



Counselor Education Student Handbook

Discover the Counseling Buff in You



Counselor Education Program
College of Education and Social Sciences
West Texas A & M University
Amarillo Center
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COUNSELOR EDUCATION PROGRAM

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Statement of Philosophy

The Counselor Education program faculty at West Texas A&M University (WTAMU) adheres to a scientist-practitioner model of training. Consistent with this approach are the program goals of graduating counselors who: (a) demonstrate competency in providing professional services to people from diverse cultural backgrounds; (b) can effectively evaluate research relevant to the profession; and (c) are committed to continued professional development and to evaluating their clinical and programmatic interventions. In addition to specific job settings, the faculty believes that it is also our mission to instill a strong sense of professional identity and appreciation for the rich knowledge base of the counseling profession. It is also our mission to aid our graduates in becoming certified and/or licensed in their chosen counseling specialty.

The clinical approach of the Counselor Education program is developmental, educative, and preventative in nature. While education for remediation of pathology is a part of counselor education, the program's emphasis is mental health. Our basic commitment is to prepare students to facilitate optimal development of persons by increasing clients' understanding of not only those forces within themselves and their environment that impede growth but also of those assets within themselves that empower them.

The Counselor Education faculty members are committed to offering a program of graduate study that will lead to the personal growth of students from a wide range of backgrounds (racial, ethnic, religious, geographical, socio-economic, etc.) that ultimately will benefit the diverse client groups they will serve. The program faculty recognizes and honors the individuality of people, variation in developmental levels, and cultural diversity. Facilitation of the growth of individuals necessitates addressing both their common needs and issues and their individual differences. Program faculty believe it is important for students to develop a diverse range of knowledge and to formulate their own counseling approach while under the guidance of faculty and field-based experience supervisors.

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Program Information

Overview of Programs

West Texas A&M University offers two professional training programs for future counselors; School Counseling and Master of Arts in Counseling. The Counselor Education programs are designed to prepare students for positions in schools, mental health agencies, and human services agencies. The *Master of Art in Counseling* program is designed to meet the academic and clinical requirements established by the Texas Board of Professional Counselors. The *School Counseling* program is designed to meet the academic and practicum requirements established by the Texas State Department of Education for licensure as preK-12 school counselors.

Mission Statement

The programs in Counselor Education at the West Texas A&M University are designed to prepare students with the culturally competent knowledge and skills to practice effectively and ethically in service positions in schools, human services agencies, and mental health facilities. Our philosophy of training is consistent with the scientist-practitioner model and includes emphases on self-exploration, human growth and development, and an appreciation of cultural diversity and social justice.

Our goals are to:

1. Create a supportive, safe, and collaborative learning environment for students from diverse backgrounds and cultures.
2. Develop competent, critically thoughtful practitioners who integrate theory, research, and experiential knowledge to accurately assess conditions, promote well-being, and assist clients with their mental health goals.
3. Develop professionals who are aware of relevant ethical standards and guidelines, who are able to engage in ethical decision-making, and who are ethical in their functioning as professional.
4. Facilitate students' personal development by encouraging them to engage in continuous personal and professional self-study and re-evaluation so they may acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills essential for the practice of counseling.
5. Ensure that only qualified, ethical, and professional counselors-in-training enter the field of counseling.

The Counselor Education faculty is committed to the belief that the development of effective counselors best occurs when theoretical knowledge and practical application are interlaced. A majority of courses include both academic content and appropriate practical experiences. At times, students are required to role-play as clients for other counselors-in-training and to participate in group counseling experiences. Students in the clinical mental health and school counseling programs are provided actual counseling experience under faculty supervision prior to assuming professional responsibilities in their internship. All students are expected to use the most current edition of the American Counseling Association's [*Code of Ethics*](#) and the American School Counseling Associations [*Code of Ethics*](#) as a guide for their behavior throughout their program.

Admissions Policies and Procedures for Entry-Level Programs

Admissions Process

Step One:

Apply to the West Texas A&M University Graduate School. Students may find additional information in applying to the Graduate School at: <https://www.wtamu.edu/academics/graduate-school/apply/index.html> . Admittance by the Graduate School does not guarantee acceptance into the Counselor Education program.

Step Two:

Complete formal online program application to the Counselor Education Department:

MA Counseling Program: <https://www.wtamu.edu/academics/college-education-social-sciences/department-education/programs/graduate/counseling/counselor-education-program-application.html>

MEd. School Counseling Program OR MEd. School Counseling + LPC:

<https://www.wtamu.edu/files/docs/academics/college-education-social-sciences/dept-education/School%20Counseling%20Program%20application1.pdf>

A resume and official copies of your transcripts are also required submitted directly to graduate school

Step Three:

References will be completed through the Graduate School Application.

You will be responsible for procuring the three references: two professional/academic and one personal reference. Those seeking **School Counseling Certification** must include a reference from an administrative official under whom you have served.

Admissions Requirements

Following are criteria designed to provide guidelines for prospective students. Meeting these minimum criteria does not guarantee admission. Each applicant to an entry-level program must:

Counseling and School Counseling

1. Admission by the graduate school.
2. Complete application with written interview for the counseling program.
3. Resume
4. Three letters of recommendation
5. Undergraduate GPA of 2.75 or higher in the last 60 hours of course work.

School Counseling only

6. TEA ID number
7. Teacher certification, with one year of classroom teaching experience is highly preferred, but applicants will need to have an affiliation with a school in order to complete practicum requirements. Students who are unable to set up a practicum in K-12 settings (public or private) will not be permitted to advance in the program.

8. Service Record, for certified teachers. It can be provided by Human Resources at your hiring school district.

Dates for application consideration per semester are as follows:

For a spring semester start date: January 10th

For summer start date: May 20th

For fall start date: August 15th

Program Faculty Advising and Registration Procedures

Upon formal admittance to the Counseling program, students are assigned a Counselor Education faculty advisor. **The faculty advisor will provide students with a program rotation upon admission.** The rotation will include the courses the student will be completing during the program. Upon beginning their studies at WTAMU, students initiate contact with their assigned advisors and consult regularly with them throughout their program. Faculty members work closely with their advisees to plan the degree program most appropriate to the student's professional goals. Each student's courses and completed program are subject to the approval of the faculty advisor. Dates for fall, spring, and summer pre-registration are posted on-line during each preceding semester.

Degree Regulations for All Programs

All degree programs in Counselor Education must be approved by the student's advisor and meet the following school and program requirements:

1. The program requirements established by the faculty must be successfully completed.
2. Students must meet the current passing requirements of the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE). The passing score for each test is based on the scores of other counselor education programs who use the CPCE as a non-exit comprehensive exam graduation requirement.
3. Students may take equivalent courses listed on the Program of Study at other universities with the approval of their advisor. No more than 12 semester hours of degree credit may be transferred from another institution or program unless a formal cooperative program arrangement exists between this school and that institution. The student's advisor must approve transfer of credit.
4. **All skills-based classes** (e.g., Essential Helping Skills, Practicum, and Internship) must be taken at the WTAMU for credit to be applied for degree programs in Counselor Education.
5. All work, including transferred credit, must be completed within a period of 6 years from initial matriculation.
6. All MA Counseling and MEd. School Counseling + LPC students must complete COUN 6365 – Diagnosis and Treatment and COUN 6375 – Helping Skills before completing Practicum and Internship. All MEd. School Counseling students must complete COUN 6375 – Helping Skills before completing Practicum.
7. An application for graduation must be filed by the date established to the Graduate School. Students are responsible to discuss this with their advisor and completing the appropriate paper work.

Scholarships Available for Application

All students are encouraged to apply for funding, whether it is through financial aid or through scholarships as we understand that graduate school is an investment in your future. To assist you with starting point of references, please review the links below.

- [WT Office of Financial Aid](#)
- [List of WTAMU Scholarships](#)
- [Nationally Competitive Scholarships](#)

MA Counseling Program

The Counseling program is designed to prepare ethical, culturally competent counselors to provide professional counseling services in various clinical settings. The faculty-approved settings where students have served their internships include: mental health centers, state hospitals and training schools, facilities for clients with dual diagnoses, as well as multipurpose mental health agencies.

Objectives

In addition to meeting the objectives, by completion of the Counseling program, graduates will:

1. Be able to conduct clinical intakes and psychosocial histories.
2. Develop the knowledge and skills to assist clients from a variety of diverse perspectives (e.g., chronic mental illness, developmental issues, cultural issues such as race/ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, etc.).
3. Demonstrate sound assessment and diagnostic skills.
4. Use current research to develop effective counseling treatment plans for persons with normal development issues and persons with mental illness.
5. Clearly articulate the role of professional counselors in mental health settings.

Program Requirements

The Counseling option offers a comprehensive array of studies that integrate the historical, philosophical, societal, cultural, economic, and political dimensions of mental health counseling with the roles, functions, and professional identity of clinical counselors. Diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mental and emotional disorders are included in the coursework. Students will be awarded a M.A. degree upon completion of the Counseling program.

Coursework

The Counseling program requires a minimum of 60 (core and elective) credit hours.

Practicum and Internship Requirements

Students' field experiences are comprised of a 300-hour Practicum and Internship experience in appropriate and approved mental health settings. **Of the 300 hours required, a minimum of 100 must be direct client contact.** Students attend weekly group supervision in their practicum and internship courses and also receive weekly individual supervision from their on-site supervisors. It is the student's responsibility to find a site supervisor and a site.

Example of a M.A. Counseling Degree Plan

Courses	Hours	Courses	Hours
EDPD 6303 – Education Research	3	COUN 6371 – Introduction to Psychopharmacology	3
COUN 6305 – Theories of Counseling	3	COUN 6372 Assessment and Testing	3
COUN 6308 – Ethical Standards and Practices of Counseling	3	COUN 6373 - Couples & Family Counseling	3
COUN 6309 – Advanced Ethics and Legal Aspects of Counseling	3	COUN 6374 – Introduction to Addictions Counseling	3
COUN 6324 – Counseling Interventions with Children and Adolescents	3	COUN 6375 - Essential Helping Skills	3
COUN 6327 - Career Counseling	3	EDPD 6329 - Human Development	3
COUN 6328 - Group Counseling	3	COUN 6399 –Practicum	3
COUN 6330 - Cross-cultural Counseling	3	COUN 6398 – LPC Internship	3(6)
COUN 6334 – Crisis Counseling	3	<i>Electives 3-6 hours</i>	3(6)
COUN 6365 – Diagnosis & Treatment in Counseling	3	CPCE Exam	
	(27)		(33)
		Total Hours	60
Electives: Choose 1-2 (3) of the following:			
COUN 6326 – Introduction to Play Therapy		COUN 6392 - Special Topics in Counseling: Includes Adventure Therapy, Grief/Loss, or Stress Management	
COUN 6376 - Sexuality Across the Lifespan		COUN 6394 - Independent Studies in Counseling: Research & Project Oriented (with approval only)	

School Counseling

The master's degree major in School Counseling is designed to prepare counselors to promote the academic, career, and personal/social development of school-aged youth in the context of a comprehensive developmental school counseling program. Further, our goal is to prepare ethical, culturally competent school counselors who address individual and systemic barriers to educational achievement and personal development. Students are prepared to work professionally with children from the kindergarten level through high school.

Objectives

Graduates of the program will demonstrate the ability to facilitate student development in the three broad areas described in the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) National Standards: academic development, career development, and personal/social development. As a result of participating in the school counselor preparation program, graduates will be able to:

1. Plan, design, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive developmental school counseling program
2. Clearly articulate the role of the school counselor and his/her contributions to the mission of a school program
3. Provide consultation to parents and teachers to assist them in helping their children and students acquire the skills needed for school success
4. Select developmentally appropriate interventions to assist students in making educational transitions
5. Demonstrate knowledge and use of emerging technologies in education and school counseling.

Program Requirements

The School Counseling program option (M.Ed.) is designed for the professional preparation of school counselors for grades pre-K through 12. It is broadly based and interdisciplinary in nature. Effectiveness in school settings requires skills in working with individuals and groups, functioning as a school team member, and consulting with teachers and parents.

Coursework

The School Counseling program option includes 48 semester-hours of courses related to school counseling preparation for different schoolwork settings. Of these hours, a minimum of 3 credit hours is required in a supervised practicum setting. Students will be awarded the M.Ed. degree upon successful completion of the School Counseling program.

All students who are interested in completing both their school counseling program and their counseling track need to inform and discuss this with their advisor. The students will then be enrolled in the Med. + LPC track which is a 60-credit hour program.

Practicum and Internship Requirements

Students in the School Counseling program focus their training on planning, implementing, and evaluating guidance and counseling programs to meet the unique social, physical, intellectual, and emotional needs of children and adolescents in school settings. **Students are responsible for securing access to practicum sites in local and neighboring school districts.** Students' practicum is 160

hours, of which 60 must be direct service contact (e.g., classroom guidance lessons, individual or small group counseling, etc.) under the supervision of a Certified School Counselor (CSC).

Practicum Course Sequencing

Students will complete COUN 6375 Essential Helping Skills, and then complete a 160 – hour practicum experiences. All practicum placements are based on the student’s intended work setting.

Example of a School Counseling Degree Plan

Courses	Hours	Courses	Hours
COUN 6304 - Intro to Research	3	COUN 6330 - Cross-cultural Counseling	3
COUN 6305 - Theories	3	COUN 6372 - Assessment	3
COUN 6306 - Intro to School Counseling	3	COUN 6375 - Essential Helping Skills	3
COUN 6308 - Ethics	3	EDPD 6329 – Human Development	3
COUN 6327 - Career Counseling	3	COUN 6399 - Practicum	3
COUN 6328- Group Counseling	3	COUN 6334 – Crisis Counseling	3
COUN 6365 - Diagnosis & Treatment	3	<i>E-1 Elective</i>	3
COUN 6324 – Counseling Interventions w/Child & Adolescents	3	Comprehensive Exam	
Electives: Choose 1 of the following (3 credits)			
COUN 6326 – Play Therapy		COUN 6376 – Sexuality Across the Life Span	
COUN 6382 – Supervision		COUN 6392 – Special Topics in Counseling	
COUN 6309 – Advanced Ethics & Legal issues		COUN 6374 – Intro to Addictions Counseling	
COUN 6375 - Couples & Family Therapy		COUN 6371 – Introduction to Psychopharmacology	

Example of a School Counseling Degree Plan + LPC

Courses	Hours	Courses	Hours
COUN 6304 - Intro to Research	3	COUN 6330 - Cross-cultural Counseling	3
COUN 6305 - Theories	3	COUN 6372 - Assessment	3
COUN 6306 - Intro to School Counseling	3	COUN 6375 - Essential Helping Skills	3
COUN 6308 - Ethics	3	EDPD 6329 – Human Development	3
COUN 6327 - Career Counseling	3	COUN 6399 - Practicum	3
COUN 6328- Group Counseling	3	COUN 6334 – Crisis Counseling	3
COUN 6365 - Diagnosis & Treatment	3	<i>E-1 Elective</i>	3
COUN 6324 – Counseling Interventions w/Child & Adolescents	3	Comprehensive Exam	
Electives: Choose 1 of the following (3 credits)			
COUN 6326 – Play Therapy		COUN 6376 – Sexuality Across the Life Span	
COUN 6382 – Supervision		COUN 6392 – Special Topics in Counseling	
LPC requirements			
COUN 6309 – Advanced Ethics & Legal issues	3	COUN 6374 – Intro to Addictions Counseling	3
	3	COUN 6375 - Couples & Family Therapy	3
	3	COUN 6398 - Internship	3/6
COUN 6371 – Introduction to Psychopharmacology	3		
Electives: Choose 1 of the following (3 credits)			
COUN 6326 – Play Therapy		COUN 6376 – Sexuality Across the Life Span	
COUN 6382 – Supervision		COUN 6392 – Special Topics in Counseling	
		Total Hours	60

Counseling Course Descriptions

EDPD 6303 - Education Research - Comparison of qualitative and quantitative research techniques. Utilize components of literature review, data collection and analysis to conduct a publishable action research manuscript that addresses an educational problem/question.

COUN 6305 - Theories of Counseling - Major theories of counseling; provides models to conceptualize client issues and selecting appropriate interventions.

COUN 6306 - Introduction to School Counseling - Principles and practices of guidance and counseling services in schools with emphasis on delivery of services to students and consultation skills for working with staff.

COUN 6308 - Ethical Standards and Practices in Counseling - Examination of ethical standards of professional organizations and credentialing bodies, and applications of ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling practice.

COUN 6309 - Advanced Ethics and Legal Aspects of Counseling - Prerequisite(s): COUN 6308. This course provides a detailed look into the ethical and legal aspects of counseling including ethical decision-making models, the relationship between ethics and law, and managing professional boundaries, social media, and a counseling practice.

COUN 6324 - Counseling Interventions with Children and Adolescents - Techniques and procedures for working with children, youth and their parents.

COUN 6326 - Introduction to Play Therapy - Introduction to the foundations, theoretical orientations, and interventions related to working with the youth in a play therapy setting.

COUN 6327 - Career Counseling - Explores theoretical framework of career counseling; introduction to basic career counseling tools and interventions utilized within the career counseling process.

COUN 6328 - Group Counseling - Dynamics of counseling applied to the group setting. Experimental learning in a simulated group process.

EDPD 6329 - Human Development - Systematic analysis of various human behavioral domains concerned with teaching and learning.

COUN 6330 - Cross-cultural Counseling - Introduction to the cultural composition of multiple subgroups represented in society. Subgroups can be based on age, gender, sexual orientation, mental and physical characteristics, education, religious and spiritual values, socio-economic status or other commonalities. The focal task will be to build knowledge, awareness, and skills necessary to become effective helpers and advocates for diverse populations.

COUN 6334 - Crisis Counseling - The purpose of this class is to introduce and familiarize professional counselors with the different approaches to crisis intervention.

COUN 6365 - Diagnosis and Treatment in Counseling - Introduction to mental health concerns, diagnosis of mental health symptomology and an overview of the existing treatment strategies and interventions for various mental health issues.

COUN 6371 - Introduction to Psychopharmacology - Impact of psychotropic medications on clients and how these therapies influence counseling interventions.

COUN 6372 - Assessment and Testing in Counseling - Ethical strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting standardized and non-standardized assessment and evaluation instruments for use in professional counseling settings.

COUN 6373 - Couples and Family Counseling - Overview of the major traditional family therapy theories and recent advances in intervention techniques for couples and families in counseling.

COUN 6374 - Introduction to Addictions Counseling - This course introduces treatment approaches, techniques, and programs for counseling individuals and families experiencing substance-related problems. Students will learn how to critically evaluate addictions research in the literature and apply the appropriate substance abuse program for counseling effectiveness.

COUN 6375 - Essential Helping Skills of Counseling - Identification and implementation of techniques that are used in the counseling relationship. Emphasis on interviewing clients and basic intervention strategies. Experimental learning in simulated counseling sessions.

COUN 6376 - Sexuality Across the Lifespan - Exploration of human sexuality and assisting individuals and couples with sexual concerns. Emphasis on sexual development, sexual orientation, sexual dysfunction, and sexual trauma/abuse.

COUN 6392 - Special Topics in Counseling - Introduction to various special topics in counseling, which can include adventure therapy, grief and loss counseling, and stress management techniques in counseling. To be taken only after prearrangement with a designated faculty member of record. May be repeated when topics vary for a maximum of six credit hours.

COUN 6394 - Individual Study in Counseling - Prerequisite(s): Consent of instructor. Opportunity to explore and research special topics and projects in counseling. Projects may not be a part of existing class requirements and must be completed by the student working on an independent basis with guidance from a faculty advisor.

COUN 6398 - Internship in Counseling - Prerequisite(s): consent of instructor. Opportunity for students to perform, under supervision, a variety of activities that regularly employed counselors typically perform in schools and professional counseling settings. Upon completion, students should have the required number of hours of experience and training in individual counseling, group counseling and assessment. To be taken only after prearrangement with a designated faculty member of record. May be repeated until required internship hours are completed for a maximum of nine credit hours.

COUN 6399 - Practicum in Counseling - Prerequisite(s): consent of instructor. Course is a competency-based supervised experience in schools and professional counseling settings. Upon completion, students should have received the required number of hours of experience and training in individual counseling, group counseling and assessment in a school and/or mental health setting according to the requirements of their state organization. To be taken only after prearrangement with a designated faculty member of record. May be repeated until required practicum hours are completed for a maximum of nine credit hours.

Note: Should any of the courses listed be paired with a Go-Global/Study Abroad Opportunity, candidates participating in the travel option may be charged an additional course fee not to exceed the actual cost of travel, including but not limited to transportation, lodging and food.

Practicum and Internship Policies and Procedures

Applicable to Students in All Programs

The practicum and internship experiences are critical components in the preparation of professional counselors. Following is information that applies to students regardless of their specialty area.

We anticipate that students will have the opportunity to use and apply the skills developed in the degree program at their placement sites. Practicum is designed to help students begin to apply theory to practice. Internship affords this same opportunity at a deeper level and is considered an important transitional step between academic training and the world of professional practice.

Basic Information

A Semester Before Beginning Practicum or Internship

Coordinators of the Counseling and School Counseling Programs:

- Meet with students to discuss potential placements and review the placement process.
- Are familiar with approved and potential placement sites.
- Submit the practicum application on Page 30.
- The documents students have to submit the following documents to receive permission to register for Practicum and/or internship every semester:
 - Practicum/Internship application (one per class)
 - Degree plan (available through graduate school)
 - Unofficial transcript (unofficial transcripts will work)
 - School Counseling students will submit – Service record of site supervisor and School Counseling Certificate from TEA’s Website.
- Work with students to make arrangements for interviews with staff at different sites.
- Approve all placements and site supervisors. Students may not make arrangements with any sites or site supervisors without faculty approval.

Students:

- Submit documentation that they have professional liability insurance through [Healthcare Providers Service Organization](#) (HPSO) before they begin their practicum/internship. Students may also obtain such insurance through professional associations such as the [American Counseling Association](#) (ACA), ACA divisions such as the American Mental Health Counselors Association, the American School Counselor Association, or the Texas Counselors Association.

After Practicum and Internship Begins

- Students who are in field placements are expected to receive a minimum of one hour of individual supervision per week from their site supervisor.
- Students are responsible for submitting appropriate documentation (e.g., logs and supervisor evaluations) in a timely manner as prescribed in their course syllabi.
- Maintain and submit documentation of professional liability insurance. Students cannot accrue direct hours until they can provide proof of liability insurance. Since most insurance policies are in effect for one year, it is critical that students renew their policies before the policies expire and then submit documentation that their policies are in effect through their entire internship.

- Arrange a work schedule with the site supervisors. Students are expected to set their daily and semester schedule to coincide with both their courses and the calendar of their host site (not just the university schedule), including daily work schedule, holidays, vacation days, etc.
- Adhere to all requirements stated in practicum and internship syllabi, attend required class meetings, complete all course assignments, and attend individual and group supervision sessions.
- Perform site responsibilities in a professional manner, as if a paid staff member.
- Comply with all legal and ethical regulations; bring all potential ethical and legal issues to the attention of their site and university supervisors.

Field Placement Supervisory Evaluation

Supervision is a key component to professional development of practicum and internship students. Each person who provides supervision to a practicum or internship student must complete an evaluation form at the end of each semester. These evaluations are a summative review of the student's overall performance at the site. A rating of "N/A" (not appropriate or not observed) should be used if the student has not had the opportunity to demonstrate, or the supervisor has not had the opportunity to observe, competence in a particular area.

The final evaluation should be completed during the final week of each semester or as noted in course syllabi. Supervisors are expected to review their evaluations and recommended grades with students before submitting the evaluations to the instructor of the practicum or internship seminar.

It is essential that supervisors engage in ongoing assessment of the intern's performance. If supervisors believe that a final recommended grade of "Unsatisfactory" is warranted, this should not come as a surprise to the student. If there are any problems with the student's performance (professional behavior, skill demonstration, or other expectations of the student), the supervisor is expected to communicate to the student and the instructor of the practicum or internship seminar.

The supervisor and student, along with the course instructor, should develop a remediation plan to address deficiencies or problems. If a remediation plan is developed, the instructor should be provided with verbal and/or written feedback from both the student and the supervisor on a regular basis as to the student's progress. Such plans should include a clear description of the problem(s) and behavioral indicators of acceptable performance. For example, rather than vague statements such as, "Ms. Smith is resistant to supervision and she needs to adjust her attitude," remediation plans should include specific information such as:

Problem: Ms. Smith has been late for three supervision sessions.

Expectation: Ms. Smith will be on time for all supervision meetings for the remainder of her internship.

Problem: Ms. Smith comes to supervision without reviewing or cuing tapes of client sessions.

Expectation: Ms. Smith will have at least one taped cued for each supervision session. At minimum, she will be ready to discuss what has occurred up to that point in the session, what she believes she did effectively in that session, and what questions or concerns she has about what occurred in that session.

Licensure/Certification

We have designed both our Counseling and School Counseling programs to meet the academic and field experience requirements for licensure and certification in Texas. In addition to submitting logs to their instructors and documenting practicum and internship hours, all students are responsible for keeping copies of these logs, so they can complete the paperwork necessary to obtain their licenses and certifications.

Licensed Professional Counselors

In addition to the academic and clinical experiences, post-degree supervised clinical experience is also required before becoming a Licensed Professional Counselor in the state of Texas (and all other states). Students must a) first graduate with 60 graduate credit hours reflected on their official transcript, b) apply for and pass the National Counseling Exam (NCE), which is offered by the [National Board of Certified Counselors](#) (NBCC) as well as c) pass the [Texas Jurisprudence Exam](#) offered through the [Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors](#), and finally d) submit their application for licensure to the licensing board. Dr. Malvika Behl, the (Professional Counseling Program Coordinator) can assist with this process.

LPC board link: <https://www.bhec.texas.gov/texas-state-board-of-examiners-of-professional-counselors/applying-for-a-license/index.html>

Students interested in pursuing licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor in the state of Texas are advised to secure information from: Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors, Texas Department of State Health Services, Mail Code 1982, and P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347. Email: lpc@dshs.texas.gov; Telephone: (512) 834-6658; Fax: (512) 834-6677.

Certified School Counselors

Graduates of the School Counseling program will be recommended for the [Texas Standard Certificate in School Counseling](#). All students seeking Texas licensure as school counselors should have their credentials and program plans reviewed by Dr. Elizabeth Garcia (Office of Alternative Certification) and by Dr. Malvika Behl (School Counseling Program Coordinator). Students must have two years of credible teaching experience and have fulfilled all program requirements, including successful completion of the comprehensive exam.

All students who would like to receive permission to complete the TExES #152, will need to complete the practice TExES 152. The practice TExES 152 can be completed either in person with Dr. Behl and/or Dr. Green or it can be completed online on <http://www2.certifyteacher.com/> Students will need to create an account on the website using their buff email address and can use promo code: WTAMU6041.

After successful completion of the TExES Test ([#152-EC-12 School Counseling Exam](#)) and submission of an official transcript certifying a M.Ed. in School Counseling, students will be eligible for Texas Standard School Counseling Certification. Students interested in becoming a certified school counselor are encouraged to review the [Texas Administrative Code](#) and the [Texas Education Code](#) related to school counseling.

Additional Program Policies

Comprehensive Examinations

All M.A. and M.Ed. candidates in Counselor Education must satisfy the Counseling program comprehensive examination requirement. Students in the both programs will do this by completing a multiple-choice examination called the [Counselor Preparation Counselor Exam](#) (CPCE) that is similar in nature to the National Counselor Examination. Students must complete their comprehensive examination requirement during the last two semesters before they expect to graduate. Exams are given during all three operating semesters: spring, summer, and fall. Students must pay a fee (as required by the national testing site) at the time of the comprehensive exam. Students must check with their advisor to apply for the comprehensive exam. Practice exams are also given each semester.

Application for Graduation

Students must apply for graduation at <https://www.wtamu.edu/academics/graduation-application.aspx>. Application forms and instructions are available at this website. Students are advised to submit their applications well in advance of the deadline date.

Job Placement

The staff of the University Career Services Center assists students in seeking professional positions as they near graduation. Services available through the Center include resume and interview coaching. Students should also tell the Counselor Education faculty members when they are looking for professional positions. If faculty members know students are searching, they will assist them in any way possible. In addition to writing letters of reference, professors often learn about job leads through informal communication with their colleagues. The professional friends and associates of faculty members can often help students find the positions they are seeking.

WTAMU Department of Education Mission

The WTAMU Department of Education prepares **confident, skilled, and reflective professionals** through course work and field experiences who are critical creative thinkers, effective communicators, advocates for diverse learners, users of technology, life-long learners, and stewards of the profession.

Program Educational Outcomes (PEOs) –

After participating in the Counselor Education Program, our candidates will be:

- 1. Critical creative thinkers who develop solutions to improve the educational environment and who inspire students or co-workers.**
- 2. Effective communicators who use verbal, nonverbal, electronic, and print modes of communication to establish a positive school or work environment and promote thinking and learning.**
- 3. Advocates for diverse learners who appreciate, promote, and model the values of diversity.**
- 4. Users of technology who seamlessly integrate multimedia in learning environments as instructional and management tools to enhance learning.**
- 5. Life-long learners who take responsibility for their own learning and continuously foster their professional renewal.**
- 6. Stewards of the profession who represent ethical and professional dispositions.**

Ethical and Professional Dispositions –

Candidates will:

- A. Demonstrate an expectation that all students can learn and are a vital part of the learning community.
- B. Display sensitivity to students' needs.
- C. Work with peers, clinical instructors, cooperating teachers, university field supervisors, and relevant stakeholders to advance learning.
- D. Model poise, maturity, and sound judgment.
- E. Engage in continuous self-evaluation and improvement.
- F. Promote ethical and professional standards in teaching, learning, and research.

Student Evaluation For Programs

Students who enter the Counselor Education Program at WTAMU will be evaluated throughout their graduate program both for the benefit of students and to ensure that graduates of the program are prepared to participate as counseling professionals. Following is information about how students are evaluated.

Faculty Evaluation of Students' Fitness and Performance

The Counselor Education Faculty evaluates students' fitness and performance on an ongoing basis in the following areas: academic program standards, clinical performance, and non-academic program standards. These standards are explained below. Faculty members make judgments as to students' fitness and performance based on observations of coursework, evaluations of students' work in simulated practice situations, supervisors' evaluations of students' clinical skills and students' adherence to the American Counseling Association's [*Code of Ethics*](#) or the American School Counselor Association's [*Code of Ethics*](#).

Academic Program Standards

- Students should aspire to make A's & B's in their courses. The lowest passing grade for degree credit is B. Students who do not maintain a 3.0 GPA will be placed on academic probation. Students who make two C's or more may be suspended from the program.
- Students must maintain a 3.0 GPA, complete program in timely manner in compliance with all program, College of Education and Social Sciences, and University policies and procedures, take the appropriate sequencing of coursework, and progress in career role by developing areas of specialization, practice, and appropriate professional affiliations
- All M.A. and M.Ed. candidates in Counselor Education must satisfy the comprehensive examination requirement.

Clinical Performance

Students are evaluated on their ability to:

- Integrate theory and research to guide clinical practice;
- Progress in ability to work with clients including: assessment, conceptualization, selection, implementation and evaluation of counseling interventions;
- Maintain and submit all clinical documentation in an appropriate and timely manner
- Integrate cross-cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills into professional interactions;
- Establish professional interactions with clients, supervisors and colleagues; and,
- Maintain professional ethics.

Non-Academic Standards

In addition to maintaining high scholastic standards, students enrolled in all Counselor Education Program areas must develop skills necessary to work effectively with people with diverse needs.

Members of the Counselor Education faculty expect prospective counselors to:

- Be committed to personal growth and professional development.
- Be concerned about other people.
- Demonstrate emotional and mental fitness in their interactions with others.

- Demonstrate the ability to give constructive feedback and receive, integrate, and utilize feedback from peers, faculty and supervisors.
- Demonstrate creative problem solving, critical thinking skills and intellectual flexibility.

A student's acceptance in the Counselor Education Program does not guarantee her or his fitness to remain in the program. The faculty is responsible for assuring that only those students who continue to meet program standards are allowed to continue in the program.

Professional Impairment

On rare occasions, faculty members become concerned about a student's suitability for entry into the counseling profession even though the student may be evidencing satisfactory performance in academic course work. For example, a student's personal characteristics and behavior might be considered. Examples of behaviors that evidence professional impairment may include the following and are not intended to be exhaustive:

- Violation of professional standards of ethical codes
- Inability or unwillingness to acquire or manifest professional skills at an acceptable level of competency
- Behaviors that can reasonably be predictive of poor future professional functioning, such as extensive lateness in client record-keeping or poor compliance with supervisory requirements
- Interpersonal behaviors and interpersonal functioning that impair one's professional functioning
- Inability to exercise sound clinical judgment, poor interpersonal skills, and pervasive interpersonal problems.

Student Remediation, Probation, And Dismissal Procedures

The members of the Counselor Education faculty endorse the American Counseling Association *Code of Ethics* that states counselor educators have a responsibility to provide regular feedback to students and to dismiss students who are unable to render competent service due to academic or personal limitations. Faculty members also recognize their obligation to: consult with colleagues and document their decision to refer students for assistance or to request that students be put on probation or dismissed from the program; support students in obtaining remedial assistance; and, assure that students have adequate recourse to address decisions made.

Faculty may work on an informal basis with students in their courses who are evidencing academic, clinical, or non-academic difficulties (e.g., personal issues are affecting student's ability to work effectively) when circumstances indicate that this method may be productive. The faculty member and student will discuss the problem(s), review appropriate measures of correction, and establish a time line for change. This should be done prior to initiating formal remediation procedures except when the severity of the problem does not allow for an informal method. In such incidences formal remediation procedures may be implemented as delineated in the following section of this handbook

Remediation Procedures

In circumstances where informal attempts for rectifying a situation have proven unsuccessful, formal procedures for consideration of probation and/or enforced withdrawal from the program will be initiated. These procedures are followed to ensure that the rights of the student and the integrity of the program can be protected in the process.

Step 1

When a determination is made by a faculty member that an educationally, clinical, or professionally related problem exists, which could not be resolved on an informal basis, the faculty member discusses this with the student and her or his advisor. They will meet to discuss the problem and try to outline, verbally and in writing, ways to correct or rectify the problem. This interaction process should allow the student ample opportunity to react to the negative information presented regarding a problem area. If the problem is resolved, no further action is needed.

Step 2

If the problem continues, the advisor again will discuss the problem with the student. A meeting will then be held with the student's advisor, the program director, the student, and the concerned faculty member as appropriate. The meeting date will be set so that the student will have the opportunity to provide additional evidence to the group for consideration at the meeting. The purpose of the meeting will be to determine whether the problem needs to be addressed by the program core faculty and relevant adjunct faculty.

Step 3

If the outcome of the meeting of the advisor, program director, and student is that the problem should be brought to the entire program faculty, a meeting of the faculty will be called. The student will be informed of the time of this meeting in advance and will have an opportunity to provide additional information or evidence to the faculty for consideration at the meeting, either in writing or in person. The faculty will vote to decide whether further remediation is required and/or the student should be placed on probation or the student should be dismissed from the program. These actions require three quarters of the faculty present at the meeting be in agreement. The program director and/or other designated persons will inform the student of the decision both orally and in writing. The student will have five working days to respond orally and/or in writing to the recommendation.

Step 4

The program faculty will review the student's oral and/or written response to the action decided in step three and will make a final decision regarding the disposition of the case. Should the student file no response to the action, the action taken in step three will be considered as final. A vote to reconsider may be passed by a majority of the program faculty. Final disposition of the reconsideration requires a three-quarter vote. The student will be informed of the meeting at least one week in advance and will have the opportunity to provide additional information or evidence to the faculty. The program director and the student's advisor will notify the student, in writing, of the final decision made by the faculty. Appeals may be made to the Graduate School.

Probation Procedure

Whenever a student is placed on probation, the advisor will meet with the student and provide in writing the following information:

- a) A behavioral description of the problem
- b) Possible courses of remediation
- c) Criteria stated in behavioral terms for ending the probationary status
- d) A time frame for meeting these criteria
- e) A summary of the options available to the student (e.g., appeals, dropping out, methods of remediation)
- f) A detailed description of the consequences of not meeting criteria within the time frame

An attempt will be made to clarify all of these points with the student so there is an understanding on the student's part of the problem, the remediation options, the criteria for removal of the probationary status, and the time limits for completing the criteria. At the end of the probationary period, the program faculty will again meet to review the student's progress toward meeting the criteria for removal of the probationary status. The student will be informed of the meeting in advance and will have the opportunity to provide additional evidence to the group for consideration at that meeting, either in writing or in person. A decision will be made to:

- a) Return the student to full graduate status;
- b) Continue the probation (which would necessitate preparation of another set of recommendations as specified above); or,
- c) Terminate the student's program (enforced withdrawal)

The program director will inform the student of the decision both verbally and in writing. The student will be given the opportunity to respond orally and/or in writing to this recommendation.

Enforced Withdrawal Procedure

If a student is recommended for enforced withdrawal, the program director and appropriate faculty will meet with the student and provide both orally and in writing the following information:

- a) Specifications of the student behaviors that resulted in the recommendation for termination of her or his program of studies.
- b) A summary of the appeal options available to the student.

An attempt will be made to clarify all of these points with the student so there is an understanding on the student's part of the reasons for the termination decision and the options available to her or him for appeal. The termination decision will be forwarded by the program director to the Dean of the College of Education and Social Sciences. Alternative career paths and options will be discussed with students who are asked to leave the Counselor Education Program in order to aid in the transition.

COMPS (Counselor Preparation Counselor Exam)

The comprehensive exam (COMPS/CPCE) is a graduation requirement for all students enrolled in the Counseling program, including MA in Counseling, MEd in School Counseling, and MEd in School Counseling + LPC. All students are required to PASS the COMPS to graduate from the program. WTAMU Counseling Program utilizes the Counselor Preparation Counselor Exam (CPCE) for the COMPS.

The Counselor Preparation Counselor Exam (CPCE) is a multiple-choice examination similar in nature to the National Counselor Examination (NCE). Students must complete their COMPS/CPCE requirement during the last two semesters before they expect to graduate. COMPS are given during all three operating semesters: spring, summer, and fall. Students must pay a fee (as required by the national testing site) at the time of the comprehensive exam. Students must check with their advisor to apply for the comprehensive exam.

Where can I complete COMPS/CPCE?

COMPS/CPCE can be completed either at the WTAMU Pearson Vue Testing Center or an off-Campus Pearson Vue location.

The **on-campus location** (West Texas A&M University Testing Center), Testing Center is located in the Classroom Center on the Canyon campus, room 108. The testing Center is a pre-approved Pearson Vue site. The **on-campus test for COMPS is called CPCE APB** (Anywhere Proctored Browser).

As far as fees for your **On-campus CPCE exam**, they are as follows:

1. WTAMU Testing Center fee - \$25.00 in either check, debit, or money order format.
2. CCE On Campus Testing fee - \$75.00 online testing fee to be registered and paid for online at least two weeks prior to your exam.

The **Off-Campus** (Pearson Vue Location) can be selected by each student wherever they are. The **off-campus test for COMPS is called the CPCE CBT** (Computer based Testing). CBT administrations can only be delivered at an approved Pearson VUE facility. Students can schedule their time and date by themselves whenever they are available.

As far as fees for your **Off-campus CPCE exam**, they are as follows:

1. Total fee for online testing is \$150.00. Those students taking their CPCE exam off-campus, in various cities across Texas and other states will receive different instructions for registration. The CCE office processes your information for off campus clearance and the COMPS coordinator will share the off-campus exam directions with you once you have been cleared, added to the system, and they have been provided to me by CCE offices.

HERE IS A LINK TO THE PEARSON VUE REQUIREMENTS:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIQr9Meee0I>

Examination Content:

This examination is a summative evaluation of the eight core content areas of counseling. The CPCE consists of 160 items with 20 items per content area. Content areas: Human Growth and Development; Social and Cultural Foundations; Helping Relationships; Group Work; Career & Lifestyle Development; Appraisal; Research & Program Evaluation; Professional Orientation and Ethics. It is an

essential benchmark to the preparation and readiness of students to graduate with an advanced degree in Counseling. It is a multiple-choice examination.

Textbooks:

The Counseling faculty strongly encourage you to purchase one of the following texts early on in your program to begin to studying for the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE) (required for our program) and the National Counselor Exam (NCE) (required for clinical licensure for Texas). While you will not take the CPCE until the end of your program, it is important that you read, prepare, and practice as you progress through the program.

- Rosenthal, H. (2017). *Encyclopedia of counseling* (4th ed.). Routledge, OX.
- Erford, B., Hays, D. & Crockett, S. (2011). *Mastering the national counseling exam and the counselor preparation comprehensive examination*. Pearson.
- Helwig, (20xx). *Study guide for the national counselor exam and the CPCE* (8th ed.)
- Momentrix Media LLC. (2018). *NCE secrets: Study Guide*.
- National Counseling Examination Preparation Team. (2017). *NCE study guide: Exam prep and practice test questions for the NCE*

The Counseling program at WTAMU does not endorse any particular guide; however, there are several digital and printed study guides available.

Applying for the CPCE:

Students will receive a call for COMPS. Submit your application to take the exam to the COMPS coordinator by the posted deadline. You will receive an email about COMPS and its date. You will be required to fill out the form at the end of this handbook and submit it.

Passing the Comprehensive Examination:

The results of the Comprehensive Examination (COMPS) or the Counselor Preparation Counselor Exam (CPCE) are sent to the COMPS coordinator by the Center for Credentialing and Education (CCE). Results are published each month around the 15th, for the previous month by CCE. The Counseling program and the coordinator has no control over the results and when they are published.

The passing grade for COMPS is required to be higher than one standard deviation below the mean. Students will be informed via email whether they have passed or failed the test.

After completing the Exam:

Once you have completed COMPS, please submit the results to the COMPS coordinator, scanned via email sent to counseloredprogram@wtamu.edu.

Failure of the Comprehensive Examination

- a) **Failing First Attempt:** Students failing the examination on their first attempt must re-register, pay for and retake the examination the next semester the exam is offered. The Counseling Faculty recommend that students who did not pass the test seek out assistance from their advisor or another faculty member, but it is not required. Students are also encouraged to identify student resources that will assist them in preparing for and passing the exam. The students will be required to wait two weeks before completing a second attempt.

- b) **Failing the Second Attempt:** Students who fail COMPS on their second attempt are required to contact their faculty advisor; and develop and write a remediation plan with specific time frames that outline the steps the student and advisor will take to assist the student in passing the test. The plan should include an explanation of what factors led to failure of the exam (so that the faculty can better understand the needs of the student), documentation of any learning challenges which might impair the student in this process and delineation of specific accommodations required when appropriate, specific activities the student plans to undertake in order to achieve a passing score (this might include, but is not limited to, studying strategies, retaking/auditing of classes, or any other activities aimed at preparing the student for success in this endeavor), and a time-line of when the student will be carrying out these activities and retaking the exam. When the plan is completed, the student must arrange to meet with the faculty for mutual review of the plan. The plan will then be reviewed by all faculty and if approved, signed and placed in the student file. If the faculty require revision of the plan, the student maintains responsibility for revising and resubmitting the plan. The plan is then placed in the student file as evidence of remediation. Students will not be allowed to register for the CPCE for a third time without advisor approval. Students must provide evidence of the completion of the remediation plan.
- c) **Failing the Third Attempt:** Students who fail the COMPS for a third time after completing the remediation plan are subject to the following possible options:
- Dismissal from the program
 - Requirement of extra coursework/ assignments related to the failed core areas to demonstrate competency.
 - Requirement to retake specific courses related to failure of core areas.
 - Other options based on student need

Students who fail the third attempt are welcome to submit a written letter of explanation to their advisor in order to advocate for themselves. The letter will be distributed to the faculty for review and further recommendation.

Practice COMPS

Practice COMPS are offered online on blackboard once every semester: spring, summer, and fall. Each semester will have date set for students to complete practice COMPS. Practice COMPS are *NOT required but are recommended* for students. Practice COMPS are proctored through zoom by a faculty within the Counseling program at WTAMU. Students need a working camera, laptop, microphone, and access to internet, to be able to complete practice COMPS. There is no passing score for students to complete COMPS.

Checklist for COMPS

Please submit this to the COMPS coordinator two weeks before COMPS

Email this document to counseloredprogram@wtamu.edu

ON-CAMPUS

WTAMU testing Center Fee (\$25)

CCE On Campus Testing fee (\$75)

Candidate ID number from CCE

Review the instructions provided after signing up for CPCE-APB

OFF-CAMPUS

CCE On Campus Testing fee (\$75)

Candidate ID number from CCE

Review the instructions provided after signing up for CPCE-CBT

Send your test date to Dr. Behl

I have completed the above-mentioned requirements to be able to complete

On-campus COMPS:

Off Campus COMPS:

Student Name:

Date:

Student Signature:



West Texas A&M University
Counselor Education Program

PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP APPLICATION

Check one of the following:
COUN 6399 _____ COUN 6398 _____

Name _____ Date _____

Phone: Daytime _____ / _____ Cell: _____ / _____

Address _____

E-mail _____ WT ID _____

Total hours completed in program _____ Program Advisor _____

Degree Plan Program: Mental Health (LPC) _____ School _____ School + LPC _____

Practicum/Internship Site

Name of Agency or School _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Site Supervisor _____

Site Supervisor's Degree, License/Certification _____

Number of Years of Supervisors Experience (**Only for School Counselors**) _____

Site Supervisor's Signature _____

This form **must** be submitted along with a copy of your transcript and a copy of your program degree plan via counseloredprogram@wtamu.edu to the appropriate Practicum and/or Internship Faculty Coordinator **during the semester prior to field experience**.

For **School Counselors**, please also submit your site supervisors School counselor Certificate and their Service Record. You will not be able to register until approved.

Requested Practicum/Internship Class and Due Dates for Application

Each semester and each site requires a new application

Summer: 1st week in May **Fall:** 1st week in August **Spring:** 1st week in December

_____ COUN 6399 – Summer _____ Fall _____ Spring _____ (Year) _____

_____ COUN 6398 – Fall _____ Spring _____ (Year) _____

Student's Signature _____