the licensing authority for individuals seeking to become LPCs in Texas. Anyone wishing to practice as an LPC must submit the appropriate credentials for evaluation and pass the required examination.

While graduates of the SFA Master's Program in Professional Counseling are well-prepared with the educational qualifications needed to apply for LPC licensure in Texas, they must complete the required 3,000-hour internship under supervision to meet all licensure requirements. Typically, two and a half to three years of full-time, post-graduate supervised experience are required to complete the requirements for full licensure.

Students are encouraged to contact the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors directly to verify current licensure requirements, as requirements may change. Students are responsible for obtaining the most current licensure information.

For more details, students should consult the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors at: <https://www.bhec.texas.gov/texas-state-board-of-examiners-of-professional-counselors/index.html>

Policy on Endorsement of Students

Students seeking recommendations for credentialing, licensure, or employment should contact the faculty members from whom endorsements are requested. Faculty provide endorsements only for students who meet the standards for the relevant certification, licensure, or position.

Faculty members providing endorsements must have sufficient familiarity with the student's competencies, skill level, and ethical behavior. If professional or ethical standards of the program or the counseling profession are not met, an endorsement cannot be provided. Faculty may recommend graduates for positions for which posting requirements are met and competence to perform stated responsibilities has been demonstrated.

Retention, Remediation, and Dismissal

Due Process

Students who are identified as at risk will have the opportunity to meet with the faculty to hear their concerns, provide additional information that may be relevant. Based on the outcome of the meeting with faculty, a student may be placed on a remediation plan. Students have the right to appeal the faculty decision to the Department Chair. Students wishing to appeal against the faculty decision will need to discuss the appeal process with the Department Chair.

Remediation Plan

Remediation can involve repeating classes, other required professional development activities, and attending personal counseling. The program faculty will develop the goals for the plan, identify the required target measures of accomplishment and documentation of goal attainment, and the timeframe for completion. Students who are mandated to attend personal counseling will be required to sign a release of information that will allow the faculty to obtain information about the number of sessions attended, willingness to address the identified concerns, and progress toward the identified goals. Personal information will not be shared with the faculty. Failure to complete the remediation plan will result in removal from the program.

Course Grade Appeals

The SFA grade appeal policy, which can be found here, <https://www.SFA.edu/docs/hops/04-109.pdf>, provides a formal process for students to appeal academic decisions. All relevant documentation under consideration at each step is forwarded to the appropriate parties at the next procedural level. Any further appeal must be made within ten (10) business days from the conclusion of each step. Recommendations or decisions at each level are generally made within four weeks of receiving the appeal. The burden of proof rests with the student throughout the process.

A student may appeal a final grade if inappropriate criteria were used in determining the grade, the instructor did not adhere to stated procedures or grading standards, or other compelling reasons exist to change the grade. A student may not appeal due to general dissatisfaction with a final grade or disagreement with the instructor's professional judgment regarding the quality of the student's work.

It is important to distinguish grounds for grade appeal from questions about quality of instruction. Successful grade appeals must be based on evidence that the student performed at a level sufficient to warrant a different grade. It is important for students to bring to the instructor's and the department's attention perceived deficiencies in instruction, but these by themselves do not normally warrant a change in grade.

Aside from final grades, a student may appeal substantial and/or unjustified deviation from academic policies, procedures, and/or requirements.

Initial Appeal to the Instructor: The first step in the final course grade appeal process at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) requires submission of a written appeal to the instructor responsible for the grade. This appeal must be made within 30 calendar days after the first day of class of the following semester, either fall or spring. The appeal must demonstrate that the instructor did not adhere to stated procedures or grading standards must provide other compelling reasons for the appeal. General dissatisfaction with the grade or disagreement with the instructor's professional judgment is not sufficient grounds for an appeal.

If the instructor is unavailable or extenuating circumstances exist, the academic unit head may grant an extension to the deadline. The instructor reviews the appeal and engages with the student to attempt to resolve the issue. If the outcome is not satisfactory, the appeal may proceed to the next level.

Appeal to the Academic Unit Head: If the instructor's response is not satisfactory, a written appeal may be submitted to the academic unit head. The academic unit head gathers written statements from both the student and the instructor. The academic unit

head reviews the information provided and makes a written recommendation, which is communicated to both the student and the instructor.

Appeal to the Academic Dean: If the dispute remains unresolved after the academic unit head's recommendation, a written appeal may be submitted to the academic dean. Upon receiving the appeal, the dean notifies both the student and the instructor of the continued appeal process. The dean may request additional information or responses from the instructor.

At this stage, the dean may refer the appeal to the relevant college council for review. If the college council does not have student members, the dean may appoint up to two students recommended by the Student Government Association to participate as voting members. The college council reviews all relevant documentation and submits its recommendation to the dean, who then provides a written recommendation to the involved parties.

Final Appeal to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs: If the issue remains unresolved after the dean's recommendation, a final written appeal may be submitted to the provost and vice president for academic affairs. The provost may request additional information or responses from involved parties and may consult the college council for advice.

The provost reviews all documentation and provides a final recommendation, which is communicated to the student, the instructor, and any other parties involved in the appeal process. This recommendation is generally considered final, and the appeal process concludes at this level.

Timelines and Deadlines: Throughout the appeal process, strict timelines are enforced. Students must submit their appeals within 10 business days from the conclusion of each step in the process. Recommendations at each level of appeal are typically made within four weeks of receiving the appeal. These timelines ensure that the appeal process is conducted efficiently and that all parties receive timely resolutions.

Faculty members are responsible for the evaluation of student course work conducted in their class and, under normal circumstances, are the sole judge of the grades assigned in their course.

Professional Organizations

A critical element of professional identity is related to association with the greater counseling profession. Students are required to join a professional organization upon entering the program and provide proof of membership. The Texas Counseling Association is the professional association representing counselors in the State of Texas. Divisions within TCA represent specialty areas. Numerous national organizations also exist, including the American Counseling Association and the American Mental Health Counseling Association. Most professional organizations offer reduced membership and conference rates for students. Attendance at least one professional conference is encouraged during the period of enrollment.

TCA encourages student participation through volunteer service on committees or at conferences. The annual Professional Growth Conference is held in November and has activities and sessions specifically developed to meet the needs of graduate students. During legislative sessions, students are encouraged to participate in field trips to one of the three TCA Advocacy Days. In addition, Piney Woods Counseling Association is a chapter of TCA and holds 3 meetings each year in which professional development credits can be obtained.

Expectations of Students

Students are expected to abide by all policies in this handbook and all university policies. Students are expected to meet with their advisors, complete all forms in a timely fashion and demonstrate professional behaviors in classes and at fieldwork sites. Students are expected to embrace a professional counselor identity and follow the ethical codes and rules and regulations within Texas for counselors. Students are expected to be committed to learning and academic excellence and to meet all established deadlines. Students are expected to actively address any personal issues that might impair their ability to be competent, ethical, and effective counseling students.

Personal Counseling Services

There are resources that students can utilize should they need counseling services and other assistance.

On-Campus Resources:

The Dean of Students Office (Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby)

www.SFA.edu/deanofstudents

E-mail: dos@SFA.edu

Ph.: (936) 468-7249

SFA Counseling Services

Health and Wellness Hub (at the corner of E. College and Raguet)

www.SFA.edu/counselingservices

Ph.: (936) 468-2401

SFA Counseling Clinic

www.sfasu.edu/alliedhealth/clinics-labs/counseling-clinic

Human Services Building, Room 202

Ph.: (936) 468-1041

To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person—mind, body and spirit.

www.SFA.edu/thehub

thehub@SFA.edu

Ph.: (936) 468-4008

Services include:

- Health Services.
- Counseling Services.
- Student Outreach and Support.
- Food Pantry.
- Wellness Coaching.
- Alcohol and Other Drug Education

Off-Campus Resources:

Burke Mental Health Services

24-hour Crisis Line

Ph.: (800) 392-8343

National Suicide Prevention

Ph.: 988

Suicide Prevention Lifeline
Ph.: (800) 273-8255 (TALK)

Crisis Text Line
Text HELLO to 741-741

Disability Services

To obtain disability-related accommodations, alternate formats, and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS notifies the course instructor and outlines accommodations and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services promptly may delay accommodations. For additional information, go to:
<http://www.SFA.edu/disabilityservices/>.

Technology Requirements

All students are required to have access to a laptop or desktop computer for academic and testing purposes. For questions regarding laptop hardware or software, please contact The SFA Help Desk at: [ITS Portal Home](#) or 936-468-HELP. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that his/her computer has the required software installed upon admission, and it is updated throughout his/her time as a student. Students will be expected to use Zoom and Brightspace/D2L.

Time Limitations

To ensure that graduates are trained in the most current professional environment, SFA requires completion of the master's degree within a six-year period. Coursework that is prior to the six-year period will not be accepted for credit. Students can request a review of the content of the course syllabus to determine whether it encompasses current professional knowledge. Students will also be asked to demonstrate retention of the knowledge.

Timeline for Required Actions

What Action to be Taken:	What Action Should be Taken:	Where to Secure Forms/Information:	Whom to See:
Develop class schedule and complete degree plan	After notice of admission.	Advisor will provide current degree map	Faculty Advisor will be assigned to each student
Attend mandatory New Student Orientation	Check e-mail for important dates and locations for New Student Orientation.	Receive an e-mail from the Program Coordinator about dates and times	Program Coordinator
Apply for Admission to Candidacy	After completing 15 -18 semester hours of graduate work.	Forms are available from administrative assistant – e-mail counselingprogram@SFA.edu	Administrative Assistant
Apply for Practicum	Prior to application deadline semester before enrollment.	Forms are available from administrative assistant – e-mail counselingprogram@SFA.edu	Administrative Assistant
Prepare for Comprehensive Exam	Comprehensive Exam (CPCE) is taken during enrollment of practicum.	Practicum Instructor will help with sign up process for CPCE	Practicum Instructor

Apply for Internship	Prior to application deadline semester before enrollment. For fall internship apply by Feb 1, for Spring internship apply by Sept 1.	Forms are available from administrative assistant – e-mail counselingprogram@SFA.edu	Administrative Assistant
Complete endorsement for LPC in Texas	Students must have signature from Field placement Coordinator for LPC endorsement.	BHEC forms for LPC Application	https://www.bhec.texas.gov/
Apply for graduation, pay graduation fee	By deadline in current Graduate School Bulletin.	SFA Website	Registrar
Purchase cap and gown	Mid semester during last semester of enrollment.	Campus Bookstore	Campus Bookstore

Appendix A – Degree Maps

Professional Counseling Degree Map

Course Sequence for 9 Hours (Students Begin Program in Fall)

Master of Arts in Professional Counseling - Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC)

YEAR ONE		
Semester 1 Fall	Semester 2 Spring	Semester 3 Summer
PCOU 5331 Theories	PCOU 5310 Abnormal	PCOU 5323 Ethics (online)
PCOU 5320 Professional Orientation	PCOU 5341 Research	PCOU 5335 Multicultural Counseling (online)
PCOU 5385 Lifespan (online)	PCOU 5325 Career (online)	
9 hours	9 hours	6 hours
YEAR TWO		
Semester 4 Fall	Semester 5 Spring	Semester 6 Summer
PCOU 5328 Group	PCOU 5394 Practicum	PCOU 5339 Business Practices (online)
PCOU 5359 Assessment	PCOU 5391 Mental Health & Psych (online)	PCOU 5330 Crisis (online)
PCOU 5333 Skills and Tech	PCOU 5322 Family Counseling (Zoom)	
9 hours	9 hours	6 hours
YEAR THREE		
Semester 7 Fall	Semester 8 Spring	Semester 9
PCOU 5395 Internship (3 Hours)	PCOU 5396 Internship (3 Hours)	
PCOU 5321 Substance Abuse (online)	PCOU 5329 Child and Adolescent (online) Or another approved elective	
6 hours	6 Hours	

Professional Counseling Degree Map

Course Sequence for 9 Hours (Students Begin Program in Spring)

Master of Arts in Professional Counseling - Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC)

YEAR ONE		
Semester 1 Spring	Semester 2 Summer	Semester 3 Fall
PCOU 5331 Theories	PCOU 5323 Ethics (online)	PCOU 5310 Abnormal
PCOU 5320 Professional Orientation	PCOU 5335 Multicultural Counseling (online)	PCOU 5341 Research
PCOU 5325 Career (online)		PCOU 5385 Lifespan (online)
9 hours	6 hours	9 hours
YEAR TWO		
Semester 4 Spring	Semester 5 Summer	Semester 6 Fall
PCOU 5333 Skills and Tech	PCOU 5339 Business Practice (online)	PCOU 5321 Substance Abuse
PCOU 5328 Group	PCOU 5329 Child and Adolescent (online) Or another approved elective	PCOU 5394 Practicum
PCOU 5359 Assessment		PCOU 5391 Mental Health & Psych (online)
9 hours	6 hours	9 hours
YEAR THREE		
Semester 7 Spring	Semester 8 Summer	Semester 9 Fall
PCOU 5395 Internship (3 Hours)	PCOU 5395 Internship (3 Hours)	
PCOU 5322 Family Counseling (zoom)	PCOU 5330 Crisis Counseling (online)	
6 hours	6 hours	

Appendix B

The Student Evaluation Scale is used in certain classes to help identify issues students are having and to facilitate early intervention to help ensure student success.

Student Evaluation Scale

As part of the process of ongoing evaluation, students' academic performance, interpersonal skills, and counseling dispositions will be assessed each semester as indicators of the likelihood of success within the Professional Counseling Program and eventual performance as competent, professional master's level counselors. The SFA Professional Counseling Program can recommend counseling or an independent mental health evaluation prior to granting degree candidacy. This information can be used for evaluative and decision-making purposes regarding continued participation in the program up to the point of graduation in order to protect the public welfare.

Potential as a graduate student and counselor

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very limited at this time	Low potential at this time			Average Potential at this time		High Potential at this time

Evaluation Areas							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know

Identifiable Interest in Welfare of Others

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------

Receptivity to Feedback

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------

Academic Potential

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------

Interpersonal Skills

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------

Acceptance of Diverse Ideas and Values

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------

Professionalism and Ethical Behavior

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------

Social/Emotional Capacity to Work with Others in a Helping Capacity

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------

Ability for Self-Awareness

- ☐ I support this student's continuation in the program.
- ☐ I do not support this student's continuation in the program
- ☐ Insufficient information to render judgement.

Please provide an explanation of non-support on the reverse side of this form.

Signature of Professor

Date

Appendix C- PFE

Performance Fitness Evaluation N No Opportunity to observe 0 Does not meet criteria for program level 1 Meets criteria only minimally or inconsistently for program level 2 Always meets minimum requirements for program level 3 Always performs above minimum requirements in a satisfactory manner					
Counseling Skills and Abilities					
1. The student demonstrates the ability to establish relationships in such a manner that a therapeutic working alliance can be created	N	0	1	2	3
2. The student demonstrates therapeutic communication skills including:					
a. Creating appropriate structure - setting the boundaries of the helping frame and maintaining boundaries throughout the work such as setting parameters for meeting time and place, maintaining time limits, etc.	N	0	1	2	3
b. Understanding content - understanding the primary elements of the client's story	N	0	1	2	3
c. Understanding context - understanding the uniqueness of the story elements and their underlying meanings	N	0	1	2	3
d. Responding to feelings - identifying client affect and addressing those feelings in a therapeutic manner	N	0	1	2	3
e. Congruence - genuineness; external behavior consistent with internal affect	N	0	1	2	3
f. Establishing and communicating empathy - taking the perspective of the client without over-identifying.	N	0	1	2	3
g. Non-verbal communication - demonstrates effective use of head, eyes, hands, feet, posture, voice, attire, etc.	N	0	1	2	3
h. Immediacy - staying in the here and now	N	0	1	2	3
i. Timing - responding at the optimal moment	N	0	1	2	3
j. Intentionality - responding with a clear understanding of the therapist's therapeutic intention	N	0	1	2	3
k. Self-disclosure-skillful and carefully-considered for a specific therapeutic purpose	N	0	1	2	3
3. The student demonstrates awareness of power differences in the therapeutic relationship and manages these differences therapeutically.	N	0	1	2	3
4. The student collaborates with the client to establish clear therapeutic goals.	N	0	1	2	3
5. The student facilitates movement toward client goals.	N	0	1	2	3
6. The student demonstrates adequate knowledge of a wide variety of theoretical bases.	N	0	1	2	3
7. The student demonstrates the capacity to match appropriate interventions to the presenting clinical profile in a theoretically consistent manner.	N	0	1	2	3
8. The student creates a safe clinical environment.	N	0	1	2	3
9. The student demonstrates analysis and resolution of ethical dilemmas	N	0	1	2	3

Professional Responsibility					
1. The student conducts self in an ethical manner so as to promote confidence in the counseling profession	N	0	1	2	3
2. The student relates to peers, professors, and others in a manner consistent with stated professional standards.	N	0	1	2	3
3. The student demonstrates sensitivity to real and ascribed differences in power between themselves and others.	N	0	1	2	3
4. The student demonstrates application of legal requirements relevant to counseling training and practice.	N	0	1	2	3
Competence					
1. The student recognizes the boundaries of her/his particular competencies and limitations of her/his expertise.	N	0	1	2	3
2. The student takes responsibility for compensating for her/his deficiencies.	N	0	1	2	3
3. The student takes responsibility for assuring client welfare when encountering the boundaries of her/his expertise.	N	0	1	2	3
4. The student provides only those services and applies only those techniques for which she/he is qualified by education, training or experience.	N	0	1	2	3
5. The student demonstrates basic cognitive, affective, sensory and motor capacities to respond therapeutically to clients.	N	0	1	2	3
Maturity					
1. The student demonstrates appropriate self-control (such as anger control, impulse control) in interpersonal relationships with faculty, peers, and clients.	N	0	1	2	3
2. The student is honest, fair and respectful of others.	N	0	1	2	3
3. The student is aware of his/her own belief systems, values, needs and limitations and the effect of these on his/her work.	N	0	1	2	3
4. Student demonstrates ability to receive, integrate and utilize feedback from peers, teachers and supervisors.	N	0	1	2	3
5. The student exhibits appropriate levels of self-assurance, confidence and trust in own ability.	N	0	1	2	3
6. The student follows professionally recognized problem solving processes, seeking to informally solve problems first with the individual(s) with whom the problem exists.	N	0	1	2	3
Integrity					
1. The student refrains from making statements which are false, misleading or deceptive.	N	0	1	2	3
2. The student avoids improper and potentially harmful dual relationships.	N	0	1	2	3
3. The student respects the fundamental rights, dignity and worth of all people.	N	0	1	2	3
4. The student respects the rights of individuals to privacy, confidentiality and choices regarding self-determination and autonomy.	N	0	1	2	3
5. The student respects cultural, individual and role differences, including those due to age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language and socioeconomic status.	N	0	1	2	3