



Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health

Counseling

Student Handbook

2025-2026 Academic Year

The college reserves the right to update this document at any time.

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Authority and Purpose of the Handbook

This handbook is written to provide you with important information about the Clinical Mental Health Counseling degree program, the college, program resources, and policies and regulations. It is also a source of information for related professional associations and activities that can support your professional growth while enrolled in the program. Updates to this handbook will be made available to you via the program website, by notifications on the College Listserv, and as requested in print from faculty and staff.

The policies and procedures described in this handbook supersede those described in previous handbooks and replace all other communications on issues addressed herein. This handbook serves as a supplement to the Montreat College AGS Catalog and does not replace it, although its contents supersede those of the AGS and school Catalog. The policies and procedures are specific to the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program. The policies and procedures apply to current and newly accepted students. Students who are currently taking master's courses in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling online program must adhere to these guidelines, except for any changes in the academic program.

Disclosure Statement

Montreat College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Montreat College.

Montreat's MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) through 2026. CACREP is a specialized accreditation body recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) to accredit master's and doctoral degree programs in counseling and its specialties. For more information on the organization, please visit the agency's website at <http://www.cacrep.org>. For more details on the program's accreditation, please visit the CACREP accreditation page: [Accreditation & Authorization - Montreat College](#).

Montreat College's Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program is designed to provide academic coursework in all areas required by the North Carolina Board of Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors for licensure as an LCMHC in North Carolina: [Counselor Gateway](#).

Additionally, students are encouraged to visit their state licensure board to further familiarize themselves with the process, requirements, and post-graduation policies and procedures. To obtain your state's web address, view State Licensure Boards: [State Board Directory | NBCC](#).

Enrollment in the M.A. licensure program does not guarantee a degree from Montreat or qualify for professional licensure. Students are responsible for meeting all academic and professional

requirements for graduation. Further information regarding these academic and professional requirements can be found in this handbook. Students enrolled in the M.A. Counseling licensure program are responsible for knowing the material outlined in this handbook.

Program Administration and Faculty

Montreat College strives to continually recruit core, affiliate, and adjunct instructors whose professional identity is that of a professional counselor, who have been trained with excellence, who have diverse experiences in practicing mental health counseling, and who, above all else, profess a Christian faith. Our current faculty includes the following professionals:

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Dr. Theresa Thomas

Dr. Mark Hunter

Dr. Merry Leigh Dameron

Dr. Brian Shaffer

Dr. Joy Martin

Dr. Kwame Frimpong

Lori Breland, ABD

Carrie Hanson, LMFT

Melody Mitchell, LCSW

Welcome!

On behalf of the faculty of the Adult Graduate Studies Department, we would like to welcome you to the M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling online program. The faculty is honored that you have chosen to pursue your studies here at Montreat College! This 2025-2026 M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling Handbook serves as a guide to help you better understand the program, courses, requirements, policies, procedures, and student rights and responsibilities as of Fall 2025.

The faculty considers the handbook to be “required reading” for all M.A. Licensure Counseling students, and it should be read in its entirety. Although you have access to an academic advisor, it is ultimately your responsibility to know the information contained in this handbook. Your educational advisor will assist you with registration and course information. You will also have a faculty mentor (FM) who will answer program-related questions and be assigned when you begin the program.

Review this handbook periodically, and if you have any questions, contact your Faculty Mentor (FM). You can find the contact information for each faculty member on our webpage. Because program policies and requirements may change from one year to the next, it is essential that you always refer to the most current handbook as you plan your graduate program, enroll in classes, and arrange for field placements and graduation. You may also want to bookmark our CMHC advising page for your convenience.

Although this handbook contains extensive information, it may not provide answers to all of your questions. This handbook is not intended to be a comprehensive listing of all Montreat College policies. Therefore, in addition to talking with your FM and other professors, you can access the Adult Graduate Studies Catalog.

We are glad you have chosen Montreat College! You are about to engage in the exciting process of becoming a professional counselor. As you will see from the following pages of this handbook, the process and experiences offered at Montreat are designed to provide a comprehensive, personal, and professional educational experience. As faculty, we feel honored to accompany you on your journey. The program faculty is committed to helping you reach your academic and professional goals and mentoring you in this process as you grow and develop as a professional.

The College staff and faculty look forward to getting to know you and your dreams. We are committed to helping you develop the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes for a successful career as a mental health counselor. Please contact us if you would like us to provide additional information.

Peace in Christ,

Dr. Andrew Southerland, PhD

Program Director, CMHC

The M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling Online Program

1.1 Overview

The Clinical Mental Counseling Program (CMHC) is a department of Adult Graduate Studies. The graduate Counseling program, launched in 2013, is committed to providing quality professional training for healing human hurts from a perspective permeated by Christian faith. Our training in theory and the practice of counseling is designed to prepare students to work as licensed counselors in a variety of settings. The M.A. program provides foundational studies that equip students for licensure, to pursue doctoral studies and careers in community mental health and human service agencies, educational institutions, private practice, government, and business and industrial settings.

1.2 Mission of the College

Montreat College is an independent, Christ-centered liberal arts institution that educates students through intellectual inquiry, spiritual formation, and preparation for their calling and career, all with the goal of impacting the world for Jesus Christ.

1.3 Mission of the Counseling Program

The mission of the Counseling Program is to train candidates in the fundamentals of human development, human behavior, and counseling within the context of both secular and Christian worldviews, and to guide them in developing a personal philosophy of counseling and professional practice in various settings. The Counseling Program offers a platform for candidates to engage in reflective practice as professionals and to develop into lifelong learners, active global citizens, and advocates for social justice.

1.4 Purpose

Consistent with the University's mission to develop "Christ-centered men and women with the values, knowledge, and skills essential to impact the world," the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program seeks to educate the whole person within a framework of grace and truth, which are core values exemplified in the life of Christ and necessary for professional service; developing the knowledge, values, skills, and personal disposition required for effective professional service. Our mission is achieved, in significant measure, through offering rigorous academic programs, dynamic interaction with mentors and faculty, and carefully structured practicum and internships.

1.5 Mission of the Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Degree Program

The Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling degree program educates candidates in the history and development of the counseling profession, the theories of counseling, the ethical

practice of counseling, the competencies required for working with multicultural and diverse groups, and the strategies for working with individuals across the lifespan in everyday developmental, behavioral, psychological, social, emotional, and career challenging crises.

1.6 Commitment to Diversity

Montreat College is a school founded on fundamental Christian values, including grace, truth, and love for all persons. As believers in Christ, we are called to demonstrate our commitment to loving others (Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-28).

- We approach counseling as a profession that fosters holistic human growth and development in the cognitive, emotional, behavioral, relational, and spiritual domains of life.
- Our counseling approach also supports the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of others who are made in the image of God. This means that for us, all people possess dignity and worth because they are unique subjects of Divine Creation. Our vision is centered on fostering an academic community that values diversity of people and ideas, ensuring that this diversity enhances academic excellence and individual growth.
- Our faculty and students are comprised of people who represent various national, ethnic, spiritual, and denominational backgrounds. Learning to be respectful and appreciate other cultures will add to each student's experience at Montreat. For that reason, we are committed to nurturing and training a diverse student body in an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation of differences.
- The CMHC Program provides an academic community for students, faculty, and staff to teach and learn from the experiences of others and to submit personal values and assumptions for reflection and critical examination. Student learning, professional, and personal growth occur in a climate that encourages a deepened appreciation of differences. Therefore, we do not discriminate in our educational and counselor training programs based on race, color, creed, religion, gender, age, national/ethnic origin, sexual orientation, and physical or mental disability.

Students in the M.A. program must demonstrate adherence to the American Counseling Association's standards and ethics of the counseling profession, specifically regarding sensitivity to and celebration of diversity, as outlined in "Ethics - Tools to Ensure Ethical Standards Compliance." [Ethics - Tools to Ensure Ethical Standards Compliance](#)

Montreat College admits students of any race, color, and national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, or handicap in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, or athletic and other school-administered programs.

1.7 Disability Services and Accommodations

Equal access to education means equal opportunity to learn. Under Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, students with verified disabilities who are otherwise qualified, have a right to equal access to classes at Montreat College. The College will provide reasonable accommodations for known disabilities whether visual, hearing, mobility, medical, learning, or for other qualified applicants and students. Eligible students should follow these steps:

- Identify himself/herself to the enrollment advisor.
- Submit current documentation of his/her disability to the enrollment advisor.
- Be willing to participate in additional evaluation to confirm the disability, if requested.
- Provide clear recommendations for accommodations from a professional care provider.
- Request in writing the specific accommodations needed to enable his/her academic access.

The enrollment advisor will forward the disability services request to the Assistant Dean of Academic and Student Services who will review with the Associate Dean of Adult and Graduate Studies for approval.

The Conceptual Framework for the MA in the CMHC Degree Program

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling degree prepares candidates to become competent counselor practitioners who are life-long learners, critical thinkers, agents of social justice in their communities, and spokespersons for transformation, renewal, and reconciliation in their spheres of influence within the conceptual framework of *Counselor as Advocate, Leader, and Collaborator*.

The Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) is a 60-credit degree that meets the academic requirements for licensure as a clinical mental health counselor in most states. The philosophy takes a broad view of counseling as a discipline, creating an inclusive program that incorporates a diverse range of counseling approaches. The overarching theme of the program centers on instilling the counselor identity in students. This involves helping them develop an understanding that being a counselor is something that they are, not just something that they do. The program supports the development of the counselor's identity by creating a safe space for students to engage in a process of self-reflection to develop insight and awareness about their personality, learn how to bring this personality into a counseling relationship, and experience their vulnerability as they come to understand their personal strengths and growth areas as a counselor. Four subsidiary themes that are interwoven throughout the curriculum are the development of ethical reasoning, valuing diversity, applying critical thinking, and integrating theory and technique in clinical practice.

To achieve this vision, the curriculum extensively utilizes synchronous and asynchronous video collaboration software, enabling students to connect on a more direct and immediate level with both their peers and instructors, and to foster a greater sense of community within the program. The program promotes an authentic learning environment in which students learn to apply the theories and techniques of counseling through role-play simulations, enabling them to experience the counseling process from both the counselor's and the client's perspectives.

In addition to the online coursework, the training experience includes two face-to-face intensive residencies, a 100-hour practicum, and at least two 300-hour internships. Also, to accommodate students from as many states as possible, courses specific to state licensure requirements (such as crisis intervention/crisis counseling and marriage and family counseling) address additional licensure needs.

During the course of their training, students are expected to endorse the following confidentiality statement: "I commit to manage and protect all information from mock counseling sessions during residencies, classroom assignments, and discussions as private information. I will comply with the ACA code of ethics guidance on managing private information. I commit to maintaining the confidentiality of all classmates' information, in accordance with applicable laws. I understand that I will only have access to video-recorded classroom activities for 60 days after

the term in which I took the course ends. I further commit to gain written consent from any classmate in a video that I would like to share with other parties as a demonstration of my counseling skills before I share that video.”

2.0 Academic Policies and Procedures

2.1 Program Learning Objectives (PLOs)

The Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) online program offers students a combination of academic coursework and applied learning experiences, both in the classroom and at supervised practicum and internship sites. Students are expected to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions considered essential to the professional preparation of licensed counselors. To this end, the faculty developed the following learning outcomes applicable to all CMHC students.

PLO 1: Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice
Demonstrate knowledge of the history, philosophy, and current trends in clinical mental health counseling while applying ethical and legal standards to ensure client welfare and counselor integrity.
PLO 2: Social And Cultural Identities and Experiences
Employ culturally competent counseling strategies that respect diverse client backgrounds and advocate for mental health equity and social justice.
PLO 3: Lifespan Development
Apply theories of human development to promote resilience and adaptation in clients across the lifespan, addressing bio-psycho-social-spiritual factors.
PLO 4: Career Development
Integrate career development theories and counseling strategies to assist clients in navigating vocational challenges and addressing sociocultural influences on career decisions.
PLO 5: Counseling Practice and Relationships
Demonstrate proficiency in applying counseling theories and evidence-based techniques to meet client goals while integrating multicultural considerations into ethical decision-making.
PLO 6: Group Counseling and Group Work
Facilitate group counseling sessions using evidence-based practices and group process theories to promote cohesion and achieve positive client outcomes.

PLO 7: Assessment and Diagnostic Processes
Conduct assessments and diagnoses using the latest DSM edition and other tools to develop client-centered treatment plans that are ethically and culturally appropriate.
PLO 8: Research and Program Evaluation
Critically evaluate research and program data, applying findings to enhance counseling outcomes and contribute to the field of clinical mental health counseling.
PLO 9: Clinical Mental Health Counseling
Develop a professional identity grounded in counseling theory, integrating holistic biopsychosocial-spiritual formation into lifelong professional growth.

2.2 Counseling Program Accreditation

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) and intentionally aligned with the 2024 CACREP Standards. These standards emphasize high-quality preparation and a unified counselor identity across the eight core curricular areas—professional counseling orientation and ethics; social and cultural foundations; human growth and development; career development; counseling theories and helping relationships; group counseling; assessment and testing; and research and program evaluation—along with the specialized competencies required for clinical mental health counseling practice. Our curriculum and clinical training experiences ensure that students develop the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary for ethical, culturally responsive, and evidence-informed counseling. Through this comprehensive structure, the program prepares graduates to meet CACREP expectations and enter the field as competent clinical mental health counselors.

2.3 Professional Characteristics of Montreat Counseling Students

In 2010, the American Counseling Association (ACA) adopted the following definition of counseling: Counseling is a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals. For more information on this definition, visit ACA's website for the 20/20: A Vision for the Future of Counseling at <http://www.counseling.org/20-20/index.aspx>

North Carolina law, in General Statute chapter 90, Article 24, the Licensed Professional Counselors Act, defines counseling in the following way(s):

2.4 § 90-330. Definitions: Practice of Counseling

The practice of counseling means holding oneself out to the public as a professional counselor offering counseling services that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. **Counseling:** Assisting individuals, groups, and families through the counseling relationship by evaluating and treating mental disorders and other conditions through the use of a combination of clinical mental health and human development principles, methods, diagnostic procedures, treatment plans, and other psychotherapeutic techniques, to develop an understanding of personal problems, to define goals, and to plan action reflecting the client's interests, abilities, aptitudes, and mental health needs as these are related to personal-social-emotional concerns, educational progress, and occupations and careers.
- B. **Appraisal Activities:** Administering and interpreting tests for assessment of personal characteristics.
- C. **Consulting:** Interpreting scientific data and providing guidance and personnel services to individuals, groups, or organizations.
- D. **Referral Activities:** Identifying problems requiring referral to other specialists.
- E. **Research Activities:** Designing, conducting, and interpreting research with human subjects.

The American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA) provides the following definition of counselors:

Clinical mental health counselors are highly skilled professionals who provide flexible, consumer-oriented therapy. They combine traditional psychotherapy with a practical, problem-solving approach, creating a dynamic and efficient path for change and problem resolution. Clinical mental health counselors offer a full range of services, including:

- A. Assessment and diagnosis
- B. Psychotherapy
- C. Treatment planning and utilization review
- D. Brief and solution-focused therapy
- E. Alcoholism and substance abuse treatment
- F. Psychoeducational and prevention programs
- G. Crisis management

For more information, visit <https://www.amhca.org/about/facts.aspx>. The Montreat College Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling utilizes these definitions of counseling and counseling activities as the foundation for identifying who counselors are, what they do, and what the profession of counseling entails.

2.5 Non-Academic Expectations, Professional Behavior & Dispositions

Students are expected to uphold the Code of Ethics endorsed by the North Carolina Board of Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors, which is based on the American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics. This Code can be found at

<http://www.counseling.org/Resources/CodeOfEthics/TP/Home/CT2.aspx>

Students understand that they are required to adhere to the ethical standards established by the American Counseling Association and the North Carolina Board of Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors (NCBLCMHC). If, at any time, a student behaves in an unethical manner, the student's actions will be (1) assessed by program faculty according to the standards of ACA and NCBLCMHC, (2) discussed with the student and by a member of the faculty, and if the circumstance requires it, (3) reported to either the American Counseling Association or North Carolina Board of Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors. The information released will only include your name and a brief synopsis of the situation. Information related to student status will remain confidential.

In training counselors, evaluating student dispositions—distinctive personal characteristics and attitudes—is crucial. Dispositions provide insight into how well students align with the profession's values and ethical standards. They embody the interpersonal and intrapersonal qualities necessary for effective therapeutic relationships, ethical decision-making, and personal resilience. Evaluating these dispositions ensures counselors-in-training are prepared to meet the challenges and responsibilities inherent in mental health work. Evaluating and nurturing these dispositions should be an ongoing process throughout counselor training. Regular feedback from faculty, supervisors, and peers is crucial in helping students identify their strengths and areas for improvement. Disposition assessment includes reflective journaling, self-assessments, and observation of interpersonal interactions in residencies and clinical settings.

In cultivating these qualities, counseling programs ensure students are not only skilled in theory and practice but are also prepared to navigate the interpersonal and ethical demands of the profession. This focus on dispositions fosters the development of counselors who bring both competence and compassion to their roles. Additional information on student dispositional expectations can be found in the Appendix of this handbook, on pages 8-9 of the CMHC Fieldwork Manual, and at the back of this handbook.

2.6 Confidentiality & HIPAA

The nature of the CMHC program and the topics covered in class create the potential to put students in a vulnerable state, as sensitive material may arise in role-plays, class discussions, and other activities. Given this, confidentiality is emphasized throughout the program. It extends beyond work with clients in practicum and internship to also apply to conversations that occur in small groups, in-class group discussions, and extensive class discussions. **Violating the**

confidentiality rights of fellow students and program clients is grounds for suspension or dismissal from the program.

At the fieldwork site, it is imperative for counselors-in-training to strictly follow HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) guidelines and adhere to clinical documentation regulations to protect clients' privacy and ensure ethical practice. HIPAA compliance requires maintaining the confidentiality of client information, including secure handling, storing, and sharing of personal health information (PHI) only as permitted by law. Accurate, timely, and thorough documentation is also crucial; it not only supports continuity of care but also ensures accountability and adherence to professional and legal standards. Students must follow site-specific protocols for electronic and physical records, maintain factual and objective documentation, and consult with supervisors when questions arise regarding confidentiality or record-keeping practices. **Violating the HIPAA confidentiality and privacy guidelines regarding clients at fieldwork sites and/or in the program is grounds for suspension or dismissal from the program.**

2.7 Professional Dress & Behavior

As representatives of Montreat College, students are expected to uphold professional standards and expectations in all they do, including participation in class and experiential learning courses (practicum and internship). Students should dress professionally, keeping in mind the Christian foundation of the College. When working with clients in practicum and internship courses, students should also be mindful of the setting in which they are interning, the expectations of the internship site, the clients they serve, and what is appropriate based on these factors regarding dress and behavior.

2.8 Respect & Dignity of Individuals

At all times, students in the CMHC program are expected to show respect to and uphold the dignity of individuals, including instructors, classmates, and any individuals served in practicum and internship. Students are reminded that all individuals are made in the image of God (Imago Dei). Further, students are asked to remember Genesis 1:31: "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good."

2.9 Assessment of Skills and Dispositions

Each student will be evaluated on counseling skills (the methods used for helping clients), professional behaviors, and dispositions (the observable behaviors related to respect for individuals and openness to learning that are demonstrated in interactions and feedback with peers, faculty, and clients). Evaluation of skills and dispositions is an ongoing process throughout the program, occurring formatively in the following key courses:

- COUN 5221 Counseling Skills/Residency
- COUN 5223 Group Counseling/Residency
- COUN 6221 Counseling Practicum

- COUN 6222 Counseling Internship I
- COUN 6223 Counseling Internship II

A summative evaluation of the skills and dispositions demonstrated by the students across the program of study will be conducted during the field experience. Students in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program are expected to demonstrate the necessary knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions required for competent and ethical practice in counseling. The program upholds high academic, clinical, and moral standards to ensure that graduates are well-prepared for the field.

Students who fail to meet these expectations, whether through inadequate academic performance, insufficient clinical skills, unprofessional conduct, or a lack of appropriate dispositions as outlined by the program, may be subject to remediation. If a student does not make satisfactory progress following remediation efforts, the program reserves the right to dismiss the student.

Dismissal decisions will be made in accordance with program policies and procedures, ensuring due process and fairness. Students have the right to appeal decisions in accordance with the grievance policy outlined in this handbook.

3.0 Admissions

Students seeking admission into the CMHC degree program must submit the following materials:

- A. The Montreat College application for admission
- B. Official transcripts of all prior undergraduate college coursework documenting:
 - i. An earned Baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution
 - ii. A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in undergraduate study
 - iii. Official transcripts of all prior graduate college coursework (up to 18 credit hours may be transferred)
- C. Professional goals essay
- D. Completed background check (fee to be paid by the applicant)
- E. A required drug test before attending the first course.

3.1 Waivers & Transfer of Credit

Waivers for specific admissions requirements are rarely granted. If a student believes their situation warrants consideration for a waiver, they may submit a written request to the Program Chair, accompanied by any supporting documentation, for consideration.

3.2 Transfer of Credits

Students may transfer up to 18 credit hours of graduate-level counseling-related coursework

completed at a regionally accredited institution. The students must request that their previous coursework be considered for transfer credit. The Program Chair will review the students' requests, compare the coursework of the prior institution with that of the Montreat College CMHC program curriculum to ensure the courses are comparable, and send the student an email stating any transfer credits that will be applied to the Montreat College degree. The decision is based not only on accreditation but also on mission alignment, course equivalency, and theological integration for the receipt of transfer credits from another institution. Montreat College is a distinctly Christian institution. The Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program integrates Christian worldview perspectives, theology-informed ethical reasoning, and faith-based cultural considerations throughout the curriculum. This is explicitly supported by our program and the college's mission and is foundational to our pedagogical model and community standards.

Students will be provided with the remaining courses to take in place of those transferred to maintain full-time graduate status and continue to receive financial assistance. It is the students' responsibility to monitor their enrollment status for financial assistance purposes. Questions related to transfer of credit may be directed to the Registrar's Office (registrar@montreat.edu).

3.3 Course Registration: Academic Overload Policy and Procedure

In the Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program, students typically enroll in nine (9) credit hours each 8-week term during a full semester. Courses are delivered in an online synchronous format. Students who believe they can successfully manage additional coursework and have demonstrated strong academic performance may request permission to take a course overload.

Eligibility Criteria for Course Overload

To be considered for an overload, a student must:

- Be fully admitted into the CMHC program at Montreat College.
- Have successfully completed at least nine (9) credit hours of graduate-level coursework in the CMHC program at Montreat College.
- Have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.5 in CMHC graduate coursework at Montreat College.
- Obtain an endorsement from their assigned Faculty Mentor supporting the overload request.

Procedure for Requesting a Course Overload

Consultation with Faculty Mentor: The student must first meet with their Faculty Mentor to discuss their academic progress, current responsibilities, and ability to manage an increased course load.

Written Application: After consultation, the student must prepare a written application addressed to the Program Chair. This application must include:

- A clear statement of the reason(s) for requesting an overload.
- Confirmation of completed credit hours and current GPA.
- A description of strategies to successfully manage the additional coursework.
- A signed statement of support from the Faculty Mentor.

Submission to Program Director: The student must submit the completed application to the Program Director for review. The final decision will be made by the Program Chair.

Program Chair Review and Decision: The Program Chair will review the application, consult as needed with the Program Director, Faculty Mentor, and other faculty members, and make a final decision.

Registrar Notification: If approved, the Program Director will provide written notification to the Registrar's Office authorizing the student to enroll in the additional course(s). The student will also receive an official notification of the decision.

Student Responsibility: Upon approval, it is the student's responsibility to complete the registration process on time for the additional course(s) and ensure all financial and academic obligations are met.

Important Note

Approval of a course overload is not guaranteed and will be granted only when the Program Chair and Faculty Mentor are confident that the student can maintain strong academic performance and manage the increased workload responsibly.

3.4 Background Check

During the first semester in the program, students complete a Criminal Background Check as a course requirement in COUN5211 Orientation to Counseling. Students will not be dismissed from the program solely based on the results of the background check. However, students must be aware that they may be prohibited from completing fieldwork by their field placement site if a background investigation reveals certain criminal offenses, arrests, and/or convictions. A student who fails a criminal background check may also be unable to obtain licensure as a professional counselor. The Adult Graduate Studies (AGS) Department and CMHC Program are not responsible for a student's inability to complete the program or obtain licensure or certification due to a failure to pass a criminal background check.

3.5 Zero-Tolerance Drug and Illicit Substance Policy

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program maintains a **zero-tolerance policy** regarding the use, possession, distribution, or being under the influence of illegal drugs, controlled substances without a prescription, or misuse of prescription medication. Students are

expected to uphold the highest ethical and professional standards, including maintaining a substance-free status in academic, clinical, and professional settings.

Any student found to be in violation of this policy, whether on campus, at a practicum or internship site, or in any setting that may impact their role as a future counselor, will be subject to immediate review by the program faculty. Violations may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to remediation, suspension, or dismissal from the program.

Students struggling with substance-related issues are encouraged to seek support and utilize available resources before such concerns impact their academic or professional standing. However, seeking help does not exempt a student from the consequences of policy violations.

All students are required to adhere to this policy as a condition of enrollment in the CMHC program.

3.6 Drug Screening

Montreat's CMHC Program adheres to standards set forth by CACREP 2024 Standards and the 2014 ethical codes established by the American Counseling Association.

Per CACREP Section 2 F.1. k and Section 2 F.1.1, we must provide strategies within our curriculum for personal and professional self-evaluation, implications for practice, and self-care strategies appropriate to the counselor's role.

F.5.b of the ACA Code of Ethics states that students and supervisees monitor themselves for signs of impairment from their own physical, mental, or emotional problems and refrain from offering or providing professional services when such impairment is likely to harm a client or others.

Upon acceptance to the CMHC program, you will be required to have a drug screening completed. This screening is designed to assess your fitness for our program and future work during the Practicum and Internship. Wolfe will complete the screening. You will be provided with instructions on how to complete this process. A \$38.00 fee must be paid online or in person at the testing site. If you pay online with a debit or credit card, you will receive a receipt to take to a testing lab. These results will be reported to Wolfe and Montreat.

All screenings must be completed within three weeks of acceptance.

If a student fails the initial drug screening, they will be able to take classes at the start of the semester, including COUN 5211 Orientation to Counseling, and will have eight weeks to retake the test at their own expense. If a student then passes, he or she will be allowed to continue in the program. If the student fails, they may be dismissed from the program.

If you have any questions about the drug screening order or payment process, please contact Wolfe at **828-251-9898 or 800-979-1739**.



3.7 Minimum Academic Standing & Degree Progression

Students in the graduate program are required to maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. Therefore, students must earn grades of B or higher in all courses. Should a student earn a grade of B- (2.66) or lower for a course, they must meet with a member of the core program faculty to review circumstances surrounding the grade, course performance, and the student's plans to maintain the required minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA for the duration of the program as well as formulate a plan of action for remedying identified deficiencies in his or her performance in the course in which the student earned the low course grade. The student will not have to retake the course with the initial (only one) B-. After the Plan of Action, if the student earns a grade below a B in any course again, they will be dismissed from the program.

If a student earns a B- (2.66) in more than one course during the same semester, the student must:

1. Retake the most recently completed course.
2. Complete a Plan of Action with core faculty.

The retaken course may be taken at the same time as the next course in the sequence and, if appropriate, through a Course-Based Alternative (CBA) to reduce delays in program completion. If the student earns below a B in any course after completing the Plan of Action, they will be dismissed from the program.

If a student earns a C or below in any course, they must:

1. Complete a Plan of Action with core faculty.
2. Retake the course.

If the student earns below a B in any course after completing the Plan of Action, they will be dismissed from the program.

3.8 Academic Probation

Graduate students who earn a cumulative grade point average below 3.00 in coursework taken for graduate credit will be placed on academic probation for the next term. If, at the end of that term, the cumulative grade point average remains below 3.00, the student will face academic suspension and/or be dismissed from the program.

Students who receive financial aid must make satisfactory academic progress to maintain eligibility for federal and/or state funds. Financial aid may be available to students admitted on

probation.

3.9 Academic Suspension

The administration reserves the right to suspend a student from the College due to poor academic performance. Any student on academic probation who fails to meet the probation requirements will be subject to academic suspension, without a refund of fees.

Graduate students not permitted to continue for academic reasons may appeal the suspension in writing to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College within two weeks of the suspension. Graduate students who are not permitted to continue due to academic reasons may seek reapplication in writing through their educational program director.

3.10 Key Performance Indicators and Evaluations

To evaluate program strengths, student learning, and areas for improvement, the CMHC program collects and analyzes data from Key Performance Indicator (KPI) rubrics. According to CACREP's 2024 Standards, accredited programs must incorporate eight Core Curricular Areas and a CMHC Specialty Area into their curriculum. Montreat College's CMHC program has identified specific courses and program requirements in which each Core Area is assessed across multiple points in time.

Curricular Area	Program Objectives	Measure 1	Measure 2
Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice	Demonstrate knowledge of the history, philosophy, and current trends in clinical mental health counseling while applying ethical and legal standards to ensure client welfare and counselor integrity.	COUN5211: Final Project Part 3: Counseling Presentation	COUN5212: Code of Ethics Comparison Paper
Social and Cultural Diversity	Employ culturally competent counseling strategies that respect diverse client backgrounds and advocate for mental health equity and social justice.	COUN5215: Immersion Project	COUN6223: CSS-R (2.F Multicultural Competence & 2.B Professional Behavior)
Human Growth and Development	Apply theories of human development to promote resilience and adaptation in clients across the lifespan, addressing bio-psycho-social-spiritual factors.	COUN5214: Lifespan Book Review & Presentation	COUN 5231: Critical Issues Paper

Career Development	Integrate career development theories and counseling strategies to assist clients in navigating vocational challenges and addressing sociocultural influences on career decisions.	COUN5241: Career Intervention Program and Resource Summary	COUN5222: Individual Case Study Analysis Paper
Helping Relationships	Demonstrate proficiency in applying counseling theories and evidence-based techniques to meet client goals while integrating multicultural considerations into ethical decision-making.	COUN 5221: Skills Residency	COUN6223: CSS-R (Part I: Counseling Skills & Therapeutic Conditions)
Group Work	Facilitate group counseling sessions using evidence-based practices and group process theories to promote cohesion and achieve positive client outcomes.	COUN5223: Group Leadership Facilitation	COUN5241: Career Intervention Program and Resource Summary (Group)
Assessment	Conduct assessments and diagnoses using the latest DSM edition and other tools to develop client-centered treatment plans that are ethically and culturally appropriate.	COUN5216: Assessment Research Paper	COUN5222: Individual Case Study Analysis Paper (Assessment)
Research and Program Evaluation	Critically evaluate research and program data, applying findings to enhance counseling outcomes and contribute to the field of clinical mental health counseling.	COUN5217: Evidence-Based Practice Project	COUN 5222: Clinical Treatment Presentation (Research)
Clinical Mental Health Counseling	Develop a professional identity grounded in counseling theory, integrating holistic biopsychosocial-spiritual formation into lifelong professional growth.	COUN5222: Individual Case Study Analysis Paper	COUN 6223: CCS-R

Consequences of Deficiencies

Remediation plans will be mandated for any KPI/dispositional concern. Program dismissal may occur if unresolved after intervention (per CACREP Standard 3.P).

If a student scores a “1” (Poor) on any KPI measure, faculty initiate the program’s remediation procedures. Concerns are brought to the program faculty, and the student’s assigned faculty mentor contacts the student to discuss academic performance and develop a support plan to address the identified areas of concern.

Notice: Evaluations are cumulative and may impact eligibility for practicum, CPCE attempts, or graduation.

3.11 Dismissal from the Program

A student will be at risk for dismissal from the CMHC program for any of the following reasons:

1. Failing to maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0.
2. Earning a grade of B- or lower in 2 consecutive courses.
3. Refusal to sign any Plan of Action or Remediation Forms for success in the program.
4. Misrepresentation of credentials, exploitation of clients and/or fieldwork site.
5. Failure to pass the CPCE or any portion of the Fieldwork experience.
6. Failing to complete a remediation plan successfully.
7. A completed remediation plan does not resolve the original problem.
8. Severe professional and/or ethical misconduct and/or dispositional issues/violations with faculty or peers.
9. Receiving low scores (below 3) on CCS-R evaluations, KPIs, or being terminated from a site for any reason.
10. Academic dishonesty in program coursework or fieldwork documentation requirements.
11. Drug/illicit substance use.
12. Refusal to participate in remediation efforts, training, or meetings requested by site supervisors or engaging in any actions that may jeopardize site relationships with the college or cause harm to clients at fieldwork sites.
13. Violation of any of the following policies: HIPAA, confidentiality, social media, etc.

3.12 Evaluation Policy (CCSR/KPI/Dispositional)

KPIs and the Counselor Competencies Scale-Revised (CCS-R) to evaluate a student’s development of the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions required for effective counseling practice. These measure performance across core areas such as counseling skills, professional ethics, multicultural competence, professional behavior, and readiness for clinical work.

The CCS-R is typically completed by the student, faculty, and/or site supervisors during residencies, practicum, and internship to:

- Provide structured feedback on strengths and areas for growth.
- Identify whether the student is meeting program expectations for clinical competency.

- Guide remediation planning when performance falls below standards.
- Support decisions about a student's readiness to advance in clinical training.

Its primary purpose is to ensure that counseling students demonstrate the professional competence and ethical behavior necessary to protect client welfare and meet accreditation and licensure standards.

Performance Standard:

- Satisfactory performances on all KPIs assignments listed in section 3.10
- Students are required to achieve a minimum score of **3 or above** in each competency area on the CCSR.
- Unsatisfactory scores indicate that a student is not meeting program expectations in that domain and requires intervention.

Remediation Process:

1. Notification and Documentation

- Students who receive unsatisfactory scores will be formally notified in writing.
- The faculty will document the specific areas of concern and provide a summary of observed performance issues.

2. Meeting with Core Faculty

- The student will meet with core faculty to review KPI assignments and/or CCSR results and discuss the deficiencies.
- Faculty will clarify expectations and provide guidance on required improvement.

3. Plan of Action

- A formal Plan of Action or Remediation will be developed collaboratively with the student, specifying:
 - The competencies needing improvement
 - Required activities (e.g., skill-building exercises, additional supervision, remediation assignments)
 - Timeline for completion and reassessment
- The Plan of Action/Remediation will be signed by the student and faculty to indicate understanding and agreement.

4. Remediation Activities

- Remediation may include repeating portions of practicum/internship, additional supervised clinical hours, targeted assignments, or other interventions designed to address deficiencies, etc.
- Progress will be monitored and documented.

5. Reassessment

- Upon completion of the Plan of Action/Remediation, the student will be reassessed based on the KPI, the CCS-R or other relevant evaluation tools.
- The student must achieve satisfactory scores in all previously deficient areas to continue in the program.

6. Program Consequences

- If the student fails to meet the minimum competency score after remediation or refuses to complete the remediation, program faculty may consider further actions up to and including dismissal from the program, in accordance with institutional policies.

This policy ensures that students demonstrate the necessary competencies for safe, ethical, and effective counseling practice while providing a structured process for improvement and support when deficiencies are identified.

Faculty Discretion for Multiple Deficiencies:

If a student receives a score of below 3 in two or more competency areas on the CCSR, it is at the discretion of the program faculty to determine the appropriate course of action. Based on the severity and impact of the deficiencies, faculty may require remediation, additional supervised practice, or, in cases where concerns are significant and client safety or professional readiness is at risk, dismissal from the program.

Faculty will carefully document the rationale for their decision and provide written communication to the student regarding expectations, required actions, and potential consequences.

3.13 Misrepresentation in the Community

Engaging in behavior during course projects, fieldwork, or any program-related activity that misrepresents the college, the CMHC program, or its values and standards can lead to dismissal from the program and/or college. This includes presenting oneself in an unauthorized or deceptive manner, making false claims about program endorsement, or engaging in conduct that undermines the institution's or program's professional reputation in the community. Such actions are considered a serious breach of ethical and professional responsibility and may result in immediate dismissal from the program.

Note: The reasons for dismissal outlined in this handbook are not exhaustive. The CMHC program reserves the right to take appropriate action, including dismissal, in response to any behavior or pattern of conduct that is deemed inconsistent with the ethical, professional, or academic standards of the counseling profession, the university, or the program.

3.14 Enrollment after Dismissal from the Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) Program

To protect client welfare, uphold professional ethics, and ensure transparency in admissions and progression policies across licensure programs, effective immediately, any student who is dismissed, withdrawn for cause, or otherwise separated from the Montreat College Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program for reasons related to academic deficiency, professional misconduct, ethical violations, clinical incompetence, impairment, or other issues that would constitute grounds for dismissal under applicable professional ethical codes shall not be eligible to apply for or be admitted to any other Montreat College program that leads to professional counseling licensure.

- **Discretion:** The College, in its sole discretion, may impose a total dismissal that precludes the student from enrollment in any Montreat program. If the College elects not to apply a total dismissal, a student dismissed from the CMHC program may only be considered for admission to non-licensure programs (for example, the Wellness program) and only through the College's standard admissions review processes.
- **Process and Rights:** All dismissal determinations, program-level enrollment restrictions, and any application reviews will be documented and communicated in writing to the student. Students retain the right to utilize existing College appeal and grievance procedures.
- **Compliance and Review:** This policy is issued consistent with relevant accreditation requirements for published program policies and is subject to review by the Registrar's Office, the Office of Academic Affairs, and the College's legal counsel. Implementation requires coordination with Admissions, Financial Aid (if applicable), and the program office to ensure accurate records and notifications.

3.15 Academic and Non-Academic Remediation Process

When a serious concern arises within a course, and CMHC program faculty assesses that it is in the best interest of the student's professional growth and training as a future counseling professional and to protect the client populations the student is serving (if in practicum and internship) and/or will serve in the future, a remediation plan may be devised.

The following are the steps in a remediation process:

1. The instructor will meet with the student to provide feedback regarding the issue of concern and to hear the student's perspective on the problem. The instructor will document this meeting.
2. If the instructor and student agree on the identified problem as well as a possible solution or solutions, an agreement is made and documented. The solution is then implemented and evaluated by the instructor at an agreed-upon time. If the solution is reached, this is reported, and the situation is considered closed.

3. If the solution agreed upon by the student and instructor is not reached, the instructor will implement the consequences of not achieving the solution, and the action will be documented.
4. If the instructor and student do not agree upon the identified problem or a solution, the professor will consult with the campus Faculty Mentor. In consultation, the Faculty Mentor and instructor will identify a solution, which the Faculty Mentor will document.
5. The Faculty Mentor will meet with the student and instructor to discuss the solution identified by the Faculty Mentor and the instructor and will document this meeting. If the student accepts and completes the steps to the solution, the situation is considered closed and documented in the student's file. If the student does not accept the solution, he or she can appeal to the Program Chair.
6. Upon appealing, the student and the Program Chair will meet and discuss the identified problem and the provided solution(s). The Program Chair will decide if the solution(s) will be upheld or not. If it is to be upheld, but the student does not accept the upheld solution, he or she can make a continued appeal, following the grievance policies and procedures of Montreat College outlined in the AGS College catalog. If the Program Chair does not uphold the solution, a meeting can be called that brings together the student, the instructor, the Faculty Mentor, the Program Chair, the Academic Advisor and interdepartmental faculty (when available) to create the Remediation Committee. This meeting will be documented.
7. If a student refuses to accept a remediation plan, even after appealing and following the processes outlined above, they are at risk of suspension and/or dismissal from the program.
8. The Program Chair will submit a written recommendation of probation, suspension, or dismissal and send a copy to the student, the Registrar, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, and the Associate Dean of AGS.
9. All meetings and communications with and to the student will be documented and kept in the student's file. The instructor may share information with other instructors as appropriate.
10. The student may appeal the decision as outlined in the AGS college catalog regarding the process for grievances.
11. If the recommendation is to suspend or dismiss the student from the program, the student will meet with the Faculty Mentor or AGS Academic Advisor, and both can assist the student in exiting the program in a caring and compassionate manner.

4.0 Program Requirements and Course Descriptions

4.1 Program Orientation

All students accepted into the CMHC program, and who have paid their enrollment deposit, are expected to attend the Program Orientation Night (PON). The PON takes place during the first night of COUN5211, Professional Orientation to Counseling. PON occurs for each cohort and occurs at the location where the cohort will attend classes. The PON will provide students an opportunity to meet key Program and College personnel, learn about the College's classroom management system (Blackboard), decide upon an elective course to be taken during their time

in the program, and most importantly, have the opportunity to begin making connections with classmates as a foundation for teamwork and collegial relationships that will be encouraged throughout the graduate program. ***Students will be asked to sign an acknowledgement form during orientation that includes awareness of Tevera, Residency, extraneous fees, and confidentiality/HIPAA expectations for courses and fieldwork sites.**

4.2 Degree Curriculum

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling degree curriculum is designed to provide students with the opportunity to meet the educational requirements for licensure as a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor Associate (LCMHC-A) as set forth by the North Carolina Board of Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors. To meet the state licensure requirements, the program requires students to complete 60 credit hours of graduate-level coursework.

Program courses are taken in a lockstep, sequential manner. If a student wishes to take courses beyond those required, as long as the courses are available, they should speak with their Faculty Mentor and receive written permission to take a course out of sequence and/or in a more intensive manner than is already established. All courses are core to the program. Students will take classes in the order outlined below.

COUN 5211 Professional Orientation to Counseling

This course will be an introductory exploration of the history of counseling as a profession as well as current trends in the practice of clinical mental health counseling. Students will begin to explore the various settings in which counseling can occur, as well as the specialties within the profession, and the requirements for professional counseling licensure and credentialing. Additional topics covered in this course in an introductory way include counselor self-care, consultation, professional counseling organizations, advocacy, ethics, and multicultural competency. (3 credits, 8 weeks online)

COUN 5212 Ethics and Ethical Practice in Counseling

This course will examine ethical standards and ethical decision-making for the practice of counseling. Applicable Codes of Ethics will be examined, and case studies will be used to challenge students to think critically about ethics and ethical decision-making. Ethical issues in individual, group, family, and couples counseling will be covered, as well as multicultural considerations. The course will also address confidentiality, informed consent, boundaries, multiple relationships, supervision, and consultation within an ethical framework. (3 credits, 8 weeks online)

COUN 5213 Theories & Techniques in Counseling

This course will provide an overview of counseling theories and related techniques, including psychoanalytic, gestalt, behavioral, cognitive, reality, existential, Adlerian, family systems,

feminist, and post-modern therapies. Students will have the opportunity to role-play and demonstrate beginning skills for counseling through videotaped role-play sessions with classmates. (3 credits, 8 weeks online)

COUN 5221 Counseling Skills

This course will provide students with an opportunity to continue developing counseling microskills, as well as foundational skills in interviewing, within the helping professions. Students will videotape role-played sessions and participate in peer review as well as review with the course instructor. This course has a mandatory 4-day intensive in-person residency component. (3 credits, 8 weeks online & 4-day in-person residency) ***Additional Residency Course Fee.**

COUN 5231 Spirituality & Religion in Counseling

This course will examine the role of spirituality and religious beliefs in counseling relationships and the counseling process. Students will explore how different religious traditions that clients may participate in can influence the counseling process, as well as examine their own religious and spiritual foundations to inform their counseling theory and practice. Ethical standards will be discussed. (3 credits, 8 weeks online)

COUN 5214 Counseling Across the Lifespan

This course provides an overview of human development across the lifespan, from birth to death, and explores critical considerations for counseling individuals at various stages of development. (3 credits, 8 weeks online)

COUN 5215 Multicultural Counseling

This course will provide students with an opportunity to develop skills for multicultural competency when providing counseling services to clients from diverse backgrounds. Multicultural competencies will be reviewed, and students will explore their own identity as a cultural being. (3 credits, 8 weeks online)

COUN 5222 Mental Health Diagnosis and Treatment

This course will provide students with an overview of clinical diagnoses based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition, Text Revision (DSM-5-TR) or the current version. Diagnosis criteria and current best practice treatment options will be reviewed. Case studies will be utilized to provide students with opportunities to practice diagnostic skills. Treatment planning in counseling will also be discussed. (3 credits, 8 weeks online)

COUN 5241 Career Counseling

This course will provide an introductory exploration of career development across the lifespan, career counseling theories, assessments relevant to career counseling, and occupational

information sources. The course will provide students with opportunities to role-play, analyze case studies, and develop career interventions tailored to the chosen population. (3 credits, 8 weeks online)

COUN 5216 Assessment in Counseling

This course will provide an overview of assessment methods and tools used in counseling, including intake assessments and standardized evaluations. Ethical standards for the use of assessments in counseling will be reviewed. Students will experience taking an assessment and providing a critical review of their evaluations. (3 credits, 8 weeks online)

COUN 5217 Research Methods in Counseling

This course will provide an overview of qualitative and quantitative research methodology and techniques and discuss the role of research in counseling. Ethical standards for conducting research will be addressed. Students will develop the ability to read and critically evaluate counseling literature as well as create a research prospectus. (3 credits, 8 weeks online)

COUN 5251 Crisis Intervention/Crisis Counseling

This course will provide students with an overview of counseling skills for working in crisis and trauma situations, as well as an introduction to crisis intervention theory. Students will review case studies and create a crisis resource for a client population or counseling setting of interest. (3 credits, 8 weeks online)

COUN 5223 Group Counseling

This course will provide an overview of the theory and principles of practical group work, offering students the opportunity to develop skills in using group techniques and planning activities for groups. Students will participate in a group experience during this course. Ethical standards for group counseling will be reviewed and discussed. This course has a mandatory 4-day intensive in-person residency component. (3 credits, 8 weeks online & 4-day in-person residency) ***Additional Residency Course Fee.**

COUN 5261 Substance Abuse Counseling

This course will provide an overview of the nature of substance use, abuse, and dependency. Education, prevention, treatment, and recovery will be addressed. (3 credits, 8 weeks online)

COUN 5271 Child and Adolescent Counseling (Elective)

This course will examine developmental, cultural, relational, and social concepts related to working with children and adolescents in various settings, including schools, residential facilities, private practice, outpatient clinics, and substance abuse treatment programs. The course will include experiential activities that inform students about the ethical and legal

responsibilities required for working with children and adolescents and provide practice using expressive arts therapy centers. (3 credits, 8 weeks online)

COUN 5281 Marriage and Family Counseling (Elective)

This course will examine various Marriage and Family Therapy presenting issues and techniques, as well as addressing the multiple roles and responsibilities of the professional counselor working within a marriage and family setting. Presenting problems include, but are not limited to, sex, addiction, co-dependency, enmeshment, disengagement, and intimacy, mental illness in the family, triangulation, parenting, family hierarchy, and spiritual development within the family (3 credits, 8 weeks online)

COUN 6221 Counseling Practicum

This is an experiential course that requires students to complete a minimum of 100 hours of supervised clinical counseling practice at an approved site. Students will provide counseling services while continuing to develop skills in intake, assessment, counseling, and consultation. Students will participate in both weekly individual supervision and group supervision. The CMHC program must approve both the counseling practicum site and the site supervisor. Requires 100 hours of supervised clinical counseling experience. (3 credits, 15 weeks)

COUN 6222 Counseling Internship I

This is an experiential course that requires students to complete a minimum of 300 hours of supervised clinical counseling practice at an approved site. Students will provide counseling services while continuing to develop skills in intake, assessment, counseling, and consultation. Students will also begin to complete the necessary paperwork for licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor Associate (LCMHC-A) in North Carolina. Students will participate in both weekly individual supervision and group supervision. The CMHC program must approve both the counseling internship site and the site supervisor. Requires 300 hours of supervised clinical counseling experience. Prerequisite: Successful passing of the CPCE exam. (6 credits, 15 weeks) ***Financial charges will be incurred for six credits.**

COUN 6223 Counseling Internship II

This is an experiential course that requires students to complete a minimum of 300 hours of supervised clinical counseling practice at an approved site. Students will provide counseling services while continuing to develop skills in intake, assessment, counseling, and consultation. Students will also begin to complete the paperwork required for licensure as a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor Associate (LCMHC-A) in North Carolina. Students will participate in both weekly individual supervision and group supervision. The CMHC program must approve both the counseling internship site and the site supervisor. Requires 300 hours of supervised clinical counseling experience. (6 credits, 15 weeks) ***Financial charges will be incurred for six credits.**

5.0 Intensive Residencies

The residency requirement for the Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling degree program is satisfied by the completion of two courses, each consisting of a three-to-four-day in-person residency (COUN5221 Counseling Skills and COUN5223 Group Counseling). Students must have completed the residency requirement before starting their counseling practicum (COUN6221). Each residency experience in the Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling degree program requires students to complete a minimum of 40 total hours of training and practice in the following areas: counseling theory and intervention, assessment, multicultural issues, legal and ethical issues, group counseling, and advanced counseling and therapy. Through the counseling residencies, students gain a stronger sense of academic community by networking and discussing concepts and issues in the field of professional counseling. This experience offers a learning environment that encourages the application of critical thinking and integrated knowledge to professional matters.

5.1 Residency Attendance and Participation Policy

5.2 Purpose and Scope

Residencies are an essential, required component of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program. They provide intensive, skills-based training in core clinical competencies, including interpersonal communication, group facilitation, counselor self-awareness, and the application of evidence-based and faith-integrated counseling techniques. In-person attendance is crucial for ensuring that students meet professional standards and are ethically prepared for clinical placement. This policy outlines attendance expectations, participation requirements, and procedures related to illness, emergencies, and course failure due to residency non-attendance.

5.3 Attendance Requirements

- Attendance at 100% of the scheduled residency days is required for successful completion of any course that includes an in-person residency.
- No more than two (2) hours of total absence is permitted during residency without written, pre-approved documentation from the Program Chair or designee.
- Students who miss more than two (2) hours of a scheduled residency will not receive course credit and will receive a failing grade (F) unless an approved medical or emergency withdrawal is granted.

5.4 Participation Expectations

- Students must be actively present, engaged, and prepared throughout the entire residency.
- Required participation includes role plays, group work, live skills demonstrations, peer feedback, reflection, and KPI evaluations.

- Clinical faculty must be able to observe and assess CACREP-required competencies in real time.
- Students who do not meet satisfactory expectations must participate in a Skills Lab as determined by the instructor and Program Director.

5.5 Illness or Emergency Absences/Support During Residency

Residency attendance is critical for skill development and program completion. However, the program recognizes that emergencies (e.g., medical crises, family emergencies, transportation breakdowns) may occasionally arise. To support students while maintaining academic standards, the following protocols apply:

- Students who become ill or experience an emergency must notify the course instructor and the Program Director before the start of the missed session, or as soon as reasonably possible if incapacitated.
- Documentation from a licensed medical provider or other official authority is required within three (3) business days of the absence.
- Missed residency time cannot be “made up” via remote work, skills lab, written assignments, or alternate observation.
- If excused from residency due to medical or personal emergency, students must withdraw from the course and retake it in full during its next scheduled offering.

5.6 Immediate Notification Requirement

- Students must notify the Program Director and Residency Supervisor as soon as possible (ideally before the absence occurs, or within 1 hour if the emergency prevents prior notice).
- Documentation (e.g., tow truck receipt, medical note, obituary, police report) must be submitted within 48 hours unless extenuating circumstances apply.

5.7 Absence Accommodations

- **Under 2 Hours:** No penalty if the student communicates promptly and makes up missed work (e.g., watches recorded sessions, completes alternative assignments).
- **Over 2 Hours (Emergency Only):**
 - The student may be allowed to complete makeup hours (e.g., attending a later residency session, extra clinical case reviews) if the emergency is verified. This is determined on a case-by-case basis and is subject to the final decision of the Residency Director.
 - A written appeal must be submitted to the Residency Director, who will consult with faculty to determine if makeup options are feasible.

5.8 Unavoidable Extended Absences

- If an emergency (e.g., hospitalization, bereavement) requires missing more than one day:
- The student may petition for a late withdrawal or medical leave (if eligible) to retake residency without academic penalty.
- Alternative options (e.g., partial attendance at a future residency) may be explored on a case-by-case basis and are determined by the Residency Director.

5.9 Prevention & Support Measures

- Travel Contingency Plan: Students are encouraged to have backup transportation (e.g., ride-share apps, carpool contacts) and notify faculty early if they foresee delays.
- Emergency Fund: Limited financial assistance may be available for unexpected travel/medical costs (refer to Student Affairs).
- Wellness Resources: Students experiencing chronic emergencies (e.g., family illness) may consult the program director for referrals to counseling or academic support.

5.10 Documentation Guidelines

Acceptable proof includes:

- Flat tire/disaster: Tow invoice, repair receipt, or photo of vehicle.
- Medical/family crisis: Doctor's note, death certificate, or hospital discharge summary.
- Police/legal issues: Case number or officer's contact info.
- **Note:** Abuse of this policy (e.g., falsifying emergencies) may result in disciplinary action.

5.11 Academic Standing and Course Completion

- A student who fails a residency-based course due to non-attendance will be placed on academic warning and must meet with their academic advisor before re-enrollment.
- A failed residency course may delay a student's progress toward practicum and graduation.
- All requirements must be successfully completed before faculty can approve field placement or endorsement for licensure.

5.12 Appeals and Due Process

- Students may appeal a residency course failure or denial of credit through the Formal Grade Appeal Process outlined in the Montreat College Academic Catalog.
- Appeals must be submitted in writing within ten (10) business days of the final grade posting and must include relevant documentation.

Institutional Values and Program Integrity

Montreat College is committed to the ethical formation and professional excellence of future counselors within a distinctly Christian framework. As such, residency participation is not only a matter of skill acquisition but also of spiritual presence, relational accountability, and holistic development. The college reserves the right to uphold these standards to ensure the protection of clients, the public, and the counseling profession.

Acknowledgment

Students are responsible for securing their own lodging and transportation for the Residency experience. Information regarding meals, parking, and materials will be provided by the residency course instructor during the course. All students are required to review and sign the Residency Expectations Policy before their first residency course (usually in Orientation). Failure to sign does not exempt a student from the policy.

5.13 Skills Lab

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program is dedicated to ensuring that all students acquire the necessary counseling skills to deliver competent and ethical services. As part of this commitment, students are evaluated on their counseling competencies during each residency.

Students who do not demonstrate the required level of skill proficiency will be required to participate in the Skills Lab, a structured, faculty-guided training designed to support skill development. A faculty mentor will provide individualized feedback and identify areas that require improvement. The faculty mentor will also establish the duration of the student's participation in the Skills Lab based on their progress and demonstrated ability to meet program expectations.

Students must achieve satisfactory progress, as determined by the faculty mentor, before being permitted to continue with their practicum, internship, or other clinical coursework. A Skills Lab Remediation Evaluation will be completed at the beginning and end of the skills lab period. Failure to meet the required competencies after extended remediation may result in additional interventions, including potential dismissal from the program.

6.0 Course Delivery Formats

Students enrolled in the online program primarily complete their degree using an 8-week online semester, with 8-week courses offered 2 times throughout the semester. Please refer to the Academic Calendar for the semester and sub-term schedules.

M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling online courses are carefully designed to provide students with a comprehensive academic experience through distance learning. The College

currently uses Blackboard®, an online software platform, as its primary method for online instructional delivery. Students interact with peers taking the same course, utilize links to online resources, view supplemental streaming video clips, and receive direct feedback from their professors through this innovative delivery method. Professors may also use Microsoft Teams, Webex, Zoom, or other streaming platforms for instructional purposes.

6.1 Tevera (Experiential Learning Cloud)

Tevera is an online platform that facilitates the tracking and evaluation of student progress throughout the Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program. All students are required to register with Tevera at the beginning of their program during the Skills course. This platform will be used to complete KPI evaluations, submit documentation, and track fieldwork hours during the practicum and internship experiences.

The cost of Tevera (\$230) is the student's responsibility and must be paid upon registration. Once purchased, students will have lifetime access to their Tevera account, enabling them to maintain and reference their records long after graduation. This system ensures compliance with program requirements and supports the development of professional competencies by maintaining a secure and organized record of fieldwork and academic progress.

Students should familiarize themselves with Tevera early in the program and consult their faculty advisors or fieldwork supervisors with any questions regarding its use.

7.0 CPCE and NCE Counseling Exams

Students pursuing the Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling degree at Montreat College are required to take the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE) during their practicum to be eligible for internship I. Institutions contract with the Center for Credentialing and Education (CCE) to administer the CPCE.

(<http://www.cce-global.org/Org/CPCE>): From the NBCC website, the CPCE is utilized by over 400 universities and colleges, and is designed to assess counseling students' knowledge of counseling information viewed as important by counselor preparation programs, and is based on the same eight knowledge areas as the National Counselor Exam (NCE). The NCE is required for state licensure in North Carolina as an LCMHC-A and LCMHC. During the year, CMHC program faculty will use data collected from students' CPCE scores to reevaluate the efficacy of the curriculum. The 160-item Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination® (CPCE®), published by the Center for Credentialing and Education, an affiliate of the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC®), is used for the majority of the examination. The CPCE® covers the eight core competencies (20 items per area) as defined by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP®):

1. **Human Growth and Development** – studies that provide an understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels.

2. **Social and Cultural Foundations** – studies that provide an understanding of issues and trends in a multicultural and diverse society.
3. **Helping Relationships** – studies that provide an understanding of counseling and consultation processes.
4. **Group Work** – studies that provide an understanding of group development, dynamics, theories, methods, skills, and other group work approaches.
5. **Career and Lifestyle Development** – studies that provide an understanding of career development and related life factors.
6. **Appraisal** – studies that provide an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation.
7. **Research and Program Evaluation** – studies that provide an understanding of types of research methods, basic statistics, and ethical and legal considerations in research.
8. **Professional Orientation and Ethics** – studies that provide an understanding of all aspects of professional functioning, including history, roles, organizational structures, ethics, standards, and credentialing.

Students must be aware that it takes about four hours to complete the CPCE® portion of the comprehensive examination. The CPCE exam will be administered at a Pearson VUE testing center as a proctored exam; dates will be announced in advance to allow students adequate time to plan for the exam. Students are eligible to sit for the CPCE exam upon completion of all but three credit hours of didactic coursework; thus, they can complete the exam during the final didactic course or practicum course. Students must pass the exam to be eligible to enroll in the Internship I course.

7.1 CPCE Exam Administration Policy

Students are required to take the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE) at an approved, in-person proctored testing center. Montreat College does not provide on-campus proctoring services for this exam, nor may students take the CPCE remotely at home on their personal computers.

Students are responsible for identifying and scheduling their exam at a certified testing center and for covering any associated fees. The exam administrators (Pearson VUE) determine testing center availability and locations and are not under the control of Montreat College.

This requirement ensures the security and integrity of the exam process, aligning with national testing standards.

7.2 Exam Results and Remediation Policy

Purpose

This policy ensures compliance with CACREP Standard 6. G (comprehensive competency assessment) while providing fair guidelines for students who do not meet minimum performance benchmarks on the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE).

Please allow two to four weeks for the exam results (typically by the 15th of the month following the exam). Once these exams are processed, a notice will be sent to you immediately notifying you of the results. Students may not reschedule an exam retake until Pearson VUE has released the official results. Students must pass the CPCE before moving on to Internship I.

According to the standards set by Montreat College, to obtain a passing score, a student must earn a cumulative score in each of the eight sections that is equal to or greater than one standard deviation below the national mean of the most recent norms for the examination.

7.3 Cutoff Scores

- Minimum passing score per section: No more than 1 standard deviation (SD) below the national mean for the testing cycle.
 - *Example: If the national mean = 11.4 and SD = 1.8, the cutoff = 9.6 (rounded to 10).*
- Total score requirement: Students must also achieve the national mean total score of Satisfactory (S), Proficient (P), or Advanced (A) to pass.
- Cutoff scores will be updated annually based on national reports as they are made available to institutions.
- Students will receive written notice by the college of retake/remediation requirements within 10 business days of official score release (usually the 15th day of the following test administration).

7.4 Retake & Remediation Rules

Students who fail to meet the cutoffs during the initial exam will adhere to the following:

Performance Level	Required Action
Fail 1 section by 1SD or more	Retake failed section only (oral exam with CD).
Fail 2+ sections by more than 1SD	Full exam retake required (no partial retakes).
Fail 2 sections with >1 and <1 SD	Full exam retake required (no partial retakes).
Fail 2 sections by 1 SD	Retake failed sections only (oral exam with CD).
Fail 3+sections by 1 SD	Full exam retake required (no partial retakes).
Official letters will be sent to students detailing their pass/fail status and outlining the next steps.	

Retake Attempts & Timing

- First retake: Must be completed within 6 months of initial failure.
- Second retake (if needed): Requires faculty approval and additional remediation.

- Third and final retake: Requires faculty approval and remediation.
- Maximum attempts: 2 retakes total (3 total exam attempts).

Highest Score Policy

If a student retakes the CPCE, the official score will be determined by the highest score methodology as defined by the College Board (or applicable testing body), meaning only the highest section and total scores across attempts will be recorded for certification purposes.

College Board (n.d.). Retrieved from

<https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/digitalServices/pdf/professionals/sat-score-use-practices-participating-institutions.pdf>

Compliance

This policy aligns with CACREP Standard 6.G, NBCC exam protocols, and academic due process requirements. No exceptions will be made unless required by Pearson Vue accommodations or documented institutional error.

7.5 Oral Exams

The following policies apply concerning the remediation of oral examinations:

1. If a student passes the overall examination but fails a subsection within the exam by more than 1 SD:
 - a. The program faculty will schedule an oral exam for the student in which questions will be asked relative to the content of the failed subsection.
 - b. If a student does not pass the oral exam, an academic remediation plan will be developed to address the student's weaknesses in the content area. This remediation plan could include a delay in beginning the internship experience and re-enrolling in the failed content course (See below for types of remediation considered).
 - c. If the student successfully passes the oral component of the exam, the student will be granted enrollment in the internship course.
2. If a student does not receive a cumulative passing grade for the initial test (Satisfactory, Proficient, or Advanced), the student must meet with his or her Faculty Mentor to discuss strategies for preparing to retake the examination.
 - a. Students have a maximum of 2 opportunities to retake and pass the exam (a total of 3 attempts).
 - b. A student unable to pass the exam will be unable to register for and complete the internship requirement until he or she can take and pass the examination.
 - c. Students who are unable to pass the exam on the first attempt successfully should be aware that additional semesters will be added to

their projected graduation date.

7.6 Other Considerations

If a student is required to retake the exam, the student will be responsible for covering the cost of retaking the test. The student will also be responsible for scheduling the exam within the test window by the end of week 12 of the Practicum course.

A student who does not achieve a passing score on the second administration of the CPCE must meet with their Faculty Mentor and the primary faculty in the content area(s) where scores fell below the program's competency standards. The following options may then be considered, based on the student's individual performance and academic needs:

- **Academic Suspension:** The student may be placed on academic suspension from the program for up to one year to allow time for additional preparation and remediation. The student will sign a remediation plan for the academic suspension. They may then take the CPCE exam for a third and final time. Failure to pass a third time will result in termination from the program.
- **Development of a Formal Remediation Plan:** The student and Faculty Mentor will review the exam results and develop a targeted remediation plan focused on the content areas where competency was not demonstrated. This plan may include retaking or auditing specific courses, completing additional assignments, and/or participating in enhanced clinical experiences and supervision. In these instances, the student is responsible for all tuition and associated fees related to retaking or auditing courses. The remediation plan will be drafted and signed by the student and must be completed within one year of the date the plan is signed. Once the formal remediation plan is completed, the student may take the CPCE exam for a third and final time. Failure to pass a third time will result in termination from the program.
- **Course Retake Limitation:** A student may retake a course only once as part of a remediation plan following an unsuccessful second attempt at the CPCE. The student must retake the course before moving on to the Internship. Once they have successfully passed the course, they may retake the CPCE for a third and final time. Failure to pass a third time will result in termination from the program.
- **Individualized Oral and Written Remediation Assessment:** In exceptional cases where a student has not passed the CPCE on the second attempt but demonstrates overall proficiency across most content areas, maintains a strong academic record, and is performing satisfactorily in Practicum fieldwork, the faculty and Program Director may approve an individualized remediation assessment. This assessment will include both oral and written components, focusing on the specific content areas that were not passed. This option is designed to ensure the student has sufficiently mastered foundational counseling knowledge before progressing to the Internship and is not intended to replace the

CPCE requirement. If the student passes the oral and written remediation assessment, they may move on to the Internship.

If, after failing the CPCE a second time and the student does not demonstrate competency through the individualized oral and written remediation assessment, they must retake the CPCE for a third and final attempt. Failure to pass the CPCE on the third attempt will result in termination from the program.

7.7 Alignment with CACREP 2024 Accreditation Standards

This policy is designed to support student success while ensuring adherence to program standards and protecting client welfare. It reflects the program's commitment to evaluating both academic performance and professional dispositions as outlined in CACREP 2024 Standards, including:

- **Standard 4. J:** Policies for retention, remediation, and dismissal.
- **Standard 4. F:** Ongoing evaluation of student dispositions and performance.
- **Standard 4. C:** Systematic assessment of student learning.
- **Standard 2. F:** Demonstration of knowledge in all core curricular areas.

Students are encouraged to approach setbacks as opportunities for growth. As future counselors, developing resilience, accountability, and professional maturity in the face of challenges is a crucial aspect of preparing to serve clients ethically and effectively.

7.8 Program Discretionary Policy for CPCE Remediation

In accordance with CACREP standards and the ethical guidelines set forth by the ACA Code of Ethics, the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program reserves the right to determine the most appropriate and educationally sound course of action for students who do not meet the required benchmark for passing the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE).

Following a second unsuccessful attempt on the CPCE, students may be offered an individualized remediation plan at the discretion of the Program Director and core faculty. This plan may include, but is not limited to, written and oral exams in failed content areas, structured study plans, faculty mentorship, or retaking the full exam. The decision to allow remediation is made only after a comprehensive review of the student's overall academic performance, professionalism, progress in the program, and likelihood of successful remediation.

This discretionary option is designed to support the student's academic and professional development while upholding the program's integrity and the standards of the counseling profession. The faculty's decision to permit remediation is final and is made in the best interest of both the students and future clients. The program maintains documentation of all decisions and actions taken to ensure accountability and transparency in the event that any questions of fairness or liability arise.

7.9 Accommodations and Other Languages

The CPCE is available in both English and Spanish. Students who wish to take the exam in Spanish or who require testing accommodations (such as extended time, a separate testing environment, or other supports) must contact the Clinical Director in advance to initiate the approval process. To request accommodations or language preferences, please contact Dr. Tora Kincaid at tora.kincaid@montreat.edu as early as possible to allow sufficient time for documentation review and coordination with the testing provider.

7.10 Study Materials

There is no official study guide for the CPCE®. Since the CPCE® and the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination for Licensure and Certification (NCE®) are based on the same eight knowledge areas, any study materials developed for the NCE® should be helpful in the CPCE®.

- Encyclopedia of Counseling by H. Rosenthal.
- Students are recommended to take the CPCE Preparation Course. Students can access the course at the following link, using their Montreat emails:
<https://classroom.google.com/c/NzA4ODY0Njk0NjQ0?cjc=btfszva>

Pearson VUE, the testing provider for the CPCE, offers a separate platform called CC Academy, which is distinct from the student's CPCE registration account. Through CC Academy, students have the opportunity to take practice tests modeled after the CPCE as many times as they wish. Each practice exam attempt costs \$25, and this fee is the student's responsibility. The College does not provide vouchers or reimbursement for these practice exams. While participation in CC Academy is optional, it may serve as a valuable tool for students seeking additional preparation and familiarity with the CPCE format. Students are encouraged to use their discretion in deciding whether to utilize this resource.

7.11 Jurisprudence Exam

As part of the licensure process for professional counselors, many states require candidates to complete a Jurisprudence Exam. This 50-question exam assesses knowledge of the legal and ethical regulations governing counseling practice within a specific state. It is designed to ensure that counselors understand their professional responsibilities, including confidentiality, scope of practice, mandated reporting, and other legal and ethical considerations.

Students are encouraged to research the Jurisprudence Exam requirements for the state in which they plan to seek licensure. The exam is open-book, and its content typically includes state laws, rules, and ethical guidelines, which are periodically updated to reflect current regulations. Preparing for this exam is a crucial step in transitioning from student to licensed professional. The exam costs \$55, and this fee is the student's responsibility. The students may take the exam as many times as they wish until they pass. The fee must be paid each time the exam is attempted.

The CMHC program integrates legal and ethical training throughout coursework, and faculty are available to guide students in understanding their state's licensure requirements. Students should

proactively review state licensing board websites to stay informed about exam procedures, fees, and preparation resources.

8.0 Clinical Practicum and Internship Fieldwork Experiences

Students will complete a field experience that consists of a minimum of 100 hours of practicum and 600 hours of internship, the purpose of which is to provide the student with hands-on experience in clinical work with actual clients. Students who intend to seek licensure in states that require additional field experience hours will be required to take an additional internship course to meet that state's requirements. Students will be required to secure and gain approval for field experience sites. The same approved field site may be used for the practicum and internship experiences.

8.1 Practicum and Internship Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for enrollment in practicum and internships, students must meet the following criteria before enrollment:

- Satisfactorily completed all coursework
- Satisfactorily completed both residencies
- Have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher upon completion of COUN5221 Counseling Skills & COUN5223 Group Counseling
- Secured liability insurance for the duration of field experiences (strongly recommended to join ACA as a student to continue to develop a counselor identity and secure liability insurance as a student member)
- Have an approved field experience application accepted by the CMHC program
- Have a signed and finalized legal affiliation agreement between the field site and Montreat on file
- Have satisfactorily completed all assigned knowledge, skills, or dispositional remediation plans (if applicable)
- Have completed all training courses required to begin fieldwork (telehealth, HIPAA, clinical documentation, etc.)
- Are in good standing with Montreat College

Detailed information and directions regarding the policies and procedures for searching, securing, applying, and participating in field experiences can be found in the Tevera management system. Students will pay \$230 to enroll in the Tevera management system as part of their requirement to complete the practicum and internship experience. Students can obtain login information by emailing the Clinical Director, Dr. Tora Kincaid, at CMHCFE@montreat.edu

9.0 Practicum and Internship General Expectations

9.1 Practicum

COUN6221 Counseling Practicum is an introductory hands-on experience at an approved

field site during which students practice synthesizing clinical and professional skills that are required of a counselor-in-training. Students attend their approved field site over a full 15-week term and participate in an accompanying online practicum course. Students are required to be at their site a minimum average of 10 hours per week to earn a minimum total of 100 clock hours. Those 10 hours per week include, on average, four or more direct counseling hours per week (50% of which are one-to-one treatment counseling sessions), three professional development hours per week, 1 hour of in-person face-to-face individual/triadic supervision per week provided by the approved site supervisor, and 1.5 hours per week of synchronous video group supervision provided by the faculty supervisor. The online practicum coursework focuses on further developing skills in case conceptualization, assessment, treatment planning, delivery, and management. By the end of the practicum, students will be prepared to progress to the internship experience.

9.2 Internship

The internship experience is divided into two required courses: COUN6222 Counseling Internship I and COUN6223 Counseling Internship II in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Both courses span a full 15-week term and include an online component. The total number of hours is split equally between the two required internship experiences, with a minimum total of 300 hours for each experience at the approved field site. Students are required to attend their approved field site for a minimum of 30 hours per week to earn a total of 600 clock hours at the field site. These hours are broken into minimum average totals of 12 or more direct counseling hours per week during the term (50% of which are one-on-one treatment counseling sessions), 15 professional development hours per week during the term, 1 hour of in-person face-to-face individual/triadic supervision per week during the term provided by the approved site supervisor, and 2 hours per week during the term of synchronous video group supervision provided by the faculty supervisor. In addition to the onsite requirements, there will be *online course requirements for Internship I and Internship II*. (The Internship courses focus on honing and mastering case conceptualization skills, assessment skills, treatment planning, delivery, and management.)

Note: Students who intend to seek licensure in states that require more than 700 hours of field experience will enroll in *Internship II Continuation*, where they will gain an additional 300 hours of experience. The breakdown of hours and type of supervision will be the same as stated above.

Note: Students who wish to extend their internship hours over three terms and who have an elective course available to them may enroll in *Internship II Continuation*, in which case they will be required to be present at their internship site for an average of 20 hours per week during the term.

9.3 Recorded Sessions

As part of the Internship phase of the Fieldwork experience, students are required to submit recorded counseling sessions for supervision and evaluation purposes. These recordings are an

essential component of clinical training and must adhere to ethical, legal, and program-specific guidelines. Students are not permitted to use personal phones, laptops, or tablets to record sessions under any circumstances. Instead, each student must purchase a handheld audio recording device at their own expense that is secure, portable, and used exclusively for clinical purposes.

Prior to recording, students must obtain written consent from each client using the approved program consent forms, which must be kept securely on-site at the internship location. All recordings should also be stored and managed in compliance with HIPAA and site-specific confidentiality policies. Failure to follow these requirements may result in removal from the site or delay in internship progression.

During their field experience courses, students will sign the following confidentiality statement: “I commit to obtain written consent for recording counseling sessions from all willing clients before treatment and from a parent or guardian for all willing clients under the age of 18, relying on the guidance of my site supervisor and my field site policy. I further commit to maintain the confidentiality of all protected client information following federal, state, and local laws.”

9.4 Media and Personal Phone Policy for Internship Students

To maintain compliance with HIPAA regulations and uphold the ethical standards of the counseling profession, student interns are strictly prohibited from capturing any images or video of clients at their internship site. Under no circumstances should a client’s image, likeness, or identifying information be recorded or shared.

Additionally, student interns may not be featured in any form of media, including social media marketing or advertising, conducted by the internship site. This includes posts, videos, reels, or website materials that promote the agency’s services.

Students are not permitted to use their personal cell phones for any internship-related duties. This includes making or receiving calls or texts, checking messages, or storing any client information. Interns may not give their personal phone numbers to clients under any circumstances.

It is the responsibility of the internship agency to provide the intern with a suitable and private workspace and a designated phone line for both clinical and administrative communication. This may include a dedicated office phone, an agency-provided cell phone, or a secure online phone service (e.g., Google Voice, iPlum, or another approved HIPAA-compliant service).

At no time shall a student intern be responsible for handling the agency’s crisis line or after-hours emergency calls. These responsibilities must be assigned to licensed staff only.

9.5 Fieldwork Policy on Working When the College is Not in Session

Students enrolled in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program are not permitted to engage in fieldwork activities at their clinical sites during times when the College is not in

session (e.g., between semesters, official breaks, or holiday closures). This policy is in place to ensure the safety, support, and ethical oversight of students during their fieldwork experience.

At all times during the fieldwork experience—including Practicum and Internship—students must have access to **two supervisors**: a qualified **on-site supervisor** and a **faculty supervisor** from the College. When the College is not in session, faculty supervisors are unavailable to provide appropriate support, consultation, and evaluation. As such, continuing clinical work during these periods would compromise the structure of dual supervision required by the program and accrediting standards.

Students are responsible for coordinating their fieldwork schedules in alignment with the College's academic calendar. Any requests for exceptions must be made in writing to the Clinical Director and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, though exceptions are rarely granted.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in removal from the site and jeopardize the student's continuation in the fieldwork sequence.

9.6 Professional Liability Insurance

Students participating in a practicum or internship are required to have professional liability insurance with coverage of \$1,000,000 per claim and up to \$3,000,000 aggregate (\$1,000,000/\$3,000,000). One benefit of student membership in the American Counseling Association (ACA) is that student liability insurance is covered with paid membership dues. Visit the ACA website for more information at www.counseling.org. An explanation of this is provided in the [Member FAQs](#) document on the ACA website. Students will be required to submit proof of insurance prior to enrollment in the practicum and internship courses.

10.0 Additional Graduation Requirements

10.1 Telemental Health Training Course

For students entering practicum, who may be asked to complete online sessions with clients at their field site, Montreat offers a telemental health course in the curriculum to prepare students to meet the evolving demands of the counseling profession. With the rapid expansion of digital platforms and the increasing need for accessible mental health services, students must be proficient in delivering care through telecommunication technologies. This course satisfies the ACA Code of Ethics (2014) mandate, ensuring that students operate within their scope of practice and are trained to provide services to clients. They will develop the necessary skills to navigate ethical considerations, maintain therapeutic rapport, and effectively utilize technology in diverse settings. By mastering telemental health, students are better equipped to provide quality care to a broader range of clients, regardless of geographical barriers.

10.2 Documentation and Privacy Practices Training Course

Accurate documentation and strict adherence to privacy practices are fundamental responsibilities of professional counselors. The Documentation and Privacy Practices Training

course is designed to equip students with the necessary skills to maintain transparent, ethical, and legally compliant client records while ensuring client confidentiality is safeguarded.

This course will cover essential topics, including proper clinical documentation, informed consent, progress notes, treatment planning, HIPAA compliance, and state-specific privacy laws. Students will also learn best practices for managing electronic health records and handling sensitive client information securely. Completion of this training is required before students begin the internship experiences. Mastery of these principles is essential to professional competency, ethical practice, and ensuring the trust and safety of clients.

10.3 HIPAA and Confidentiality Training Course

The HIPAA and Confidentiality Training Course is designed to educate students on the legal and ethical responsibilities of protecting client privacy in clinical practice. This training will provide an in-depth understanding of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and other relevant confidentiality laws that govern counseling professionals.

Students will learn key principles of client confidentiality, including proper documentation, the secure handling of electronic health records, informed consent, and limitations to confidentiality, such as mandated reporting requirements. The course will also cover common privacy risks and best practices for ensuring compliance in both in-person and telehealth settings.

Completion of this training is required before students begin their internship experiences. Mastery of HIPAA regulations and confidentiality practices is crucial for upholding ethical standards, safeguarding client information, and ensuring legal compliance in professional counseling.

10.4 Attendance at a Professional Conference

As part of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program's graduation requirements, students are required to attend at least one professional counseling conference before completing their degree. This experience is designed to enhance students' professional development, increase exposure to current trends and research in the field, and provide networking opportunities with peers and professionals.

Attending a professional conference provides students with the opportunity to engage with leading experts, participate in workshops, and gain valuable insights into best practices, emerging theories, and innovations in the field of counseling. Participation in such events also emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning and staying current within the profession.

Students must provide proof of attendance, including any certificates or documentation, which their faculty advisor will review. The conference attendance must occur before graduation to fulfill this program requirement. Students are encouraged to explore conference opportunities early in their program and plan accordingly to meet this critical milestone.

10.5 Personal/Individual Counseling Sessions

As Counselor Educators, the CMHC faculty believe there is value in and benefit from personal counseling for a variety of developmental, career, and relationship issues as well as for managing

personal stress. Students are required to participate in at least 6 personal mental health counseling sessions throughout the program. It can be beneficial for a counselor-in-training to experience what it is like to be a client in a therapeutic relationship. Counseling is also a way to take care of yourself while in the program. Students will inform the Faculty Mentor on their campus when counseling ends by providing an exit letter of attendance from the licensed clinician. This letter will be kept in the student's CMHC file. A list of local mental health providers for each CMHC program location is provided in Appendix I. However, it is not appropriate for students to receive personal counseling from CMHC program instructors while they are enrolled in the program.

11.0 Student Expectations

11.1 Professional Organizations

A significant arena in which counselors can make an impact within the field is through involvement with professional organizations. Students are required to join either the American Counseling Association (ACA) and its associated national, state, and local divisions, or the American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC).

These organizations enable students to engage at higher levels in their areas of interest. Most professional organizations and divisions offer reduced membership rates to students as well as:

- benefits such as access to their professional journals and newsletters,
- reduced registration fees for professional seminars, conferences, and workshops
- eligibility for member services (ethics consultation, liability insurance)
- involvement in activities and issues which are directly or indirectly pertain to the profession (legislation and professional credentialing, licensure, certification)
- affiliation with other professionals having similar interests and areas of expertise.

11.2 Academic Honesty, AI & Plagiarism

Montreat College holds its students to high standards of academic and ethical conduct. One significant area of integrity in academics is honesty. Students are expected to submit only their own work. Furthermore, students are expected not to give or receive assistance of any kind, specifically regarding assignments or examinations.

Academic integrity is a foundational value of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program. All students are expected to submit original work and adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity and ethics. If an instructor suspects that a student has used artificial intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT or similar programs) or has plagiarized in any form (including improper citation, copying from peers, or using previously submitted work without permission), the following steps may be taken:

1. **Initial Review:** The instructor will conduct an initial review of the assignment or submission in question, gathering evidence of suspected AI-generated content or plagiarism.

2. **Documentation:** The instructor will document their concerns, including highlighted similarities, relevant AI detection reports, or examples of improperly cited or unoriginal work.
3. **Student Notification:** The student will be notified in writing and invited to meet with the instructor to discuss the concerns. The student will have the opportunity to explain the process used to complete the assignment and provide supporting materials (e.g., drafts, notes, sources) to substantiate their claims. It is up to the discretion of the faculty instructor to let the student redo the assignment or assign a failing grade.
4. **Faculty Review and Determination:** If concerns persist following the student meeting, the instructor may refer the case to the Program Director and/or Academic Affairs. Outcomes may include, but are not limited to, a failing grade on the assignment, a required rewrite, a formal warning, or referral for academic misconduct.
5. **Repeat Offenses:** Multiple offenses will result in more severe consequences, up to and including dismissal from the program.

Students are strongly encouraged to seek clarification on citation practices and the appropriate use of academic resources. The use of AI writing tools is prohibited on assignments unless explicitly permitted by the course instructor.

11.3 Academic Appeal Policy

In circumstances where a student disagrees with either a course final grade or a sanction due to a Code of Conduct issue, students have the right to appeal the grade or sanction through the Registrar's Office. The procedures followed for academic misconduct, personal misconduct, or grade appeals are outlined in the AGS Handbook.

11.4 Department Faculty-Student Interaction

The faculty is responsible for interacting with students in a supervisory capacity/role. As such, faculty may provide students with professional principles, guidance, and recommendations as they relate to the context of the student-client setting. The faculty is responsible for avoiding dual relationships with students, such as entering a student-counselor relationship. Thus, the faculty does not provide personal counseling addressing students' personal problems. If a faculty member perceives that a student needs personal or professional counseling, they will recommend that the student seek assistance from a counselor in their community.

In the event of a student's disclosure, either verbally or in writing, of either threat of serious or foreseeable harm to self or others, abuse or neglect of a minor, elderly, or disabled person, or current involvement in criminal activity, the faculty, staff, administrator, or supervisor will take immediate action. This action may include, but is not limited to, immediate notification of appropriate state law enforcement or social services personnel, emergency contacts, and notification of the program director or department chair. The incident and action taken will become part of the student's permanent record.

11.5 Professional Development, Student Support, & Administrative Review Ethical Conduct

All students in the M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling online program are expected to behave ethically throughout their training, as well as in clinical and professional settings. Violations of the ACA Code of Ethics, the Student Code of Conduct, or failure to take steps to rectify such violations are considered extremely serious. They may result in termination from the program. Although students are expected to adhere to the ACA Code of Ethics as guides to their behavior throughout their program, reading the documents is just the beginning of understanding professional ethics. Being an ethical counselor-in-training involves understanding the underlying principles and values associated with professional codes of ethics that are built upon a strong commitment to biblical principles, developing a set of beliefs that guide one's everyday practice, being able to discern potential as well as realized ethical problematic situations, and having the character to stand by these when faced with challenging situations. This is an essential component of your professional development.

11.6 Professional Development

To successfully complete the Clinical Mental Health Counseling online program at Montreat College and be eligible for graduation, a student must be able to demonstrate proficiency in six areas:

1. Attainment of scholastic competency in all coursework as evaluated through the assessment of Clinical Mental Health Counseling online standards and maintaining an overall GPA of 3.0.
2. Acquisition of, and ability to apply counseling skills with a diverse population and to a standard acceptable to licensed professional counselors. This ability is evaluated by faculty using the Counseling Competency Scale (CCS-R) in skills-based group residency courses, as well as by the student's approved site and faculty supervisor, who use the CCS during the practicum/internship.
3. Demonstration of emotional and mental stability and maturity in interaction with others, including the ability to maintain healthy boundaries, communicate appropriately, successfully manage personal anxiety or uncomfortable feelings, work collaboratively with others, and resolve interpersonal conflict. This proficiency is evaluated throughout the program in all interactions with faculty, staff, administrators, supervisors, adjuncts, and fellow students, encompassing both verbal and written communications.
4. Adherence to the Professional Identity and Standards as outlined by the American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics and Montreat's Code of Conduct. This proficiency is evaluated throughout the program in all interactions with faculty, staff, administrators, supervisors, adjuncts, and fellow students, encompassing both verbal and written communications.
5. Demonstration of the ability to integrate faith and spirituality into counseling where appropriate in an ethically competent manner. The counseling faculty will develop and evaluate students in the above areas of proficiency in a consistent manner across all settings where faculty and students interact. This interaction can occur in various settings, including formal and informal contexts such as the classroom, online communication, advising, and personal conversations. To align with CACREP standards, all students will

be evaluated using a rubric that lists the standards and expectations for various assignments in individual courses. This information will be compiled for each student and will provide documentation to meet their CACREP requirements for graduation.

11.7 Remediation Student Support and Development

In keeping with the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics (ACA, 2014), Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2023), and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) requirements, faculty in counselor education programs are required to assess the knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions of students in their programs. Faculty must take action if issues arise that could compromise the well-being of present or future clients. Remediation can occur if a student is noted to have deficiencies in any of the following areas:

- Counseling Skill Development
- Academic Integrity
- Student Support and Care (prayer, encouragement, etc)
- Student Professional/Dispositional Developmental Issues

The following summarizes the CMHC program procedures for assessing these competencies:

11.8 Administrative Hold

A student's account may be placed on administrative hold by the program director for the following reasons:

- Dispositional concerns
- Refusal to meet via an audio and video platform to discuss dispositional concerns
- As part of an administrative review
- As part of the remediation process
- As part of the disciplinary process
- As part of the grade appeals process

A hold may prevent the candidate from registering for courses, including practicum and internship, which would prevent them from progressing in the program until the issue has been resolved. The program director will notify students of any holds placed on their accounts. Once initiated, the student will remain on administrative hold in the program pending the outcome of ongoing processes.

As part of the Administrative Review, the program director will review all available and relevant evidence to determine an appropriate interim action to address dispositional issues or other concerns, which may include an interim suspension of the student from courses, internships, or clinical placements. The program director may, in their discretion, also apply a registration hold to prevent the candidate from progressing in the program pending resolution of the issue.

11.9 Policy on Dismissal from the Program Due to Site Dismissal

Students enrolled in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program are expected to uphold the

highest standards of professional conduct, ethical practice, and site engagement throughout their fieldwork experience. Any student who is dismissed from their internship or practicum site for any reason—including, but not limited to, ethical violations, unprofessional behavior, failure to meet site expectations, or breach of site or program policies—may be subject to dismissal from the counseling program.

Site dismissal will trigger a formal review process. The Program Director, in consultation with core faculty and relevant site supervisors, will evaluate the circumstances surrounding the dismissal. This evaluation will be conducted on an individual basis, considering all available documentation and communication from the site and the student.

Final decisions regarding continued enrollment, remediation, or dismissal from the program will be made at the discretion of the Program Director with the approval of the Program Chair and Dean. The goal of this policy is to ensure accountability, maintain the integrity of the profession, and protect the welfare of clients, sites, and the public.

Students are strongly encouraged to communicate openly and promptly with the Clinical Director or course instructor if any challenges arise at the site.

11.10 Behavioral Concerns at Practicum and Internship Sites

If during the Practicum or internship, a student fails to successfully demonstrate the required skills, professional behaviors, or personal or professional dispositions in this course and/or receives failing evaluations, is dismissed from the site, or is found practicing at a site without having received approval by the department for the site, the site supervisor will notify the student's instructor. The instructor will notify the Program Director and the Clinical Director. The Program Director, the Clinical Director, and/or the Faculty Instructor will examine the nature and reason for the skills deficit, professional behaviors, or dispositions, and/or site dismissal and recommend a course of action, which could include remediation and/or dismissal from the program. Remediation can be initiated at any stage of the program, as deemed appropriate by the CMHC.

If a student fails an evaluation (receives a score below 3 in any core sections of the SSRS) or is terminated from a site, it can lead to dismissal from the program. For violations that do not result in dismissal from the program, the remediation process may include requiring the student to retake certain courses or seek personal counseling. If, after remediation, the student is still unable to correct the deficits, the Program Director will determine the best course of action for the student, up to and including assigning an "F" for the course and dismissal from the program. The final decision regarding whether the student is eligible to retake the Internship and disposition of the hours accrued during the Internship are at the discretion of the Leadership Team and based on a thorough evaluation of the incident.

Note: When necessary, the Department may immediately remove a student from the site upon notification of concerning behavior by the supervisor.

There may be times when the program faculty determines that a student's behavior is so concerning and/or non-professional, regardless of whether the student is making satisfactory academic progress, that prompt protective action is required. This is especially true when students are interacting with clients in a clinical setting. In such situations, the program director will place the student on Administrative Review. As part of the Administrative Review, the program director will review all available and relevant evidence to determine an appropriate interim action to address the concerning behavior, which may include an interim suspension of the student from courses, internships, or clinical placements. The program director may, in their discretion, also apply a registration hold to prevent the student from registering for courses, internships, or clinical placements (and potentially, therefore, from progressing in the program) until the behavior at issue has been resolved.

Interim actions should also balance the School of Behavioral Sciences' gatekeeping function of protecting others with promoting the student's best interest. Administrative Review is a protective, not disciplinary, process. Interim actions will remain in place until the program director (in consultation with the student and faculty) determines both that the concerning behavior has been resolved and that any pending processes to address the student's behavior are complete (e.g., the remediation process or a disciplinary matter in the Office of Community Life or the Office of Equity and Compliance). If the student's behavior cannot be remedied to a point such that the student is qualified to continue in the program, the student may ultimately be dismissed from the program.

Should the student decide to appeal the interim action(s) imposed by the program director, the student must follow the appeal procedures.

11.8 Remediation

If, during a student's studies, a faculty, staff, administrator, or supervisor believes a student lacks required skills, professional behaviors, and dispositions to progress in the program, that person will begin remediation procedures aimed at providing the student with information and actions to correct the impairment/deficiency. The purpose of the remediation process is to assist the student in correcting any deficits in counseling knowledge and skills, as well as problematic personal, interpersonal, or ethical behaviors, so the student may successfully continue in the program. As such, remedial instruction or interventions are closely linked to the students' developmental growth, recognizing the relationship between alleviating deficiencies and developing new competencies.

We conceptualize remediation in terms of a response continuum based upon the type and severity of students' limitations, with the need to distinguish between deficient, lacks competence, and impaired:

- **Deficient:** Requires skill-based and/or academic approach. Deficient describes those behaviors, attitudes, or characteristics that need to be the focus of attention and change but are not considered excessive or inappropriate. Rather, they may be important components of the student's learning experience. At this level, remediation likely involves instruction and feedback to address the deficit.
- **Lacks competence:** Requires an additional ethical practice-based / conceptual approach. Lacks competence describes a deficit in developmentally appropriate clinical

competencies that are needed for ethical practice. These would include areas such as performance of counseling skills and/or professional behaviors, attitudes, or characteristics, response to supervision, and/or ability to apply ethics into practice. These behaviors are considered to be excessive or inappropriate, requiring remedial action beyond the course instructor or supervisor. Impairment refers to behaviors that have a significant negative impact on professional functioning.

- **Impaired:** Requires additional intervention-based and/or therapeutic approach. Impairment is demonstrated by one or more of the following behaviors:
 - a. an inability and/or unwillingness to acquire and integrate professional standards into their repertoire of professional behavior;
 - b. an inability to acquire professional skills to reach an acceptable level of competency;
 - c. an inability to control personal stress, psychological dysfunction, and/or excessive emotional reactions that interfere with professional functioning.

The problematic behavior continuum can also be considered along the lines of Academic, Clinical, and Personal, with Academic being more related to deficiencies and Personal being more related to impairments. Clinical limitations may likely involve both Academic and personal aspects. Additionally, the program response can be considered along a continuum that ranges from education to formal remediation to termination.

Deficiencies, lack of competency, and impairment can include (but not limited to):

- Inadequate knowledge base commensurate with status in the program
- Inadequate, but improving counseling skills
- Rudimentary ethical processing
- Simplistic, narrow, or disjointed case conceptualization
- Insufficient interpersonal skills and awareness, but willingness to develop
- Lack of awareness of ethical principles and obligations
- Failure in responsibilities to the site and/or supervisor
- Unwillingness/inability to be effective in basic counseling techniques
- Unwillingness/inability to complete appropriate documentation
- Failure to function as an effective member of the treatment team
- Interpersonal and Personal Problems
- Inappropriate interpersonal skills
- Lacks self-control (anger, impulse control) in relationships
- Inappropriate boundaries
- Misleads or exploits others
- Lacks awareness of the impact they have on others
- Unwilling to receive feedback in supervision
- Does not take responsibility for deficiencies and/or problems
- Lacks foundational counseling skills
- Inappropriate affect in response to clients
- Does not recognize the limitations of expertise and competence
- Does not apply ethical and/or legal standards to practice
- Lacks awareness of how their beliefs and values influence practice
- Does not demonstrate respect for individual differences and culture

- Deficits in punctuality, professional appearance, attendance, and dependability
- Does not complete appropriate paperwork and documentation
- Does not adhere to the department's or their clinical site's policies
- Lacks professional and personal integrity and maturity
- Makes false, misleading, or deceptive statements
- Displayed academic dishonesty
- Problems with alcohol/drug use or illegal activities
- Inappropriate sexual behavior
- Refused to consider personal counseling when recommended

Faculty reserve the right to initiate remediation at whatever stage they deem appropriate for the student. Failure to sign the remediation form may result in dismissal from the program.

11.9 Immediate Interventions

In the event of a student's disclosure, either verbally or in writing, of either threat of serious or foreseeable harm to self or others, abuse or neglect of a minor, elderly, or disabled person, or current involvement in criminal activity, the faculty, staff, administrator, or supervisor will take immediate action. This action may include, but is not limited to, immediate notification of the local police department, appropriate state law enforcement, social services personnel, emergency contacts, and notification of the proper program chair or associate dean. The incident and action taken will become part of the student's permanent record.

11.10 Final Determination Following Recommendation of Dismissal

Based on the recommendation for dismissal, the program director will provide the student with a written notice of dismissal. If any interim action(s) were put into place following Administrative Review (e.g., interim suspension or registration hold), those interim action(s) will remain in place. The student may appeal to the program director's final determination of dismissal. Should the student decide to appeal their dismissal, they must follow the appeal procedures outlined below.

11.11 Appeal of Dismissal

Students who disagree with the program director's final determination have an opportunity to appeal. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the Assistant Dean of Adult Graduate Studies within seven (7) days of notification of receiving the notice of the program director's decision. The appeal should clearly state the reason(s) the student believes the final determination should be overturned. Once received, the Assistant Dean (or designee) will review all relevant evidence and, if necessary, speak with the student, the program director, and any others who have relevant information (e.g., instructors, site supervisors). The Assistant Dean (or designee) will endeavor to make a determination within ten (10) days of receiving the appeal. The determination to uphold or overturn the final determination will be sent to the student in writing, and the Assistant Dean (or designee)'s determination concerning the interim action(s) will be final, pending the outcome of any separate processes. If the Assistant Dean (or designee) overturns a dismissal, the student will have the option either to remain in the program and continue work with the program director's remediation plan to fully address its concerns, or to withdraw from the program.

11.12 Enrollment after Dismissal from the Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) Program

To protect client welfare, uphold professional ethics, and ensure transparency in admissions and progression policies across licensure programs.

- **Policy:** Effective immediately, any student who is dismissed, withdrawn for cause, or otherwise separated from the Montreat College Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program for reasons related to academic deficiency, professional misconduct, ethical violations, clinical incompetence, impairment, or other issues that would constitute grounds for dismissal under applicable professional ethical codes shall not be eligible to apply for or be admitted to any other Montreat College program that leads to professional counseling licensure.
- **Discretion:** The College, in its sole discretion, may impose a total dismissal that precludes the student from enrollment in any Montreat program. If the College elects not to apply a total dismissal, a student dismissed from the CMHC program may only be considered for admission to non-licensure programs (for example, the Wellness program) and only through the College's standard admissions review processes.
- **Process and Rights:** All dismissal determinations, program-level enrollment restrictions, and any application reviews will be documented and communicated in writing to the student. Students retain the right to utilize existing College appeal and grievance procedures.
- **Compliance and Review:** This policy is issued consistent with relevant accreditation requirements for published program policies and is subject to review by the Registrar's Office, the Office of Academic Affairs, and the College's legal counsel. Implementation requires coordination with Admissions, Financial Aid (if applicable), and the program office to ensure accurate records and notifications.

11.13 Student Conduct at the Internship Site

Students representing the Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program at their internship sites are expected to uphold the highest standards of professionalism, ethical behavior, and personal integrity. Professional conduct is essential to maintaining a positive reputation for both the student and the program.

11.14 Safety and Professionalism

Students must adhere to all safety protocols established by their internship site. They should exercise sound judgment, maintain professional boundaries, and report any safety concerns, ethical violations, or workplace hazards to their site supervisor and faculty supervisor immediately.

11.15 Harassment and Discrimination

The CMHC program has a zero-tolerance policy for harassment, discrimination, or any form of inappropriate behavior. Students must interact with colleagues, clients, and staff in a professional, respectful, and ethical manner. Any incidents of harassment or discrimination should be reported in accordance with the procedures outlined by the internship site and the CMHC program.

11.16 Social Media and Online Conduct

Students enrolled in practicum, internship, or any clinical fieldwork placements represent not only themselves and the counseling profession but also their assigned sites and supervisors. Social media and public communication related to these experiences carry an added layer of ethical and professional responsibility.

Students must use social media responsibly and in a manner that aligns with professional ethical guidelines. Posting confidential information about clients, discussing site operations, or making unprofessional remarks about the internship experience on social media is strictly prohibited. Additionally, students are not permitted to post negative reviews, comments, or criticisms about their internship sites online, as this can harm professional relationships and violate ethical standards. If a student has concerns about their site, they should address them directly with their faculty supervisor rather than posting online.

Failure to adhere to these conduct expectations may result in disciplinary action, including remediation, removal from the internship site, or dismissal from the CMHC program.

11.17 Social Media Expectations Specific to Fieldwork

1. **Site Representation**

- o Students must refrain from posting, sharing, or commenting on social media in ways that could portray the field placement site, its staff, or its clients negatively or inaccurately.
- o Students should not publicly identify or tag the site in posts without explicit, written permission from the site supervisor and in alignment with the site's policies.

2. **Confidentiality**

- o Students must strictly protect all client information and maintain confidentiality in accordance with ACA ethical standards, HIPAA, FERPA, and any applicable state or site-specific regulations.
- o Even de-identified or generalized stories shared online can compromise confidentiality and are strongly discouraged.

3. **Professional Boundaries**

- o Students should avoid posting photos or videos taken at the fieldwork site, including images of offices, group rooms, or any identifying features.
- o Students should not engage in online interactions with clients or their families, including accepting friend or follow requests, commenting on posts, or discussing services.

4. **Respect for Site Policies**

- o Students are required to familiarize themselves with and adhere to all social media and public communication policies of their fieldwork sites.
- o In cases where site policies are more restrictive than those of the university or CMHC program, the more restrictive policy applies.

Consequences of Policy Violations: Violations of these guidelines may result in:

- Immediate removal from the fieldwork site
- Failure of the practicum or internship course
- Disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the CMHC program
- Potential reporting to licensing boards or future employers

11.18 Faculty Endorsement

Upon successful completion of the program of studies and demonstration of the requisite competencies, faculty members endorse students for certification and licensure. Upon request, the faculty will write letters of recommendation for employment in the student's specified area of specialization or for advanced studies (e.g., Doctoral programs). Endorsement only occurs when faculty believe students are qualified to perform the duties associated with credentialing or employment. Students should reach out to a faculty member who can best speak to their academic and professional performance.

In addition to credentialing and employment, faculty members endorse students for practicum and internship. Endorsement occurs only when students have successfully completed the prerequisite courses and if faculty members believe students are qualified to perform the duties associated with the practicum or internship. In compliance with the ACA Code of Ethics, faculty do not endorse students whom they believe to be impaired in any way that would interfere with the performance of the duties associated with the endorsement, regardless of academic qualifications.

11.19 Student Record Keeping

Students should keep copies of all class syllabi and course schedules for future use. Students should also keep copies of all clinical and supervision hours accrued in practicum and internship classes. Examination boards for counseling licensure, insurance companies, and other organizations may require proof of course content and/or clinical work, which can be demonstrated by evidence such as the course syllabus, course schedule, or official clinical hours spreadsheets. Do not discard old syllabi and other academic records; instead, save them in multiple formats (electronic, print, or backup) and store them in a secure location. It is difficult and sometimes impossible for faculty or program administration to locate old syllabi. It is the student's responsibility to keep copies of the course syllabus, schedule, and clinical hours.

11.20 Time Limit for Degree Completion

The time limit for completing the master's degree from the enrollment date of the first course taken is four years. Any online Clinical Mental Health Counseling courses taken at Montreat that are more than five years old must be repeated for a student to graduate with a degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling.

11.21 Leave of Absence From Counseling Program

1. Personal Leave of Absence

Students may request a personal leave of absence for non-medical or non-military reasons by submitting a written request to the Graduate School at least one week before the semester begins, but no later than the last day of the Add/Drop period. Approval from the department is required.

- Duration & Limits:
 - A maximum of four semesters total during graduate studies.
 - Up to two semesters may be granted at a time.
 - Extends degree completion timeline but does not extend funding eligibility.
- Restrictions:
 - No degree requirements may be completed during leave.
 - Doctoral candidates must demonstrate that the leave is necessary due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g., illness, family emergencies). Employment obligations do not qualify.
- International Students: Must consult the Office of Global Services regarding visa implications.

2. Medical Leave of Absence (MLOA)

Students experiencing medical or mental health conditions (including pregnancy) may request an MLOA.

- Process:
 - Submit a “Student Petition for Leave” form with approval from the Director of Graduate Studies and the Associate Dean.
 - For psychiatric concerns: Consultation with CAPS required.
 - For physical conditions: A healthcare provider’s letter must be submitted to SHC.
- Duration & Extensions:
 - Up to two semesters initially; extensions require annual renewal.
 - Pauses degree completion timeline; graduation is not permitted during leave.
- Confidentiality: Medical details should only be shared with CAPS or SHC, not the program.

3. Military Leave of Absence

Students called to active duty must provide military orders to their academic dean.

- Benefits:
 - 100% tuition refund for the semester (housing/meal charges may apply).
 - Up to five years of leave; extensions require approval.
- Re-Enrollment:
 - Must notify the university within three years of discharge.
 - Guaranteed return to the same academic status with no re-enrollment fee.

4. Parental Leave

Available for birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child (under age 6).

- Eligibility & Process:
 - Primary caregiver status required.
 - Request must be submitted three months in advance.
 - Six weeks of leave, taken consecutively post-birth/placement.
- Academic Flexibility:
 - Faculty should accommodate attendance/assignment adjustments.
 - Incompletes may be granted with a one-semester extension.
- Funding & Visa Considerations:
 - Does not extend degree timelines but may defer funding.
 - International students must consult the Office of Global Services.

5. Leave for Graduate Assistants

Governed by the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA):

- Medical Leave: Up to six weeks of paid leave or unpaid leave with deferred funding.
- Parental Leave: Six weeks of paid leave within four months of birth/placement.
- Family Leave: Unpaid, with funding extension equal to leave duration.

6. Mandated Leave of Absence

The university may impose a leave for:

- Interim suspensions lasting over two weeks.
- Behavior posing a risk to campus safety or academic disruption.

General Notes:

- Leaves do not count toward residency or financial aid eligibility unless specified.
- Students on leave must resolve incomplete coursework per existing deadlines.

12.0 Beginning a Professional Journey

Students in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program are embarking on a journey to become counseling professionals who engage in lifelong learning and collaboration. The beginning of the journey is the perfect time to buy into one's professional identity as a counselor and thus begin engaging with the organizations that represent our profession.

Students are encouraged to take advantage of student rates and become involved in the American Counseling Association (ACA) and at least one ACA division that reflects an area of the student's professional interest. This will enrich students' knowledge of the counseling profession and help students be a part of essential movements that occur as we respond to the changing needs of a global society. The ACA has numerous interest groups, email lists, and local chapters that provide students with opportunities for direct engagement in the field. Professional conferences are a significant source of professional training, networking, and involvement. The ACA holds an annual conference in a different city each year, with the ACA divisions also offering conferences on an annual or biennial basis. These conferences are excellent opportunities for students to meet professionals who are practicing and shaping various areas in our field.

Students may also find that their individual state counseling associations have a robust community of mental health professionals; therefore, they are encouraged to consider involvement with their state counseling associations. Many states hold annual conferences or seasonal workshops. These are excellent opportunities for students to meet professionals from around their states, some of whom may be important contacts for future field experience opportunities.

13.0 Licensure, Certification, and Professional Information

13.1 Licensure

Completing the MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling is the first step toward becoming a licensed counselor. Montreat routinely checks the academic pre-licensure requirements of each state. Whenever possible, we will keep you up to date about changes in your state's requirements. However, because requirements may change between Montreat's routine reviews, you should periodically review the requirements of your state to confirm that you have met the necessary academic requirements for licensure. All states require additional, postgraduate clinical experience and passage of a national examination to become licensed. You should also check the post-degree licensure requirements for your state. Your state may require that you submit a syllabus for each of your counseling courses. Be sure to save copies of your syllabi.

You may find the state licensure requirements by visiting your state's licensure board website. You can find the state licensing board website and contact information at the [National Board for Certified Counselors \(NBCC\) State Board Directory](#).

13.2 National Certified Counselor (NCC)

Graduates of the MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program are eligible to apply for the National Certified Counselor credential. This is a voluntary, national certification process that recognizes counselors who have met training program and experience standards established by the National Board for Certified Counselors. While national certification furthers the professional identity of beginning counselors, it is not the same as state licensure. For further information, visit the [National Board for Certified Counselors website](#).

13.3 Professional Association Information

Students are encouraged to join and become active in professional organizations (or associations). One method of staying current in the profession is participating in professional organizations by presenting papers at conferences, serving on committees, writing for professional journals, attending workshops, and becoming actively involved in leadership.

14.0 Academic Faculty and Career Advising

Montreat's Master of the Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program offers a variety of

professionals to support and promote student growth throughout the program and as a counselor-in-training. These individuals are available to advise counseling students throughout their program, covering topics ranging from selecting courses for each term to developing a professional counseling identity, as well as assisting with field experience and job-search questions. To ensure the best possible response, different advisors focus on different aspects of students' program experience as follows:

14.1 Academic Advisor

The academic advisor provides primary support for all program, course, and registration needs (with the exception of practicum and internships). Academic advisors reach out regularly, often weekly. Their main responsibilities cover the following:

- Welcoming students to the university and orienting them to Blackboard, Tevera, and the learning environment
- Reviewing the counseling academic program, creating a course plan, and enrolling students in courses to drive their path to graduation
- Being knowledgeable about policies (satisfactory academic progress [SAP] plans, scholastic warning, petitioning to graduate, etc.) and communicating these to students when applicable

14.2 Faculty Mentor (previously Faculty Advisor)

In addition to interacting with instructors from diverse backgrounds in the classroom, students will be assigned a *Faculty Mentor* for the duration of the program. While the curriculum at Montreat College is sequential, students will have an AGS staff advisor to ensure they stay on track with their courses. Faculty Mentors (FMs) provide mentorship, come alongside students to hear their professional CMHC interests and goals, and collaborate on ways to fulfill those interests and goals. Faculty Mentors may encourage students to join related professional associations, attend counseling conferences for professional development, and support student presentations at counseling conferences and workshops. Furthermore, Faculty Mentors offer guidance on how students can enhance their coursework by focusing projects and requirements on areas of interest, counseling specialty interests, and populations of interest.

Faculty Mentors are also a source of support *for* the practicum and internship selection processes. Students are encouraged to take the initiative to cultivate this relationship; it is their responsibility to seek out the FM when questions or concerns arise. Collaborative work with program instructors in research, presentations, and publications can extend beyond the student's FM.

14.3 Career Advisor

Students in the CMHC program will be assigned a Faculty Mentor (FM) who will serve as a mentor throughout the training program. As such, the FM will provide career mentoring and collaborate with the student to discern their interests, aid in the CMHC practicum and internship process, and offer career guidance as the student approaches graduation.

Program instructors are also encouraged to share information about practicum, internship, and career opportunities that come to their attention through the program listserv, in one-on-one settings as appropriate, or by posting information to location bulletin boards.

14.4 Clinical Experience Faculty Advisor

The Clinical Director of Fieldwork serves as the clinical experience faculty advisor, providing primary support for all questions related to field site search, practicum, and internships. Their primary responsibilities cover the following:

- Answering questions regarding field site searching and securement
- Answering questions regarding applying for practicum and internships
- Answering questions regarding practicum and internship prerequisites and requirements
- Supporting field site searching
- Orienting students to practicum and internships

14.5 Recommendations & Endorsements

Students may request that their instructors, program supervisors of clinical experience, and faculty mentor provide recommendations or endorsements for professional positions and/or licensure. According to policies set forth by the NC Board of LPG, the academic supervisor of clinical experience (i.e., CMHC program instructor providing supervision to the student for practicum and internship) will verify the graduate clinical experience on licensure documents. If the supervising instructor is unable to sign, the Program Director will sign the documents upon verifying supervision and work logs from the student, faculty supervisors, and site supervisors as appropriate.

Endorsements and recommendations for professional positions will be made at the discretion of the individual instructor to whom the request is submitted. Furthermore, the instructor will, at their discretion, make endorsements and recommendations of students for positions for which they are qualified. For example, an instructor may determine that it is not appropriate to recommend a student for a professional position in substance abuse work if the student did not focus his or her internship experiences in a substance abuse setting and/or if he or she did not perform well in the substance abuse course.

If a student wishes to have an instructor provide verbal or written endorsement or recommendation, the student should make a specific request to the instructor and allow adequate time for the instructor to give the endorsement or recommendation. The student should also plan to provide the instructor with a current copy of their resume (CV) and discuss their career interests, goals, accomplishments, and related activities with the instructor.

15.0 Programs & College Resources

15.1 Program Orientation

All students who have been accepted into the CMHC program and who have paid their enrollment deposit are expected to attend the Program Orientation Night (PON). The PON takes place during the first night of COUN5211, *Professional Orientation to Counseling*. PON occurs for each cohort and occurs at the location where the cohort will attend classes. The PON will provide students an opportunity to meet key Program and College personnel, learn about the College's classroom management system (Blackboard), decide upon an elective course to be taken during their time in the program, and most importantly, have the opportunity to begin making connections with classmates as a foundation for teamwork and collegial relationships that will be encouraged throughout the graduate program.

15.2 Fieldwork Orientation

The Fieldwork Orientation is designed to help students transition smoothly into their practicum and internship experiences. During this orientation, students will learn about the fieldwork process, including its expectations, requirements, and responsibilities, which are critical components of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program.

Students will be introduced to the process of selecting and securing a fieldwork site, the roles of site supervisors, and how to effectively manage their fieldwork hours and documentation. Additionally, the orientation will cover key topics, including ethical guidelines, supervision expectations, and strategies for developing professional competencies.

By the end of the orientation, students will be prepared to begin their fieldwork with confidence, understanding the support they will receive from faculty and site supervisors, as well as how to address any challenges that may arise during their fieldwork experience. This orientation is a crucial first step in ensuring that students are well-equipped for success as they begin their hands-on training in real-world counseling settings.

15.3 Graduate Assistant/Administrative Assistant

Montreat College is pleased to offer a Graduate/Administrative Assistantship (GA/AA) Program for students enrolled in the CMHC program. Two GA/AA positions are held each academic year. The Graduate/Administrative Assistant (GA/AA) position is available to currently enrolled students in the CMHC program who are in good academic standing and making progress toward degree completion.

As a GA/AA, the students will work 20 hours of clock time per week for the CMHC program. Responsibilities focus on administrative support duties. Specifically, the GA/AAs will assist the Program Chair in (1) writing projects for the CACREP accreditation process, (2) maintaining and assisting in the organization of program data, (3) assisting with elements of teaching and updating the online Student Files, and (4) other tasks as needed. In exchange for 20 hours per week from July 1 to June 30, the GA/AA will receive a partial/full tuition waiver for the year he or she is a GA, as well as a monthly pay stipend. The assistantship does not provide medical or dental insurance benefits, cost-of-living benefits, or housing stipends. A

GA/AA contract will be written for a one-year time frame from July 1 to June 30; in the instance that a GA position is filled later than the July 1 start date, all benefits will be pro-rated, and the contract will reflect the actual start date (i.e., it may be for less time than the full 12 months) with the same end date of June 30.

Additionally, it is expected that students holding the GA/AA position will do so with a proper professional demeanor and maintain the confidentiality of any student-specific information. The GA/AA position will be announced to all classes in advance of the position's start date, and all currently enrolled students who have received full admission to the program and are in good academic standing will be eligible to apply and be considered.

A GA/AA must maintain a 3.5 cumulative GPA to continue receiving benefits (tuition waiver and monthly stipends). Should a GA's cumulative GPA drop below a 3.5, the GA and Program Chair will discuss the circumstances surrounding the situation and develop an action plan and timeline for bringing the GPA back to the required 3.5. If this plan of action is not implemented successfully within the specified time frame, the student will be released from their GA/AA responsibilities and will be responsible for tuition expenses for the courses. If a student currently serving as a GA encounters a need to withdraw from the program or to take a leave of absence, he or she will be released from his or her GA/AA responsibilities and cease receiving benefits (tuition waiver and monthly stipend). Upon returning to the program, the student may reapply for a GA position if one is available and meets the requirements (see the Program Director for the Graduate Assistantship application).

15.4 National Counselor Exam

The NCE exam is offered by NBCC through participating institutions twice a year (in April and October) for students nearing the end of their training programs and for alumni within one year of graduating from their training program. The National Counselor Exam is one of two exams required by the NC Board of Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors (NCBLCMHC) for application for licensure as an LCMHC-A and LCMHC. The other is the Jurisprudence Exam. The results of this exam are not sent to Montreat College.

15.5 Chi Sigma Iota (Mu Chi)

Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) is the international honor society for counseling students, professionals, and educators. As a prestigious organization, CSI aims to promote excellence in the field of counseling by recognizing the achievements of students and professionals who demonstrate academic excellence, leadership, and a commitment to ethical practice.

To receive an invitation to join Chi Sigma Iota, Mu Chi Chapter students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.5. Membership offers students valuable opportunities for networking, professional development, and engagement with a community of like-minded individuals committed to advancing the counseling profession. CSI provides access to resources, including scholarships, grants, and leadership development opportunities, as well as invitations to participate in conferences and workshops that further enhance counseling knowledge and skills.

Being part of CSI signifies a commitment to professional ethics, advocacy, and ongoing education. It is an honor that reflects a dedication to excellence in counseling and provides a strong foundation for students as they progress in their careers.

Student members of Chi Sigma Iota are eligible to wear special accoutrements (stoles, cords, pins) during the graduation ceremony.

15.6 The Writing Center

Montreat College offers support services for students seeking to strengthen their writing skills. While the Writing Center is located in the central area of Montreat, graduate students at all locations are eligible to use the services provided. From the Montreat College website:

Montreat College students not enrolled at the main campus have two options for benefiting from our Writing Program: First, you are welcome to travel to our central campus location in Room 105 of the L. Nelson Bell Library. The Drop-in Writing Center hours are Monday-Thursday: 7 p.m.- midnight, and Sunday: 6 p.m.-11 p.m. Secondly, you may easily email your paper for electronic review. You will generally receive a response from a writing consultant within 48 hours, Sunday through Thursday, but note that this only applies when the traditional semester is in session (beginning the third week of classes and ending the week before final exams). Requests received on Thursday will generally be answered on Monday. To submit, please send your paper to writingtutor@montreat.edu.

16.0 Professional Counseling Resources

Students are strongly encouraged to consider joining professional counseling associations at the state, regional, and national levels. Because the College recognizes that taking on the financial responsibility of graduate school is significant and can thereby limit financial resources, students are not required to join associations. There are, however, many benefits to being involved in professional counseling associations:

1. Opportunities for students to network with professionals
2. Many associations and divisions of associations offer discounted conference rates and scholarships or grants for conference attendance
3. Discounted membership rates
4. Opportunities to supplement knowledge gained from program curriculum
5. Leadership opportunities for graduate students.

For these reasons, the CMHC faculty enthusiastically encourages students to consider joining professional counseling associations.

16.1 National Level

American Counseling Association (www.counseling.org)

Divisions of the American Counseling Association

<http://www.counseling.org/AboutUs/DivisionsBranchesAndRegions/TP/Divisions/CT2.aspx>

Association for Assessment in Counseling and Education (AACE) Association
for Adult Development and Aging (AADA) Association for Creativity in
Counseling (ACC)
American College Counseling Association (ACCA)
Association for Counselors and Educators in Government (ACEG) Association
for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES)
The Association for Humanistic Counseling (AHC)
Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues in Counseling (ALGBTIC)
Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD)
American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA) American
Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA)
American School Counselor Association (ASCA)
Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC)
Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW)
Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ)
International Association of Addictions and Offender Counselors (IAAOC) International
Association of Marriage and Family Counselors (IAMFC) National Career Development
Association (NCDA)
National Employment Counseling Association (NECA) Association
for Play Therapy (A4PT) <https://www.a4pt.org/>

16.2 State Level

Licensed Professional Counselors Association of NC (LPANC) www.lpcanc.org
North Carolina Counseling Association (NCCA) www.nccounseling.org
Divisions of NCCA

NC Association for Counselor Education and Supervision NC
Career Development Association
NC Association of Humanistic Education and Development NC Association for
Assessment in Counseling
NC Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development
NC Association for Spiritual, Ethical, Religious & Value Issues in Counseling NC Association
for Specialists in Group Work
NC Addiction and Offenders Counselor Association NC
Mental Health Counselor Association
NC College Counseling Association
Association for Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Issues in Counseling of NC
Association of Marriage and Family Counselors
NC Association for Adult Development and Aging Association for
Professional Counseling in Schools NC Graduate Student
Association - Interest Group
NC School Counselor Association (NCSCA) <https://www.ncschoolcounselor.org>
NC Association for Play Therapy (NCAPT) <https://www.ncapt.org/>

16.3 Regional Level

Southern Association of Counselor Education and Supervision (SACES) www.saces.org

17.0 Individual Counseling Referrals for CMHC students

Black Mountain

*Nikki Mousette **

Safe Harbour Christian Counseling

(828) 395-6073

nikki@safeharbor1.com

Swannanoa, NC

*Linda Curtis, **

Henry Building

(828) 242-9556

Hailey Klieforth

(847) 807-1699

Tele-health Counselor

Sliding Scale; as low as \$80 for students

Asheville

MAHEC (Mountain Area Health and Education Center)

(828) 257-4400

121 Hendersonville Rd, Asheville, NC 28803

Intern counselors can be seen based on need and availability. Client must be a patient.

"MC" Carla Ellis, LCMHC

Mc@mcelliscounseling.com

ATherapistLikeMe.org

Montreat Students: \$50/session

*Lauren Griffin **

WNC Counseling

201 Stone Ridge Blvd

Asheville, NC 28804

(386) 801-2606

lauren@wnccounseling.com

www.wnccounseling.com

Katherine Therrell LCMHCS, PLLC

3653 Sweeten Creek Road

Suite B

Arden, North Carolina 28704
(828) 565-1925
(828) 551-6262 cell
Accepts most insurances

*Dr. Sandra Brown **
Pastoral Counseling & Growth
191 E Chestnut St,
Asheville, NC 28801
(828) 258-2112

Morganton

*Brandi Geddings, LPCA **
*Caroline Sigmon, MSW, LCSW **
New Directions
201 Government Ave. SW
Hickory, NC 28602
(828) 267-1740

*Dr. Debra Peters, LP **
Wisdom Path
220 West Union St.
Morganton, NC 28655
(828) 475-6544

Charlotte

Atrium Health's Carolinas Medical Center
(704) 355-2000
atriumhealth.org
1000 Blythe Blvd, Charlotte, NC 28203
Intern counselors can be seen based on need and availability. Client must be a patient.

*Counseling Center at Charlotte **
3900 Park Road
Charlotte, NC 28209
Email: info@charlottecounselingcenter.org
Tel. (704) 527-7907
Fax (704) 527-7906

*First Baptist Church **
120 N. Lafayette Street
Shelby, NC 28151
(704) 472-1437

http://charlottecounseling.org/Home_Page.html

*Pricing may be adjusted on a case-by-case basis based on need.

*Students must upload signed proof of counseling sessions on letterhead from the agency.

Standard G: Counseling agencies are provided for students on each Montreat campus. These counseling agencies have been added to the program handbook and communicated to students during the orientation night for the program. Students requesting counseling services now have options available to them.

18.0 Counseling Dispositions (not exhaustive list)

1. Ethical Conduct

Upholding Ethical Standards: Counselors must follow the ACA Code of Ethics (ACA, 2014), which includes principles related to confidentiality, dual relationships, competence, informed consent, and professional behavior.

Commitment to Client Welfare: Counselors prioritize the well-being and best interests of their clients in all decision-making processes.

2. Professionalism

Accountability and Responsibility: Counselors are responsible for their actions, decisions, and the care they provide. They must maintain clear professional boundaries and take ownership of their professional conduct.

Punctuality and Preparedness: Counselors are expected to show up on time and be prepared for all professional interactions, whether with clients, colleagues, or during supervision.

Lifelong Learning and Professional Development: Counselors should demonstrate a commitment to continuous professional development and staying up-to-date with current research, practices, and legal/ethical standards.

3. Integrity

Honesty and Truthfulness: Counselors are expected to act with integrity, honesty, and transparency in all their professional and personal dealings.

Fidelity and Trustworthiness: Counselors must be trustworthy and dependable, keeping promises and maintaining client confidentiality as required by ethical and legal standards.

4. Empathy

Understanding and Respect for Others' Experiences: Counselors should be able to understand, acknowledge, and respect the emotions, thoughts, and experiences of their clients without judgment.

Active Listening: Counselors listen attentively to their clients, ensuring that they fully comprehend the client's perspective and emotional state.

5. Multicultural Competence

Cultural Sensitivity and Awareness: Counselors must recognize and respect cultural differences, understanding how factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, and religion impact the counseling process.

Commitment to Social Justice and Advocacy: Counselors are expected to advocate for marginalized or underserved populations and work to eliminate biases, discrimination, and inequities in their practice.

6. Compassion and Caring

Unconditional Positive Regard: Counselors provide an environment in which clients feel accepted and valued without judgment or prejudice.

Empowerment: Counselors focus on helping clients build confidence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy to make positive changes in their lives.

7. Self-Awareness

Reflectiveness: Counselors should be self-aware, reflecting on their values, biases, and how their own life experiences impact their work with clients.

Openness to Feedback: Counselors must be willing to accept constructive/developmental criticism/feedback from supervisors, instructors, peers, clients, and stakeholders and use it to improve their professional competence.

Personal Boundaries and Self-Care: Counselors need to maintain appropriate boundaries with clients and engage in self-care practices to prevent burnout and ensure they are functioning at their best professionally.

8. Flexibility and Adaptability

Ability to Adapt to Client Needs: Counselors must be flexible in their approach and willing to adjust their counseling methods based on the unique needs and circumstances of each client.

Openness to Change: Counselors should demonstrate a willingness to learn and adapt to new evidence-based practices, theoretical approaches, and client feedback.

9. Confidentiality and Privacy

Maintaining Client Confidentiality: Counselors must protect client information according to the ACA Code of Ethics and applicable laws (e.g., HIPAA), only breaching confidentiality when there is a threat of harm or legal obligation to disclose information.

Informed Consent: Counselors are required to obtain informed consent from clients, explaining the counseling process, risks, benefits, and their right to privacy.

10. Advocacy and Empowerment

Client Advocacy: Counselors must advocate for their clients' rights and well-being in various contexts, including systemic barriers and inequities that may negatively affect client outcomes.

Social Justice: Counselors have a responsibility to challenge and work against societal systems of oppression, advocating for equity and access to mental health services for all individuals.

11. Commitment to Supervision and Collaboration

Supervision: Counselors must actively engage in supervision, seeking guidance from more experienced professionals to improve their skills and ensure the ethical quality of their work.

Collaboration with Peers: Counselors are expected to work collaboratively with colleagues, respecting different perspectives and working together for the benefit of the client.

12. Competence

Knowledge and Skills: Counselors are responsible for ensuring that they have the knowledge and skills to work with their clients effectively. They must not practice outside their scope of competence and must continually pursue professional development opportunities to enhance their skills.

Evidence-Based Practice: Counselors are encouraged to integrate evidence-based practices into their therapeutic approaches, ensuring that interventions are supported by current research and theory.

13. Resilience and Emotional Stability

Emotional Regulation: Counselors are expected to demonstrate the ability to manage their emotions and reactions, particularly in difficult or emotionally charged situations.

Resilience: Counselors need to show resilience in the face of adversity or challenging clients, maintaining their emotional stability and continuing to provide effective support.

18.1 Examples

(Non-Exhaustive List for Program Evaluation)

Students are expected to demonstrate the following dispositions **in coursework, clinical work, and professional interactions**. These are assessed through faculty feedback, supervisor evaluations (CCSR), and peer reviews.

1. Professionalism

Examples of Adherence:

- ✓ Submitting assignments on time.
- ✓ Dressing appropriately for client sessions.
- ✓ Responding to emails/calls from faculty within 24–48 hours.

Examples of Concerns:

- ✗ Frequent tardiness to class/practicum without notice.
- ✗ Using unprofessional language (e.g., slang, sarcasm) with clients.

2. Self-Awareness & Reflexivity

Examples of Adherence:

- ✓ Journaling about personal biases after a challenging client session.
- ✓ Saying, “I realize my reaction to that topic was defensive—I need to explore why.”

Examples of Concerns:

- ✗ Dismissing feedback with *“That’s just how I am.”*
- ✗ Blaming clients for therapeutic impasses (*“They’re just resistant.”*).

3. Cultural Humility & Social Justice Advocacy

Examples of Adherence:

- ✓ Attending workshops on LGBTQ+ affirming care.
- ✓ Adjusting interventions for a client’s religious/spiritual needs.

Examples of Concerns:

- ✗ Making assumptions (*“All veterans have PTSD.”*).
- ✗ Avoiding discussions of race/identity in sessions.

4. Empathy & Interpersonal Warmth

Examples of Adherence:

- ✓ Saying, *“That sounds incredibly painful—I’m here with you.”*
- ✓ Mirroring a client’s body language to show engagement.

Examples of Concerns:

- ✗ Interrupting clients to share personal opinions.
- ✗ Flat affect during a client’s emotional disclosure.

5. Ethical Judgment

Examples of Adherence:

- ✓ Reporting a suicidal client’s plan despite their request for secrecy.
- ✓ Consulting a supervisor before accepting a client’s gift.

Examples of Concerns:

- ✗ Texting a client from a personal phone.
- ✗ Discussing client cases in public spaces.

6. Resilience & Emotional Regulation

Examples of Adherence:

- ✓ Using grounding techniques after a stressful session.
- ✓ Seeking therapy to manage countertransference.

Examples of Concerns:

- ✗ Crying uncontrollably in session when a client discusses grief.
- ✗ Lashing out at peers after critical feedback.

7. Integrity & Honesty

Examples of Adherence:

- ✓ Admitting a documentation error to a supervisor.
- ✓ Citing sources properly in research papers.

Examples of Concerns:

- ✗ Fabricating client progress notes.
- ✗ Lying about practicum hours.

8. Collaboration & Teamwork

Examples of Adherence:

- ✓ Offering to help a peer prepare for a client session.
- ✓ Participating actively in group supervision.

Examples of Concerns:

- ✗ Dominating class discussions without listening.
- ✗ Refusing to work with peers on assignments.

9. Commitment to Growth

Examples of Adherence:

- ✓ Requesting extra supervision to improve skills.
- ✓ Reading counseling journals outside assigned work.

Examples of Concerns:

- ✗ Rejecting evidence-based practices (*"I only trust my instincts."*).
- ✗ Skipping trainings required for licensure.

10. Client-Centered Focus

Examples of Adherence:

- ✓ Using a client's preferred pronouns without correction.
- ✓ Adapting a treatment plan to a client's financial constraints.

Examples of Concerns:

- ✗ Pushing a personal agenda (*"You should forgive your abuser."*).
- ✗ Ending sessions early routinely due to personal inconvenience.

Policy Reminder

- Dispositions are evaluated **at key milestones** (e.g., practicum gatekeeping reviews).
- Concerns trigger a **remediation plan** (e.g., mentoring, counseling).

- Chronic issues may lead to **program dismissal** (*CACREP Standard 3.P*).