

**Arkansas State University
Department of Psychology & Counseling**

**Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program
Ed.S. Degree in Psychology and Counseling**

Student Handbook

2023-2024

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Section I Foundations

Introduction to the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program

Welcome to the CMHC program. We are happy you chose this program for your counselor training. This handbook is intended to serve students throughout the completion of the Ed.S. degree. In this handbook, you will find general information as well as policy and procedures regarding the following:

- Program mission statement and goals
- Information about professional counseling organizations
- Opportunities for professional involvement
- Matriculation requirements
- Expectations of students
- Academic appeal policy
- Endorsement policy for recommendations for credentialing and employment
- Policy for student retention, remediation and dismissal from the program.

This document, along with the Arkansas State University Student Handbook and Graduate Bulletin is our contract with you and your contract with us. If you have any questions, however, the best source of information and clarification is your program faculty.

Program Mission Statement

Arkansas State University aims to educate leaders, enhance intellectual growth, and enrich lives. Congruent with this global goal, the mission of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program is to prepare students to become culturally competent counselors with a strong professional identity who lead through service and advocacy and can effectively work with diverse populations in various settings.

Program Objectives:

- To instill a strong professional counseling identity within our students.
- To create a culturally inclusive learning environment that promotes multicultural competencies in developing counselors.
- To prepare students to conduct ethical and evidence-based practice to meet the needs of clients across the lifespan.
- To prepare students to conduct individual and group work in a variety of settings.
- To encourage service through leadership and advocacy.

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) track of the Education Specialist (Ed.S.) Degree in Psychology and Counseling prepares students for careers as professional counselors who meet the highest standards for delivering counseling services in a wide variety of community and agency settings. Mental health counselors work with individuals, families, and groups to address and treat mental, developmental, and emotional disorders and to promote optimum mental health and wellness. Counselors are trained in a variety of therapeutic techniques to address a wide range of issues, including but not limited to the following: anxiety, depression, addiction and substance abuse,

suicidal impulses, stress management, problems with self-worth, issues associated with aging, job and career concerns, educational decisions, challenges related to mental and emotional health, and family issues, including parenting, marital or other relationship problems. Clinical mental health counselors often work closely with other mental health specialists, such as psychiatrists, psychologists, clinical social workers, psychiatric nurses, and school counselors.

Students who complete the program are eligible to take the National Counselor Examination (NCE) offered by the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC). Students must pass this exam in order to qualify to become a National Certified Counselor (NCC) and a Licensed Associate Counselor (LAC) in Arkansas.

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) Accreditation Status

The CMHC program is accredited by CACREP through October 31, 2027.

Academic Advising

When you are admitted to the CMHC track of the Ed.S. Degree Program, you will be assigned an academic advisor. The academic advisor will assist you in scholastic matters and with problems and questions throughout your program. Due to the busy schedules of our faculty, we highly recommend that you become familiar with your academic advisor's scheduled office hours and seek assistance at those times. A student may change advisors for any reason. The student must obtain permission from the faculty member he or she intends to switch to and the faculty must be a full-time CMHC faculty member.

Student Expectations

Professionalism

Graduate school is a unique opportunity in which professionalism is integral to student learning and progress. Although you are counselors-in-training, you are primarily viewed by faculty, colleagues and clients as professionals. Therefore, it is critical that you, as professionals, represent both this program and the field of counseling in a manner reflective of your position. This task extends beyond academic intellect and requires emotional maturity. Professionalism is key to your development and growth as a counselor. Because personal development is so central to your success in the counseling profession, this is one of the areas in which you will be evaluated.

Personal Growth Experiences

The faculty of the CMHC program strongly believe that the personhood of the counselor is a necessary component of the therapeutic process. As a professional counselor, who you are as a person will be the strongest instrument that you will utilize in your therapeutic relationships with clients. As such, the personal qualities, characteristics, experiences, and reactions of counselors are as critical to becoming a therapist as is knowledge and skills.

The emphasis on personal development is a vital and fundamental aspect of counseling. The faculty is committed to creating an atmosphere of emotional safety. However, it is important to recognize that an atmosphere of safety is not synonymous with an atmosphere of comfort. Across the program, you will be asked to take necessary emotional risks and actively engage in personal growth and self-reflection. This is considered essential for two reasons. First, as stated above, the personhood of the counselor is as important to professional development as are the knowledge and skill dimensions of the counseling field. Second, counseling is based on the process of self-growth and exploration on the part of the client. Therefore, engaging in self-reflection and personal development is essential to encouraging such a process in others.

For example, within the counseling program, students will have opportunities such as:

- exploring their own family of origin issues through such assignments as completing a family genogram,
- identifying biases and assumptions about issues of diversity through such assignments as multicultural experiences and interviews,
- receiving feedback on how others experience and perceive them through such requirements as Pre-practicum and small group activities, and
- receiving feedback during individual/triadic and/or group supervision.

Active involvement in self-exploration and personal growth is an integral and necessary component of counseling. As such, students are expected to continuously strive for increased self-awareness throughout their experiences in the program. Students must be open to receiving clinical feedback from faculty and peers that includes the realm of their personhood to successfully complete the program.

A-State's Academic Dishonesty Policy

All students are expected to uphold the highest levels of academic integrity. Academic misconduct and scholastic dishonesty are strictly prohibited in all program requirements. The A-State Student Handbook states, "Arkansas State University enthusiastically promotes academic integrity and professional ethics among all members of the A-State academic community. Violations of this policy are considered as serious misconduct and may result in severe penalties." For further information, including specifics about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, see the Academic Misconduct Policy in A-State's Student Handbook (<http://www.astate.edu/a/student-conduct/student-standards/handbook-home.dot>). If you are unsure about what constitutes unauthorized help on an assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution, please ask your instructor or advisor.

Plagiarism

Violations of this policy are considered as serious misconduct and may result in disciplinary action and severe penalties. Plagiarism is the act of taking and/or using the ideas, work, and/or writings of another person as one's own. Faculty members may respond to cases of plagiarism in any of the following ways:

1. Return the paper or other item for rewriting; the grade may be lowered.

2. Give a failing grade on the paper or other item—"F" if a letter grade is used or zero if a numerical grade is used.
3. Give the student who plagiarized a failing grade in the course.
4. Recommend sanctions, including disciplinary expulsion from the University. All cases should be referred to the student conduct system.

Cheating

Cheating is an act of dishonesty with the intention of obtaining and/or using information in a fraudulent manner. Faculty members may respond to cases of cheating in any of the following ways:

1. Allow the testing to progress without interruption, informing the offending student about the offense—and award a failing grade on the test—"F" if a letter grade is used or zero if a numerical grade is used.
2. Seize the test of the offending student and give a failing grade on the paper.
3. Give the offending student a failing grade in the course.
4. Recommend sanctions, including disciplinary expulsion from the University. All cases should be referred to the student conduct system.

Section II General Information

Matriculation Requirements

The following includes a list of required courses.

The CMHC program requires the following coursework:

- COUN 6023 Intro to Mental Health Counseling
- COUN 6033 Social and Cultural Foundations in Counseling
- COUN 6043 Career Development and Services
- COUN 6053 Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in Counseling
- COUN 6113 Theories and Techniques in Helping Relationships
- COUN 6123 Group Dynamics (Listed as Group Counseling on Banner; taken with COUN 6213)
- COUN 6203 Counseling Pre-practicum
- COUN 6213 Counseling Practicum
- COUN 6253 Intro to Statistics and Research Design in Counseling
- COUN 6313 Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- COUN 6432 Crisis Counseling
- COUN 6451 Telehealth for Mental Health Practice
- COUN 6543 Psycho-Social Aspects of Development
- COUN 6573 Assessment in Counseling
- COUN 7463 Intro to Couples and Family Counseling
- COUN 7533 Psychopathology
- COUN 7633 Psychophysiology and Psychopharmacology
- COUN 7473 Supervised Internship I
- COUN 7483 Supervised Internship II

**In addition, students must take six hours (two courses) of electives. Some elective courses have prerequisite criteria that must be met. Maybe something like this – You may contact course instructors to obtain additional information, but you must consult with your academic advisor before attempting to register for any course(s).

The following courses are currently offered as electives:

- COUN 6103: Introduction to Play Therapy
- COUN 6133: Sexuality Issues in Counseling
- COUN 6143: Expressive Arts in Counseling (play therapy program admission required)
- COUN 6153: Advanced Play Therapy (play therapy program admission required)
- COUN 780V: Advanced Group
- COUN 680V or 780V: Independent Study (arranged through individual faculty members)

Background Check Requirements

Students are required to complete a background check prior to registration for their Spring term of their first year. Information regarding the process of obtaining the background check will be given and discussed at new student orientation. Information may also be obtained from the program

coordinator. Student submission of their background checks must be obtained prior to their faculty advisor clearing them for registration for their first Spring semester.

Play Therapy Certificate Program

The Department of Psychology and Counseling houses the A-State Play Therapy Education and Research Center and offers a Graduate Certificate in Play Therapy. The Play Therapy Education and Research Center is an Approved Center of Play Therapy Education through the Association for Play Therapy (APT), and the play therapy graduate certificate is designed to meet the educational and clinical requirements necessary for mental health professionals to apply for national certification as a Registered Play Therapist (RPT). The certificate program requires the completion of 15 graduate credit hours comprised of five courses: COUN 6103: Introduction to Play Therapy, COUN 6153: Advanced Play Therapy, COUN 6413 Practicum in Play Therapy, COUN 6143: Expressive Arts in Counseling, and COUN 6163: Child-Parent Relationship Therapy. Students currently enrolled in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program are eligible to enroll in Introduction to Play Therapy and Advanced Play Therapy as electives that count for six hours of credit toward both the Ed.S. degree and the graduate certificate. To complete the certificate, students are required to take the other three courses: Practicum in Play Therapy, Expressive Arts in Counseling, and Child-Parent Relationship Therapy. Students interested in completing the certificate program are encouraged to contact Dr. Lacy Overley (lcumrine@astate.edu). Additional information about becoming a Registered Play Therapist can be found at www.a4pt.org.

Cohort Model of Course Rotations

Currently, the CMHC track of the Ed.S. Degree Program admits students each fall utilizing a cohort model. The cohort model offers a three-year plan traditional course rotation. However, should you need to adjust your schedule to extend a graduation date beyond three years, that is possible and should be thoughtfully planned in collaboration with your academic advisor.

Per University policy as described in the Graduate Bulletin, “The time allowed for completion of the master’s degree is six years, exclusive of time spent in the armed forces of the United States. Graduate work completed prior to six years from the students’ date of completion of the degree cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements.” If you have not completed your degree within six years, any courses taken prior to six years of your expected graduation date will expire and will need to be retaken.

Procedures for Evaluation, Retention and Dismissal

Evaluation is an ongoing part of the student experience in the counseling program. We are committed to giving students ongoing feedback regarding your academic, personal, and professional performance in the program. Evaluation is accomplished in the following ways:

1. Course grades
2. Practicum and Internship performance
3. Pre-comprehensive exams
4. Comprehensive exams
5. Annual reviews
6. Student Dispositions

Academic performance is evaluated primarily by course grades and comprehensive exams. Professional performance, as well as personal suitability for the counseling profession, are also continuously evaluated throughout the program. These procedures are explained below.

Course Grades

The requirements and criteria for receiving course grades will vary from course to course. These procedures will be explained in each course rather than in the handbook. If a student is unclear about the criteria for evaluation in a particular course, the instructor of that course should be consulted. You must maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 or you are subject to academic suspension by the University. In addition, you cannot get more than one final course grade of “C” while in the program. Once a student earns a final course grade of “C,” that student will be placed on academic probation and remediation. If the student earns another final course grade of “C” the student will be dismissed from the program. Earning a grade of “F” in any course will automatically cause a student to be dismissed from the program without opportunity for remediation.

Annual Review

In addition to the academic standards for continuing enrollment set forth by the University, all Clinical Mental Health Counseling students are subject to regular and frequent informal review by counseling faculty throughout their program of study, especially during clinically oriented course work (i.e. COUN 6203 Counseling Pre-practicum, COUN 6123 Group Counseling, COUN 6213 Counseling Practicum, COUN 7473 Supervised Internship I, and COUN 7493 Supervised Internship II). Informal reviews are primarily concerned with personal and professional development as well as general academic performance. Further, student reviews are conducted during a formal annual review process during the spring semester using the Student Dispositions Evaluation Form (see Appendix A). Student progress relating to academic achievement, personal and professional development, and any special assistance a student might need are evaluated. Students can earn one of the following overall ratings: (a) Does Not Meet Expectations, (b) Needs Improvement, (c) In Progress Toward Goals, (d) Meets Expectations, or (e) Exceeds Expectations. The disposition results are shared with each student by his or her advisor. Once the results have been reviewed, the form will be signed by both student and advisor. A hard copy will be made and provided to students by their advisors to keep for their records.

If a student received an overall rating of ‘Needs Improvement’ or below, the student will be placed on remediation. Faculty will meet with the student to discuss and determine the best course(s) of action to help him or her earn a rating of ‘In Progress Towards Goals’ or higher. **If the student does not meet this objective, he or she will be eligible for dismissal from the program.**

A student receiving a final course grade of ‘C’ will be immediately placed on probation and remediation. A student who receives a second course grade of ‘C’ will be removed from the program. A student having been dismissed due to the results of their annual review or due to academic difficulties may apply to be re-admitted to the program. The student must include a letter explaining the situation that led to the dismissal and include a ‘plan of action’ to ensure that the same situation will not reoccur. We strongly recommend that students meet and discuss their options with their academic advisor or other faculty prior to reapplying for the program.

Each annual review may result in the following outcomes: approval for unrestricted continuation in the program, approval for continuation in the program with specified contingencies, suspension from the program with specified contingencies for re-admission, or removal from the program. Should a student be removed from the program, he or she can reapply for readmission.

PRE-COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Students are required to complete a pre-comprehensive examination at the end of their Counseling Practicum course (COUN 6213). This exam is based on a case scenario and requires students to provide essay responses to four questions, which mimic the format of the final comprehensive examinations. The evaluation of the pre-comprehensive examination is similar that that described for the comprehensive exam except students are expected to successfully respond to 3 of the 4 questions with a score of 3 or better (out of a possible 5). For more information on the Pre-comprehensive Examination, see the Clinical Experience Handbook.

Comprehensive Examinations

Comprehensive examinations are required as demonstration of a student's overall mastery of foundational counseling concepts. Preparing for the comprehensive exam is a final opportunity for students to integrate their learning experiences and increase levels of competency as emerging professionals. The comprehensive exam consists of two parts. **Students must complete BOTH parts of the comprehensive exam.** Please note, even if you successfully complete all of your course work and clinical experiences, **graduation from the program is contingent upon passing at least ONE part of the comprehensive exam.**

Part One: CPCE

The comprehensive exam includes both the standardized national Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE). The CPCE is a multiple-choice test researched, developed, and distributed by the Research and Assessment Corporation for Counseling (RACC) and the Center for Credentialing and Education (CCE). These organizations are two affiliate corporations of the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC). The item writing committee was selected from masters and doctoral level professionals. The committee compiled a comprehensive listing of texts used in counselor education programs. Each question is developed based on information found in the most commonly used textbooks. The exam is designed to assess your knowledge of counseling to ensure minimum competence in the field. The CPCE also provides collective feedback that can be used by the program in developing and improving curriculum. The benefits of using the CPCE are as follows:

- Allows our counseling comprehensive exam to better meet psychometric standards.
- Gives the program an objective view of the knowledge level of students.
- Allows faculty to examine student functioning in various curriculum areas.
- Promotes longitudinal self-study.
- Compares program results to national data.
- Stimulates student integration of knowledge learned in separate courses.
- Gives students comparative strength/weakness feedback.

Lastly, the CPCE is developed to reflect the eight core competencies identified by CACREP as minimum level competencies for all counselors. In addition, the test is a reflection of the National Counselor Examination (NCE), the test used in multiple states as their primary counselor licensing examination, including Arkansas. The comprehensive exam is taken during the second week of the final semester of study and includes items taken from the following areas of study:

1. Professional Identity – studies that provide an understanding of all aspects of professional functioning including history, roles, organizational structures, ethics, standards, and credentialing.
2. Social & Cultural Diversity – studies that provide an understanding of issues and trends in a multicultural and diverse society.
3. Human Growth & Development – studies that provide an understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all levels of development.
4. Career Development – studies that provide an understanding of career development and related life factors.
5. Helping Relationships – studies that provide an understanding of counseling and consultation processes.
6. Group – studies that provide an understanding of group development, dynamics, counseling theories, group counseling methods and skills, and other group work approaches.
7. Assessment – studies that provide an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation.
8. Research & Program Evaluation – studies that provide an understanding of types of research methods, basic statistics, and ethical and legal considerations relating to human subject research.

In addition to these foundational areas of study assessed by the CPCE, the student must also successfully respond to case application questions via essay response. Dates for the comprehensive examination are scheduled for the second week of each spring semester.

Part Two: Essay

The essay portion of the comprehensive exam is developed as an application of content test. This means you will be using the content and skill information you gathered while in the CMHC program on this section of the comprehensive exam. This section consists of a counseling case study and subsequent essay questions that students must respond to related to the counseling case study. The essay portion of the comprehensive exam includes content related to case conceptualization, diagnosis, social and cultural dynamics, ethical and legal issues, and current trends in the counseling profession.

The essay portion of the comprehensive exam will be proctored on campus. Each student will have five hours to complete the essay portion. All responses must be saved and turned in to the exam proctor at the time and day the comprehensive exam is given.

Preparation for the Comprehensive Examination

Students should gather information and prepare for the comprehensive exam throughout their program of study. Students should refer to course syllabi, notes, texts and additional materials from all courses. In addition, students should look for relationships between and among the content of

various courses that can be applied to counseling situations. Although students may choose to organize study groups to facilitate their preparation or use study materials prepared by other students, students are held personally responsible for their own success. Students differ in the type and amount of preparation they need; therefore, no assumptions should be made that those who study together will perform equally well in responding to the actual exam. The program faculty strongly discourages reliance on the study materials prepared by other students. Such materials have the inherent weakness that content that was exceptionally meaningful to the one who prepared it loses some of that meaning when viewed from another's perspective. Additionally, such materials may contain inaccuracies, be incomplete, and/or be out of date.

Students may request input from faculty – such as suggestions on additional resources to review in preparing for the exam - but should not expect faculty to provide tutoring in the content of the exam. Furthermore, faculty should not be expected to make arrangements for tutoring from any other source. The responsibility for preparing to complete the comprehensive examination and for successful performance rests exclusively with the student.

Evaluation of the Comprehensive Examination

The CPCE is scored by the CCE and takes approximately 10 days to two weeks for results to return to the comprehensive exam coordinator. Students must earn a score within one standard deviation of the national mean on six of eight sections of the CPCE in order to pass. If a student fails the CPCE, he or she must retake the entire test. Students must pass both the CPCE and essay portion of the comprehensive exam. A student who fails only one component of the exam must retake that specific portion of the exam only. In other words, if you pass the CPCE but fail the essay portion of the exam, you must re-take only the essay portion of the exam. Any student who fails both portions of the comprehensive exam will have failed the exam and must re-take the portion(s) of the exam failed at the next scheduled time. Special consideration may be made for an alternative time to retake the exam, but reasons for such a consideration must be reviewed and approved by the Counseling Program Committee. **Please note, per University policy, you will only have two opportunities to pass the comprehensive exam. Failure at both attempts will result in expulsion from the program.**

The essay component of the exam is scored by at least three faculty members affiliated with the counseling program in the Department of Psychology and Counseling. This grading committee will review and grade the student's responses using the Scoring Rubric found in Appendix B. Each reader will evaluate all responses by a particular student. Although each section may include several component questions, the readers will give each section an overall rating. Readers will evaluate each section based on a five-point system with five being "exceptional" and one being identified as "unacceptable." A student must earn an overall rating of three being "acceptable" or higher from the majority of the readers on three of the five responses. There are four outcomes:

- A student will pass the exam;
- A student will be asked to rewrite a certain section, or sections, of the exam;
- A student will be asked to come in for an oral exam over certain content areas;
- A student will fail the exam.

Each student will receive his or her results via a letter that will be mailed to the address listed with the University. Once they have received their results, students are encouraged to make an appointment with their advisors to discuss any questions they may have regarding their results. The

University will also notify students of exam results. After a student completes either a rewrite or an oral exam, if required, the student will again be notified of the results. The faculty grading committee may require the student to complete additional courses or additional study prior to taking the examination a second time. In accord with University policy, **any student failing the examination a second time will be removed from the program.**

Academic Appeals

Graduate student appeals and grievance processes are outlined in the A-State Student Handbook. All grievances should first be taken to the student's advisor who will inform the student of the correct procedures to follow. Following proper channels for appeals and grievances is essential to obtaining a timely and efficient resolution.

Section III Clinical Experiences

To develop your abilities to perform in the practitioner role, the program requires a clinical component. The clinical component was developed to meet the following goals:

1. Provide students with an opportunity to apply theoretical concepts and counseling skills through direct service to clients (face-to-face counseling) in a clinical setting under supervision.
2. Provide students with the opportunity to become familiar with a variety of professional activities (indirect services to clients).
3. Provide students with the opportunity to observe and learn “on-the-job” from practicing counselors.
4. Provide students with work experience critical to future employment and academic pursuits.
5. Provide students with the opportunity to critique their own work and the work of others, as well as to be evaluated by their supervisors and peers.

The clinical experiences are divided into three parts: Practicum, Internship I, and Internship II. Collectively, these components require 700 hours of work experience in a setting or settings appropriate to the career goals of the individual student. The practicum and internship components of a student’s clinical experience includes 1.5 hours per week of group supervision with a faculty supervisor, one hour of individual or triadic supervision with a faculty supervisor and a minimum of one hour of weekly individual and/or triadic supervision with a site supervisor. This means that students will receive a minimum of 3.5 hours of supervision per week. During group supervision, students will meet with their peers and a faculty supervisor to present cases, critique recorded samples of student work, and discuss professional issues. Individual and/or triadic supervision is similarly structured. More specific information of the clinical experience can be found in the Clinical Experience Handbook.

Liability Insurance

Students must have professional liability insurance before beginning their first clinical field experience, Counseling Practicum (COUN 6213). Students must maintain liability insurance throughout their clinical experiences, which also includes Internship I (COUN 7473) & II (COUN 7493). The counseling faculty strongly encourages students to become members of the American Counseling Association (ACA) and acquire student insurance through this organization. Though liability insurance may be gained through other organizations or institutions, membership and liability insurance through a counseling organization provides insurance intended for counseling students. As a benefit of ACA membership, master’s level counseling students receive liability insurance coverage at no additional charge.

Admittance to the Practicum and Internship Experiences

Admittance into the counseling program at A-State and pre-requisite coursework DOES NOT guarantee admittance into the practicum and internship experiences. During practicum and internship, you will be working as a counselor with clients. Counseling program faculty must assume legal and ethical responsibility for your performance while in these settings.

Suitability for practicum and internship will be determined by a number of factors, including grades earned in prerequisite courses (i.e., COUN 6203: Pre-practicum and PSY 6113: Theories and Techniques of Counseling), student dispositions and other faculty feedback. For example, a student must earn a Pre-practicum grade of “B” or better in order to be admitted to the Practicum course. A student that is **not** prepared for the practicum or internship experiences will be advised on the steps necessary to become adequately prepared. Remediation is one of the mechanisms that faculty use to help ensure that students are set up for success. When necessary, students will be provided with help in developing a remediation plan or in finding a more suitable career option. The current remediation options utilized by the counseling program are described later. Additional information about the clinical experience is available in the Clinical Experience Handbook.

Clinical Training Sequence

As stated previously, faculty are concerned that students meet certain criteria prior to entering into clinical training. First, students must successfully complete prerequisite course work. In order to enroll in COUN 6203: Counseling Prepracticum the student must have taken PSY 6113: Theories and Techniques of Counseling prior to, or concurrent with, COUN 6203. In addition, the student must obtain a “B” or better at each level of clinical training. The following is the appropriate sequence of clinical course work:

- COUN 6203 Counseling Prepracticum – The study and practice of counseling techniques including micro-counseling and role-playing.
- COUN 6213 Counseling Practicum – Supervised practice in individual counseling with an opportunity to facilitate/co-facilitate a counseling/psychoeducational group in an approved professional setting with the focus on improving beginning level counseling skills.
- COUN 7473 Supervised Internship I – Supervised practice in individual counseling with an opportunity to facilitate/co-facilitate a counseling/psychoeducational group in an appropriate professional setting.
- COUN 7493 Supervised Internship II – Supervised practice in individual counseling with an opportunity to facilitate/co-facilitate a counseling/psychoeducational group in an appropriate professional setting.

Practicum

Students must complete supervised practicum experiences that total a minimum of 100 clock hours. The practicum provides for the development of counseling skills under supervision. The student’s practicum includes all of the following:

- 40 hours of direct service with clients, including experience in individual counseling with an opportunity to facilitate/co-facilitate a counseling/psychoeducational group.
- One hour of weekly individual or triadic supervision with a faculty supervisor.
- An average of 1 ½ hours weekly group supervision with a faculty supervisor or an adjunct supervisor under the supervision of a faculty supervisor.
- One hour of weekly individual supervision with a site supervisor.

- Evaluation of the student's performance throughout the practicum.
- An opportunity for students to evaluate their experiences both in supervision and on-site.

Internship

Students must complete a two-part supervised internship: Internship I & II. Each internship experience totals a minimum of 300 clock hours, or 600 hours total. The supervised internships provide students with an opportunity to perform a variety of counseling activities that professional counselors are expected to perform in Arkansas. The internships shall include the following:

- 240 hours of direct service to clients appropriate for professional counselors in the state of Arkansas. Some of the issues students will work with include, but are not limited to, anxiety, depression, addiction and substance abuse, suicidal impulses, stress management, problems with self-esteem, issues associated with aging, job and career concerns, educational decisions, challenges related to mental and emotional health, and family, parenting, and marital or other relationship problems. In addition, students may have the opportunity to work closely with other mental health specialists, such as psychiatrists, psychologists, clinical social workers, psychiatric nurses, and school counselors.
- One hour of weekly individual or triadic supervision with a site supervisor.
- One hour of weekly individual or triadic supervision with a faculty supervisor.
- One and a half hours of weekly group supervision with a faculty supervisor.
- The opportunity for students to become familiar with a variety of professional activities in addition to direct service (i.e. record keeping, third party reimbursement processes, supervision, information and referral resources, in-service and staffing meetings, technological resources).
- Opportunities for feedback concerning both personal and professional development as it relates to their counseling.
- Opportunities for students to formally evaluate their experiences both in supervision and on-site.

*** For additional information and evaluation forms, etc. please refer to the student Clinical Experience Handbook.

Out of Area Clinical sites 2.5+ hours driving distance from campus

Most clinical sites must be preapproved and within 2.5 hours driving time of the Arkansas State University-Jonesboro campus. Students who wish to arrange a placement more than 2.5 hours driving time from campus and/or out of state must submit a formal request, including justification, to the faculty. Applicants are advised that (1) out of area internships are rarely authorized, (2) two-thirds of the faculty must approve requests, (3) requests for distant sites must be submitted to practicum and internship coordinator no less than one month before practicum and internship application due date, (4) completing clinical placement outside of the 2.5+ hours driving time from campus may result in students needing to complete some classes/electives online with other programs and transferring credits, (5) those wishing to complete the play therapy program prior to graduation from the CMHC program may not be eligible for out of area clinical sites.

Section IV Credentialing, Professional Development and Other Information

Licensure and Certification

National Counselor Examination

All students are encouraged to take the National Counselor Examination as soon as they become eligible to do so. The NCE is required for individuals who wish to be licensed as a professional counselor in most states, including Arkansas, and for those who wish to be certified as a National Certified Counselor (NCC). Information about the exam is available from the website:

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

Arkansas Counselor Licensing Requirements

Students who are in the process of completing the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program are strongly encouraged to become a Licensed Associate Counselor (LAC) with the final goal of becoming a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). The State of Arkansas has specific requirements that must be met in order to qualify for licensure. For the most current information, contact

<https://abec.statesolutions.us/> or write to:

Arkansas Board of Examiners in Counseling
101 E. Capitol, Suite 202
Little Rock, AR 72201
Phone: (501) 683-5800
Fax: (501) 683-6349

Letters of Recommendation:

It is the responsibility of the student to obtain letters of recommendation for licensure, credentialing, and/or employment. A number of items may be used by faculty in order to decide whether to write a letter of recommendation, including (but not limited to) the following:

- Course grades
- Annual review results
- Student dispositions evaluations
- Comprehensive Exam results
- Classroom observations

Please remember that completion of the program does not guarantee that graduates will receive letters of recommendation from faculty.

Job Market and Employment Information for Counseling

Clinical Mental Health Counselors

Median Salary in 2022	\$48,520
Entry Level Education	Master's Degree
Number of Jobs in 2022	327,500
Projected Job Openings from 2020-2030	402,600

Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Department of Labor, *Occupational Employment and Wages.*

Opportunities for Professional Development

Professional Organizations

Membership in professional counseling organizations helps students expand knowledge and skills, encourages professional identity, helps to develop professional networks, supports political initiatives that support the counseling profession, and provides access to a wide range of products and services. One of the benefits provided through student membership in the American Counseling Association is liability insurance. State organization membership in the Arkansas Counseling Association or the Arkansas Mental Health Counselors Association is also strongly encouraged, as it will provide some of the most relevant information and support legislative initiatives most likely to directly impact you as a professional in Arkansas. At the local level, students can also become involved with the Arkansas State University Counseling Graduate Students (CoGS) organization.

Below you will find a listing of professional organizations that students might be interested in joining. All organizations require membership dues, so discussing options with your faculty advisor is encouraged.

Organization name and website contact:

American Counseling Association - <http://www.counseling.org/>

American Mental Health Counselors Association - <http://www.amhca.org/>

Arkansas Counseling Association - <http://www.arcounseling.org/>

Arkansas Mental Health Counselors Association - <http://www.armhca.org/>

*Additional specialty divisions can be found on the ACA membership webpage at <https://www.counseling.org/membership/join-reinstate/student>

University Services for Students

Counseling Services

Due to the level of personal reflection and introspection that this program requires, there may be times when painful psychological or emotional material is uncovered. While this is an uncomfortable part of the process, it is a critical ingredient for both your personal and professional development as a counselor-in-training. Should you need assistance in dealing with these issues, please do not hesitate to contact the Arkansas State University Counseling Center (Campus location: Reng Student Union 2203; Telephone: (870) 972-2318; Website: <https://www.astate.edu/a/counseling-services/>). All

students currently enrolled at Arkansas State University have access to an *unlimited number of sessions at no cost*. Initial appointments are available either through phone scheduling or during walk-in hours (Monday-Thursday: 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. or Fridays: 9 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.). Appointments cannot be scheduled via email. Your faculty advisor can also provide referrals to community resources as well.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students who are eligible for reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and amendments thereto, are encouraged to contact their instructors as soon as possible. Before accommodations can be made, students must register with Access and Accommodation Services (Campus location: Reng Student Union Rm. 2181; Telephone: 870-972-3964; Website: <https://www.astate.edu/a/disability/>).

Summary

It is crucial to remember that this handbook is only one source of information about the CMHC program, student requirements, and help that might be available during your graduate experience. The best source of help is your Counselor Education faculty. We are ready to help you be successful in any way that we possibly can. If you have any questions about the handbook, please contact your advisor or the program director as soon as possible. If you have feedback on how to make the handbook better and more student-friendly, please send all comments to wsandusky@astate.edu

Psychology and Counseling Department

Asher Pimpleton-Gray, PhD, LPC
Department Chair
Associate Professor
Email: apimpleton@astate.edu
Phone: (870) 972-3064

Current Counseling Faculty

Savannah Cormier, PhD, LPC (CO), RPT-S
Graduate Certificate in Play Therapy Coordinator
CoGS Faculty Advisor
Email: scormier@astate.edu
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Stephanie Gotay, Ed.D., NCC, CRC
Practicum and Internship Coordinator
Email: sgotay@astate.edu
Phone: (870) 972-3020

Lacy Overley, Ph.D., LPC-S (MS), NCC, RPT-S
Comprehensive Exam Coordinator
Email: lcrumrine@astate.edu
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Asher Pimpleton-Gray, Ph.D., LPC
Department Chair
Email: apimpleton@astate.edu
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Blake Sandusky, Ph.D., LPC, LMFT
CMCH Program Coordinator, CACREP Liaison
Email: wsandusky@astate.edu
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Ashley Williams-Whitley, PhD, LPC, NCC
CoGS Faculty Advisor
Email: awilliamswhitley@astate.edu
Phone: (870)-972-3171

APPENDIX A:

Counseling Program
Arkansas State University
Student Dispositions Evaluation

Student Name _____ Student ID # _____

Faculty/Supervisor Name _____ Date _____

Year in Program First Second Third Fourth or more

Supervisor's Relationship with Student: (Check one that applies)

Faculty University Faculty Supervisor
 Course: _____ Advisor

Please indicate the score that most accurately represents an assessment of the student's dispositions. This must be reviewed with the student, and both student and faculty will sign the document. Students or faculty may supply additional comments in the space provided.

- 0 – Not observed
- 1 – Does not meet minimal professional expectations
- 2 – Rarely meets minimal professional expectations
- 3 – Often meets minimal professional expectations
- 4 – Consistently meets minimal professional expectations
- 5 – Exceeds all minimal professional expectations

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE	0	1	2	3	4	5
Successfully completes academic course work required in the program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Abides by academic policies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates academic integrity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Readiness to discover knowledge and ideas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participates fully in learning experiences.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To be Completed by the Student's Academic Advisor	GPA: _____					
Does the students have any final course grades of C or below? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>						
If yes, how many and for which courses? _____						

Comments:

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – CLINICAL	0	1	2	3	4	5
Meets clinical requirements for developmental level.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicates empathy and understanding in a genuine manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides unconditional acceptance of others and others' values.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respects the uniqueness and inherent worth of individuals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates confidence in others' potential for growth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is Practicum/Internship Evaluation attached as supportive documentation? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>						
Comments:						

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR AND DISPOSITIONS	0	1	2	3	4	5
Respect and adhere to all aspects of the American Counseling Association <i>Code of Ethics</i> (2014), the rules and regulations of the Arkansas Board of Examiners in Counseling, Arkansas Code Annotated § 17-27-101-313 et seq.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates multicultural competence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicates, cooperates, and relates with others in meaningful and positive ways.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thinks concretely and reasons abstractly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates appropriate expression of thought.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accepts and makes use of feedback in supervisory and other experiences with faculty and staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gives appropriate feedback to peers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develops and maintains appropriate boundaries with clients, supervisors, and/or colleagues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shows initiative, motivation, and ability to work independently.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is dependable in meeting professional expectations and obligations, including punctuality and adherence to deadlines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates willingness to explore and accept personal responsibility.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:						

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	0	1	2	3	4	5
INTRINSIC DISPOSITIONS						
Is open to new and challenging ideas and experiences.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tolerates ambiguity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Projects a future-mindedness.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exhibits a high degree of patience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates creativity and the ability to think “outside the box.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates developmentally appropriate self-acceptance and self-confidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shows maturity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is flexible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates appropriate expression of emotions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates integrity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exhibits personal courage, strength, and a willingness to be impacted by educational and clinical experiences.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SELF-REFLECTIVE ABILITIES						
Exhibits self- and other-awareness.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to appropriately perceive and manage impact on others.						
Openness to self-reflection and self-examination.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognizes personal and emotional limitations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SKILLS IN MANAGING PERSONAL WELLNESS AND LIFE DIFFICULTIES						
Demonstrates emotional stability and personal security.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates appropriate stress management.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Handles frustration and conflict with a positive, future-minded attitude.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognizes and minimizes impact of personal impairment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:						

OVERALL RATING:Does Not Meet
ExpectationsNeeds
ImprovementIn Progress
Toward GoalsMeets
ExpectationsExceeds
Expectations

**A student must score a 4 or above on all items to warrant an overall rating of “meets expectations.” Any item scored as 3 warrants an overall rating no higher than “in progress toward goals.” Any one item scored as 2 or below warrants an overall rating no higher than “needs improvement.”*

Faculty member’s signature

Date of conference with student

Student’s signature

This form was created by adapting the *Disposition Form* developed by the University of Mississippi Counseling Program and the *Students Review and Retention Checklist* developed by the University of North Texas Counseling Program. Dispositional items were also derived from:

Frame, M. W., & Stevens-Smith, P. (1995). Out of harm’s way: Enhancing monitoring and dismissal processes in counselor education programs. *Counselor Education & Supervision*, 35, 118–129.

Henderson, K. L., & Dufrene, R. L. (2012). Student behaviors associated with remediation: A content analysis. *Counseling Outcome Research & Evaluation*, 3, 48-60. doi: 10.1177/2150137812437364

APPENDIX B:**SCORING RUBRIC FOR Ed.S. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY AND COUNSELING**

Student ID # Date of Exam: Reader:

The reader will circle the appropriate number to indicate the rating of each response category using the following scale:

- 1 = Unacceptable
- 2 = Less than acceptable
- 3 = Acceptable
- 4 = More than acceptable
- 5 = Exceptional.

The faculty member(s) will determine whether the student passed or failed the entire section. Students will receive a copy of this document in an effort to provide additional feedback regarding specific areas of weakness.

Upon completion of scoring, the Comprehensive Examination Coordinator will compile the scores of each section. In order to pass the entire section, students must receive a passing score of three or better for a minimum of 3/5 of the specialty questions presented. Students having passed all five sections will have passed the entire exam. Any student who fails more than one section of the exam will be required to meet with the three faculty exam readers to discuss the most appropriate option for remediation of the section(s) failed. The student will only be passed once the committee has reached a consensus that the student has adequately demonstrated mastery of a given area. Any student who fails three or more sections of the comprehensive exam will have failed the exam and must retake the exam at the next scheduled date and time. Special consideration may be made for an alternative time to retake the exam, but reasons for such a consideration must be reviewed and approved by the student's advisor and program coordinator. In addition, a student can be required to rewrite a certain section, or sections of the exam and/or pass an oral exam over certain areas.

- 1.) 1 2 3 4 5
- 2.) 1 2 3 4 5
- 3.) 1 2 3 4 5
- 4.) 1 2 3 4 5
- 5.) 1 2 3 4 5

Overall grade for this section: Pass Fail Oral Exam

Additional comments including suggested content for recommended oral examination (attach as needed):

APPENDIX C:
SIGNATURE PAGE

By signing this page, I acknowledge that I have read the contents of this handbook and agree to the terms therein.

Student Name (PRINT): _____

Student Signature Date

Program Director Signature Date