

Department of Counselor Education Student Manual

Welcome to the Department of Counselor Education at Shippensburg University

We are pleased that you have chosen to join our community of learners, helping professionals, scholars, advocates, and future leaders in the counseling profession. Whether your goal is to become a clinical mental health counselor, school counselor, counselor educator, supervisor, or another helping professional, we are honored to be part of your professional journey.

Counselor education is more than the acquisition of knowledge and clinical skills. It is a process of professional and personal development that challenges students to grow in self-awareness, multicultural understanding, ethical decision-making, advocacy, and commitment to the well-being of others. Throughout your time in the program, you will be asked to engage deeply with course content, reflect on your own experiences and values, develop meaningful relationships with peers and faculty, and apply your learning in service to clients, students, and communities.

Our faculty are committed to creating a learning environment that is rigorous, supportive, collaborative, and inclusive. We believe that effective counselors are lifelong learners who approach others with curiosity, humility, empathy, and respect. As a department, we value diversity in all its forms and recognize that our differences enrich both the learning process and the counseling profession. We are committed to fostering a community in which all students are welcomed, supported, challenged, and empowered to succeed.

This handbook serves as a guide to the policies, procedures, expectations, resources, and opportunities available to you as a student in the Counselor Education program. It is designed to help you navigate your graduate experience, understand program requirements, and access the support needed to be successful. Students are responsible for becoming familiar with the information contained in this handbook and for remaining informed about updates to departmental, university, and professional requirements.

We encourage you to take full advantage of the many opportunities available throughout your time at Shippensburg University, including professional organizations, research and scholarship, leadership experiences, clinical training, community engagement, and mentorship from faculty and peers. Your graduate education will be shaped not only by the courses you complete, but also by the relationships you build and the experiences you pursue.

You belong here. We are excited to support your development as a counselor, advocate, scholar, and professional. We look forward to working alongside you as you prepare to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

Welcome to the Counselor Education community at Shippensburg University.

Mission Statement, Goals, and Learning Objectives

Mission Statement

Our mission is to prepare highly effective professional practitioners who are ethical and culturally competent. We emphasize development of the whole person by grounding learners in current research, direct experience, personal development and social equity. Graduates possess a strong identity as counselors and student affairs professionals.

Program Objectives

1. Prepare students who are competent, ethical, and effective practitioners.
2. Provide coursework and field experiences necessary for obtaining professional certification and/or licensure, as applicable, and vocational success.
3. Provide learning opportunities and experiences to prepare culturally-competent professionals.
4. Produce graduates who demonstrate wellness, self-awareness, and resiliency.
5. Produce graduates with identities as professional practitioners in their respective field (clinical mental health counseling, school counseling, and college counseling and student affairs).

Core Values and Key Dispositions

Overarching Core Value: The development of healthy identities for Counselor Educators, Professional Counselors, and College Student Affairs Professionals.

We at Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania value that our identities are intersecting and firmly grounded in Counselor Education and Supervision. We focus on wellness as a paradigm of self-care and growth that guides our presuppositions for counselor training and college student affairs development. We strive to be self-reflective educators, practitioners, and students who value relationships and the ever-evolving nature of our professional identities. To this end we endorse four key core values that guide our integration of key dispositions.

Demonstrate a commitment to engagement as social justice advocates and practitioners

- Demonstrate thoughtful cultural and socially just decision making and action oriented advocacy that benefits persons from diverse communities in our departmental, college, university, and societal communities

Demonstrate a commitment to engagement in the profession of Counselor Education and Supervision

- Engage in active and leadership in the profession starting in the classroom and extending to professional development opportunities at workshops and conferences
- Engage in creative scholarship across venues that include the classroom, professional conferences, college, and university learning communities
- Engage in a sustained focus on theory, research, and clinical practice that positively impacts learning and diverse communities

Demonstrate a commitment to engagement in Professional Ethical Standards

- Adhere to the professional standards of ethical practice as defined by the [American Counseling Association Code of Ethics](#)
- Adhere to the ethical standards of the [College of Education and Human Services](#) at Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania

Demonstrate a commitment to engagement in Advanced Learning Communities

- Engage in self-reflection, open communication, be a positive role model and active participant in the development and maintenance of a healthy inclusive learning environment
- Value engagement in and the development of relationships with healthy boundaries grounded in honesty and integrity in and outside of the cohort and shared model of training and education

Accreditation

Shippensburg University is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), among others.

The Department of Counselor Education has achieved professional accreditation from the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) for its specializations in School Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling. The Department is also authorized by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to offer certification programs in K–12 School Counseling.

Students are encouraged to consult with their faculty advisor regarding certification, licensure, and credentialing requirements associated with their intended area of professional practice.

Program Requirements**Degree Programs**

The Department of Counselor Education offers the following graduate programs:

- Master of Science Degree (60 hours) and certification in K–12 School Counseling (CACREP-accredited)
- Master of Science Degree (60 hours) with specialization in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CACREP-accredited)
- Master of Science Degree (36 hours) in Student Affairs (non-CACREP-accredited)

Students admitted to each of these programs are required to complete a minimum of 36–60 semester credit hours, depending on their program. Students typically require three years or more to complete the 60-credit programs (School Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling) and approximately 18 months to complete the Student Affairs program. Full-time students typically enroll in a maximum of 9 credit hours of coursework per semester.

Students must complete their degree requirements within seven years of beginning graduate coursework after admission to the program; however, more rapid completion is encouraged.

While it is possible to complete the program as a part-time student, several advanced courses meet in the late afternoon and many practicum and internship sites require student availability during standard business hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.).

Courses are organized into three phases and are generally completed in that sequence, with some flexibility. As students progress through the program, they are expected to meet regularly with their assigned advisor to ensure they are meeting program requirements and maintaining a plan of study that will culminate in graduation.

Students must apply for admission to candidacy in their specialization concurrently with enrollment in COUN 585: Practicum.

School Counseling (M.S., 60 Credits)

The Master of Science degree in Counseling with a specialization in School Counseling is designed to prepare students for employment as professional school counselors in K–12 educational settings.

Certification as a school counselor by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) requires successful completion of the Educational Specialist – School Counselor (5422) Praxis Examination. Students are encouraged to complete this examination toward the end of their program of study, ideally while enrolled in COUN 589 Clinical Field Experience II and/or COUN 505 Organization and Administration of School Counseling Services.

Chapter 354 of the Pennsylvania Code, "Preparation of Professional Educators," requires applicants entering a graduate School Counseling program to have a minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0. Students interested in School Counseling whose undergraduate GPA is below 3.0 may apply to the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program. Students who earn a graduate GPA of 3.0 or higher during their first semester in Clinical Mental Health Counseling may apply to transfer into the School Counseling specialization.

Clinical Mental Health Counseling (M.S., 60 Credits)

The Master of Science degree in Counseling with a specialization in Clinical Mental Health Counseling is designed to prepare students for employment in community mental health agencies, outpatient counseling centers, inpatient and intensive outpatient treatment programs, hospitals, and private practice settings.

The curriculum provides students with a common counseling core and specialized clinical training designed to prepare graduates for professional counseling practice and future licensure opportunities.

Admission and Progression Through the Program

Initial Admission

Admission to the Department of Counselor Education is competitive and based on a holistic review of each applicant's academic preparation, professional potential, experiences, interpersonal qualities, writing ability, and readiness for graduate study and professional practice.

In addition to the application and official transcript(s) required by The Graduate School, applicants must submit the following materials:

Resume

Applicants must submit an updated resume documenting their educational background, employment history, volunteer experiences, and other relevant professional experiences.

Recommendations

Applicants must submit three (3) recommendations.

References should come from current or former instructors/professors, current or former university staff members (e.g., Dean of Students), or employment supervisors. Applicants who have been out of school for an extended period of time may substitute recommendations from current or former work supervisors.

Related Experience Form

Applicants are asked to describe paid and volunteer experiences, particularly experiences related to the counseling or student affairs profession. The Related Experience Form is completed as part of the online application process.

Counseling Autobiographical Statement

Applicants must submit a Counseling Autobiographical Statement not to exceed five (5) double-spaced pages using a 12-point font.

The autobiographical statement is intended to provide faculty with a sense of the applicant's past experiences, current interests, and future professional goals. Applicants should address the following areas:

- Why are you pursuing this degree?
- How do you plan to use this degree in the future?
- What will you bring to the program personally and/or professionally?
- What characteristics make you effective in working with people?
- What characteristics do you feel you need to develop to work more effectively with people?
- How do you best learn complexities of the world, especially those that contradict previous knowledge?
- Describe personal and professional experiences with individuals who differ from you with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sex, sexual orientation, religion, or spiritual beliefs.

Applicants are encouraged to provide specific examples and experiences to support their responses. Faculty review the autobiographical statement to assess both program fit and graduate-level writing skills.

School Counseling Admission Requirements

Consistent with Pennsylvania Department of Education requirements, applicants to the School Counseling specialization must possess a minimum cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.0 at the time of application.

Applicants whose GPA is below 3.0 may apply to another specialization within the Department of Counselor Education. Once the student's cumulative GPA meets Pennsylvania Department of

Education requirements, the student may apply to transfer into the School Counseling specialization.

Admission Timeline

The Department of Counselor Education utilizes a rolling admissions process and does not maintain a formal application deadline. Students may begin the program during the fall, spring, or summer terms, but it is recommended that they start in the Fall term. Once an application is complete, the department conducts a review and communicates an admission decision as promptly as possible.

Admission to Candidacy

Admission to Candidacy represents the department's second formal admissions review and occurs during the semester in which a student is enrolled in COUN 585: Practicum in Counseling. Students should submit their Application for Admission to Candidacy to the Administrative Assistant in the Department of Counselor Education at the beginning of the semester in which they are enrolled in Practicum.

The purposes of candidacy are to:

- Ensure that students are integrating classroom learning into professional practice.
- Verify that professional goals are specific, focused, and realistic.
- Confirm that foundational professional skills can be demonstrated.
- Assess readiness for advanced professional responsibilities.
- Ensure that students understand and can meet professional ethical standards.
- Evaluate students' ability to thoughtfully discuss current and emerging issues within the profession.

Candidacy Requirements

To be eligible for admission to candidacy, students must:

- Maintain a cumulative graduate GPA of at least 3.0.
- Earn a grade of B or higher in COUN 578: Pre-Practicum in Counseling.
- Successfully complete COUN 585: Practicum in Counseling with a grade of B or higher for continued progression in the program.
- Maintain membership in a professional organization related to their specialization, which also provides them with a (student) liability insurance policy, which is required.

- Attend a professional conference prior to completion of Clinical Field Experience II.
- Demonstrate professional dispositions and behaviors consistent with departmental expectations.
- Complete all specialization-specific candidacy requirements.

Candidacy Process

Students initiate the process by submitting the Application for Admission to Candidacy form to the Administrative Assistant for the Department of Counselor Education. Upon receipt of the application, students' Practicum instructor(s) will provide information regarding candidacy review procedures and scheduling.

As part of the candidacy process, students meet with two faculty members, one of whom is typically their Instructor for Practicum, and the other is typically from their specialization area. Together, the faculty and candidacy applicant review and discuss the applicant's academic progress, professional development, career goals, professional dispositions, and readiness for advanced training.

All students are required to maintain an electronic professional portfolio and participate in a review of their Plan of Work and Professional Performance Review (PPR) as part of the candidacy process.

Specialization-Specific Requirements

School Counseling

Students seeking candidacy in School Counseling will:

- Submit a professional portfolio.
- Present a current client case and discuss conceptualizations relevant to school counseling.
- Demonstrate foundational counseling skills, case conceptualization skills, client assessment, appropriate collaboration, coordination, or consultation with other school professionals (as applicable), and professional self-awareness.
- Participate in a review of academic progress, professional development, and readiness for advanced training.

Clinical Mental Health Counseling

Students seeking candidacy in Clinical Mental Health Counseling will:

- Submit a portfolio that includes an updated resume, a description of their clinical experience at their Practicum site, their personal theory about the helping process, and a self-assessment of their respective strengths and growth areas as outlined on the Professional Performance Review (PPR) document.
- Present a current client case and discuss clinical conceptualization.
- Demonstrate foundational counseling skills, case conceptualization skills, treatment planning, client assessment, and professional self-awareness.
- Participate in a review of academic progress, professional development, and readiness for advanced training.

Candidacy Decisions

Following review by specialization faculty, candidacy recommendations are presented to the faculty in the Department of Counselor Education for consideration. Students are notified in writing of the department's decision after it has been routed through the appropriate channels within the College and University.

Students must successfully pass candidacy to be eligible to graduate from their respective program. Information regarding candidacy appeals is provided in the Academic Appeals section of this handbook.

Ongoing Evaluation

Admission to the Department of Counselor Education represents the beginning of an ongoing process of professional development and evaluation. Throughout the program, faculty assess students' academic performance, professional dispositions, ethical conduct, interpersonal effectiveness, and readiness for professional practice. Evaluation occurs through coursework, professional performance reviews, candidacy, field experiences, and meeting other program requirements.

Academic Advising

Upon admission to the Department of Counselor Education, each student is assigned a faculty advisor. Advisors assist students with program planning, course sequencing, professional development, candidacy preparation, and degree completion requirements. Students are encouraged to meet with their advisor regularly throughout their program of study, particularly prior to registration each semester. Advisors can assist students in understanding program requirements, university policies, certification and licensure requirements, professional opportunities, and academic resources. With the assistance of their faculty advisor, students create a tentative Plan of Work (PoW) that provides a roadmap for completing their program,

including what courses are taken during which semesters. The PoW is a living document and may flex depending on changes initiated by the student or changes made by the department to the course offerings schedule. Faculty aim to help students graduate in their intended time frame and semester.

Students should consult their advisor regarding changes to their program of study, transfer credits, candidacy requirements, practicum and internship planning, graduation requirements, and professional development opportunities. The advising relationship is intended to support students' academic success, professional identity development, and progression toward their educational and career goals.

While faculty advisors provide guidance and support, students are ultimately responsible for understanding and completing all program, departmental, Graduate School, certification, and licensure requirements applicable to their degree program.

Student Expectations

Graduate education in counseling and student affairs extends beyond successful completion of coursework. Students are expected to demonstrate academic competence, ethical behavior, professional dispositions, cultural responsiveness, interpersonal effectiveness, and readiness for professional practice. Students are expected to engage actively in their professional development and to demonstrate behaviors consistent with the mission, program objectives, and Core Values and Key Dispositions of the Department of Counselor Education.

As stated in the academic standards set forth by The Graduate School, students are expected to conduct themselves in an ethical, responsible, and professional manner. Students must be knowledgeable of and adhere to the ethical standards of their respective profession, including the American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics (Clinical Mental Health Counseling), and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Ethical Standards (K-12 School Counseling).

As future professional counselors, students are expected to be concerned about the welfare of others, to work effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences, to engage in effective interpersonal relationships, to receive feedback willingly, and to offer feedback constructively. Students are expected to behave in a manner that demonstrates readiness for professional practice and a commitment to lifelong learning.

The Department further expects students to engage in continued personal growth and professional development through self-reflection, responsiveness to supervision, and participation in professional learning experiences. Faculty members believe it is imperative that

professionals be willing to engage in the same processes of growth, reflection, and self-awareness that they encourage in clients, students, and colleagues.

Assessment of Student Expectations

Faculty members regularly monitor not only students' academic progress but also characteristics that contribute to professional effectiveness. Student progress is evaluated through multiple measures across the program, including:

- Academic performance
- GPA
- Course assignments and examinations evaluated by Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- Demonstration of professional dispositions and ethical conduct evaluated through the Professional Performance Reviews (PPR)
- Candidacy reviews
- Practicum evaluations including Professional Portfolio submitted during Candidacy
- Students' evaluations of site and site supervisor
- Site supervisors' evaluations of students

These assessment processes are designed to provide students with meaningful feedback regarding their academic performance, professional development, counseling and student affairs competencies, ethical decision-making, cultural responsiveness, and readiness for professional practice.

Academic and Program Progression Standards

Students are expected to maintain satisfactory academic performance throughout their program of study and to demonstrate readiness for increasingly advanced professional and clinical experiences.

The following standards apply to all students in the Department of Counselor Education:

- Students must maintain a minimum cumulative graduate GPA (QPA) of 3.0.
- Students whose cumulative graduate QPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation in accordance with the Graduate Catalog.
- Students whose cumulative graduate QPA falls below 2.0, or who fail to meet the conditions for continued enrollment while on academic probation as outlined in the Graduate Catalog, will be dismissed from the program.

- Counseling students must earn a grade of B or higher in COUN 578: Pre-Practicum in Counseling for continued progression in the program.
- Counseling students must earn a grade of B or higher in COUN 585: Practicum in Counseling for continued progression in the program.
- Students must maintain satisfactory academic performance, professional dispositions, ethical conduct, and professional competence throughout the program.
- The Department of Counselor Education may recommend remediation, delayed progression, or dismissal for violations of ethical or legal standards or for behavior inconsistent with the professional expectations of counselors-in-training.

Failure to meet these standards may result in faculty review, a Professional Development Plan, remediation activities, delayed progression, or dismissal from the program.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The Department of Counselor Education utilizes Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to assess student achievement of program learning outcomes and professional competencies. KPIs are measures of student learning that are aligned with specific CACREP standards and specialization competencies.

A KPI is assessed through an assignment, paper, project, presentation, quiz, examination, or other evaluative measure that is appraised using a standardized rubric. Student work is reviewed by faculty to determine whether there is evidence that the student has achieved the identified learning outcome or competency.

KPIs are scored using the following scale:

Score Description

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|---|----------------------------|
| 0 | Unmet |
| 1 | Expectations Minimally Met |
| 2 | Expectations Fully Met |
| 3 | Expectations Exceeded |

The Department's expectation is that students demonstrate competency on all Key Performance Indicators. KPI results are reviewed at the end of each semester by faculty as part of the department's ongoing assessment process.

Faculty evaluate KPI results using two benchmarks:

1. The overall mean score for a KPI should equal or exceed 2.0 ("Expectations Fully Met").
2. At least 85% of students should achieve a score of 2.0 or higher on each KPI.

When KPI results indicate that a student is not meeting expected levels of performance, faculty may provide additional feedback, recommend developmental activities, implement remediation procedures, or develop a Professional Development Plan designed to support student success.

Professional Performance Review (PPR)

The Department of Counselor Education utilizes the Professional Performance Review (PPR) process to evaluate professional dispositions and behaviors that are essential for effective practice. Professional dispositions are evaluated throughout the program and are considered alongside academic performance when determining readiness for continued progression in the program.

Assessment through the PPR process includes consideration of:

- Openness to new ideas
- Flexibility
- Cooperativeness with others
- Willingness to accept and use feedback
- Awareness of one's impact on others
- Ability to deal with conflict
- Ability to accept personal responsibility
- Ability to express feelings effectively and appropriately
- Attention to ethical and legal considerations
- Initiative and dependability
- Effective communication

Professional dispositions may be reviewed during coursework, advising meetings, candidacy reviews, practicum and internship experiences, portfolio evaluations, and other program activities.

The current Professional Performance Review form is included in Appendix A of this handbook.

Feedback, Support, Professional Development, and Retention

Faculty members provide students with ongoing feedback throughout the program. Feedback may occur through coursework, advising meetings, supervision, field experiences, candidacy reviews, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and Professional Performance Reviews (PPRs).

The faculty of the Department of Counselor Education are committed to supporting students toward maintaining steady and uninterrupted progress through their program of study. Most concerns are addressed through developmental feedback, advising, supervision, and professional growth opportunities. In a small number of cases, however, concerns may arise regarding a student's academic performance, professional dispositions, ethical conduct, interpersonal effectiveness, counseling skills, or readiness for professional practice.

When concerns arise, the Department seeks to address them in a manner that is supportive, educational, and consistent with the ethical standards of the counseling profession.

Retention and Professional Development Procedures

If, in the professional judgment of a faculty member, a student's behavior, performance, or professional conduct raises concerns regarding professional competence or suitability for the profession, the following procedures may be implemented:

1. The faculty member who has become aware of the concern will meet with the student and provide feedback regarding the concern and recommendations for improvement. A Professional Performance Review (PPR) form or other appropriate documentation may be completed to document the feedback provided.
2. If the student's response is insufficient and additional action is warranted, the faculty member may notify the Department Chair. The student will be informed in writing that the Department Chair has been notified.
3. If the Department Chair determines that the concern warrants further review, specialization faculty may review the situation. The student will be informed in writing regarding the review process and may be asked to meet with faculty to discuss the concern.
4. Following review, faculty may recommend developmental activities, additional supervision, academic support, a Professional Development Plan, remediation activities, or other actions designed to promote student success and professional growth.
5. The Department Chair and the student's advisor will meet with the student to communicate departmental decisions and recommendations. The Department Chair and advisor may subsequently monitor the student's progress in carrying out the department's recommendations.

Students are expected to maintain satisfactory academic performance, professional dispositions, ethical conduct, and professional competence throughout the program. Failure to demonstrate satisfactory progress may result in additional review, remediation, delayed progression, or dismissal from the program.

Appeals Procedures

The Department of Counselor Education is committed to providing students with fair and equitable procedures for addressing academic and professional concerns.

Candidacy Appeals

Students wishing to appeal a denial of candidacy or a decision to place candidacy on hold will be directed to consult with their advisor to obtain specific feedback regarding the decision.

If the student is not satisfied following consultation with their advisor, they may submit a written request to the Department Chair for review by a Candidacy Appeals Committee, which is comprised of three faculty, one of whom will serve as committee Chair, and three counseling students in good standing. Requests for review must be submitted within ten (10) working days after notification of the department's candidacy decision.

Upon receipt of the written request, the Department Chair will appoint a Candidacy Appeals Committee and notify the student in writing of the committee chairperson. Arrangements for the review meeting must be made within ten (10) working days of notification. The review meeting will include the student, the student's advisor, and the committee. Following the review, the committee's decision will be communicated to the student in writing and a copy will be maintained in the student's departmental file.

Retention, Remediation, and Dismissal Appeals

Students who are not satisfied with a departmental decision related to retention, remediation, progression, or dismissal may appeal the decision to the Dean of the College of Education and Human Services in accordance with university procedures.

Grade Appeals

Grade appeals are governed by Graduate School policies and procedures. Students should consult the current Graduate Catalog for information regarding grade appeal procedures, timelines, and requirements.

Endorsement Policy

The Department of Counselor Education is committed to preparing competent, ethical, and effective professional counselors and student affairs professionals. Consistent with professional

standards and CACREP requirements, faculty members endorse students and graduates only for professional roles, credentials, certifications, licenses, employment opportunities, and advanced educational opportunities for which they have been appropriately prepared and have demonstrated competence.

Endorsement decisions are based on a comprehensive review of the student's academic performance, professional dispositions, ethical conduct, clinical or professional competencies, and successful completion of program requirements.

In general, endorsement is contingent upon a student's:

- Successful completion of all degree requirements;
- Successful attainment of candidacy;
- Demonstration of satisfactory performance on program assessments, including Key Performance Indicators (KPIs);
- Demonstration of professional dispositions consistent with the expectations of the counseling or student affairs professions;
- Successful completion of required practicum and clinical field experiences;
- Adherence to applicable professional ethical standards and university policies; and
- Resolution of any active Professional Development Plans, remediation plans, or other conditions established by the department.

Faculty members reserve the right to withhold endorsement when, in their professional judgment, a student or graduate has not demonstrated the knowledge, skills, dispositions, ethical conduct, or professional competence necessary for the credential, position, certification, licensure, or opportunity being sought.

The Department of Counselor Education endorses students and graduates only for areas in which they have received training and demonstrated competence through their program of study.

Questions regarding endorsement should be directed to the student's advisor or the Department Chair.

Concerns Regarding Faculty Conduct

In addition to providing academic and professional training, faculty members are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards in their relationships with students.

Students who believe a faculty member has behaved in a harmful, inappropriate, or unethical manner are encouraged to address the concern directly with the faculty member whenever possible. If the student feels unable to do so, they may request assistance from their faculty advisor and/or another faculty member, and, later, the Department Chair to facilitate resolution.

If the concern remains unresolved, students may seek assistance through the Dean of the College of Education and Human Services or other appropriate university resources and procedures.

Professional Portfolio

The portfolio is an organized, structured exhibit of the competencies students develop through the Department of Counselor Education. The portfolio provides a history of student progress on the essential learning outcomes of the program and assists students in integrating the various components of the curriculum.

The initial review of the portfolio occurs during the candidacy process. Candidacy will not be granted until initial portfolio requirements have been met. The final review of the portfolio occurs during COUN 589: Clinical Field Experience II.

Portfolio requirements include:

- A current resume (in progress) including professional goals, education, credentials, work history, professional memberships, clearances, references, and other pertinent information.
- A narrative describing the student's emerging theory of helping
- Narrative about the student's clinical experience at their Practicum site
- Student's self-evaluation using the Professional Performance Review (PPR) to outline their personal strengths and growth areas
- Note: a video recording of a counseling session with a client is a part of the portfolio shown during Candidacy, but it is for in-house use only and would NOT be a part of a student's permanent professional portfolio due to confidentiality, privacy, and other ethical concerns.

Practicum and Clinical Field Experiences

The Department of Counselor Education considers the supervised field experiences of Practicum, Clinical Field Experience I, and Clinical Field Experience II to be among the most important components of professional preparation. These laboratory and field-based experiences are designed to sequentially integrate knowledge and skills from earlier coursework

while fostering the development of new competencies. In addition, field experiences serve as an important vehicle for communication and networking among students, faculty, supervisors, and counseling professionals.

The importance of Practicum and Clinical Field Experiences cannot be overstated. Students are expected to become familiar with all requirements and follow departmental procedures exactly as specified. Detailed policies, procedures, forms, deadlines, and operational requirements are outlined in the Department of Counselor Education Practicum and Fieldwork Manual.

Overall Requirements

There are four specific requirements in the program sequence designed as Practicum and/or Clinical Field Experience. Practicum and the Clinical Field Experiences are separate and sequential experiences and must be completed across separate academic terms.

Placement sites are expected to adhere to nondiscriminatory practices and provide opportunities for students to work with clients and communities representing a broad range of backgrounds, experiences, and identities. Final approval of all placement sites rests with the Department of Counselor Education.

Students enrolled in counseling degree programs are required to complete:

- COUN 578: Pre-Practicum in Counseling
- COUN 585: Practicum in Counseling

In addition, students must complete the required Clinical Field Experience sequence:

- COUN 580: Clinical Field Experience I
- COUN 589: Clinical Field Experience II

Mandatory Practicum Meetings

The department conducts mandatory practicum meetings each semester for students intending to enroll in Practicum during the following semester. These meetings provide information regarding practicum expectations, site selection, procedures, and approval processes. Students who are unable to attend must meet with their advisor and the Practicum/Field Coordinator.

Clearances for Practicum and Field Placements

Students planning to complete practicum or field placements are required to obtain all necessary clearances, including child abuse clearances, criminal background checks, and FBI fingerprinting. Additional site-specific requirements, such as TB testing, may also be required.

Practicum Requirements

Students enrolled in COUN 585: Practicum in Counseling must complete a minimum of 100 clock hours during the academic term, including at least 40 hours of direct client contact. Students must participate in group supervision, individual faculty supervision, and site supervision and must earn a grade of B or higher for continuation in the program.

Clinical Field Experience Requirements

Clinical Field Experience (also known as Internship) serves as the culminating professional experience in the program. Students are expected to assume increasing levels of professional responsibility and function as members of the professional staff within their placement settings. Clinical Field Experiences require completion of the hours specified by the program and specialization area.

Changing Placement Sites

Students wishing to change practicum or field placement sites after registration must follow departmental procedures, including notification of the site supervisor, faculty supervisor, and Field Coordinator. New registration forms must be completed for each semester of placement, even when continuing at the same site.

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Placement Policy

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling specialization is designed to prepare professional counselors with broad-based clinical training and experiences. Consistent with departmental philosophy and CACREP expectations, practicum and field placements are generally approved in agency settings that provide opportunities to work with diverse client populations and presenting concerns. Students are reminded of the Agreement to Refrain from Private Practice completed during the application process.

Confidentiality

Students participating in practicum and field experiences are expected to adhere to all ethical and legal requirements regarding confidentiality. This includes case presentations, recordings, supervision activities, classroom discussions, and documentation practices. Students must obtain appropriate consent before recording client sessions and must protect client identities in all educational and supervisory contexts. Additional confidentiality requirements are outlined in the Practicum and Fieldwork Manual.

Professional Liability Insurance

Students enrolled in Practicum and Clinical Field Experience courses are required to obtain professional liability insurance prior to beginning their field experiences. Proof of insurance

must be provided as required by the department. Students who fail to provide documentation may be removed from field activities until documentation is received.

Professional Development, Certification, and Licensure

The Department of Counselor Education encourages students to engage actively in professional development throughout their program of study. Professional identity development occurs through involvement in professional organizations, attendance at professional conferences, participation in scholarship and research activities, leadership opportunities, and engagement with the broader counseling and student affairs professions.

Information regarding certification and licensure requirements is available on the Department of Counselor Education website and through faculty advisors. Because certification and licensure requirements vary by state and professional credential, students are encouraged to consult current state licensing and certification boards to ensure they understand the requirements applicable to their intended area of practice.

Professional Organizations

Because the department's mission emphasizes the development of professional identity, students are expected to become members of at least one professional organization related to their area of specialization. Professional organizations may include local, state, regional, and national associations.

Students are encouraged to consult with faculty regarding the benefits of professional membership, including opportunities for professional networking, leadership development, volunteer service, professional liability insurance, research funding, awards, and continuing professional education.

Professional Conference Attendance

Students are expected to attend at least one professional conference prior to finishing their program of studies. Conferences may be sponsored by state, regional, or national professional associations.

Students are encouraged to volunteer or seek leadership, presentation, and networking opportunities as part of their conference participation. While students are generally responsible for registration, travel, and accommodation expenses, limited departmental and College of Education and Human Services resources may be available to support student participation, particularly when students are presenting or co-presenting professional work.

Information regarding upcoming conferences and professional development opportunities is distributed through departmental communications and professional organizations.

Scholarship, Research, and Professional Presentations

Students are prepared for professional scholarship through coursework, research activities, presentations, and professional writing. Students are encouraged to adapt coursework for presentation at professional conferences and other professional venues.

Faculty members provide mentoring and support to students who wish to submit conference proposals, engage in research activities, or pursue publication opportunities. Students may also have opportunities to collaborate with faculty members as research assistants, co-researchers, or co-authors.

Department Professional Development Opportunities

The Department of Counselor Education hosts professional development events throughout the academic year. These events provide opportunities for continuing education, professional networking, and exposure to current issues within the counseling and student affairs professions.

Students are encouraged to participate in departmental workshops, trainings, guest lectures, and other professional development activities sponsored by the department.

Clinical and Community Engagement Opportunities

The Department supports experiential learning opportunities that allow students to develop professional skills while serving the community. These opportunities may include participation in departmental clinics, outreach programs, support groups, community partnerships, and other supervised professional activities.

Students interested in these opportunities should consult departmental communications, faculty advisors, and the department website for current offerings.

Student Organizations and Leadership Opportunities

Students are encouraged to become involved in departmental, university, and professional leadership opportunities. Opportunities may include participation in Chi Sigma Iota (CSI), student advisory groups, graduate student organizations, departmental committees, and other leadership roles.

Participation in student organizations and leadership experiences provides opportunities to develop professional identity, leadership skills, service, advocacy, and collegial relationships within the profession.

University Resources and Involvement Opportunities

Shippensburg University offers numerous opportunities for personal and professional growth, including educational programs, wellness initiatives, cultural events, leadership opportunities, student organizations, and campus activities. Students are encouraged to take advantage of these resources as part of their overall professional development and wellness.

Professional Identity, Wellness, and Student Support

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Belonging

The Department of Counselor Education is committed to creating and maintaining a learning environment characterized by dignity, acceptance, collaboration, accessibility, and respect for all individuals. Consistent with the mission of the department and the counseling profession, students are expected to engage in ongoing self-reflection, cultural humility, advocacy, and professional growth as they develop the knowledge, skills, and awareness necessary to serve diverse communities effectively.

The department recognizes that individuals hold multiple intersecting identities and that culture influences personal development, wellness, relationships, learning, counseling, supervision, and student affairs practice. Students are expected to engage respectfully with perspectives, experiences, and worldviews that differ from their own and to demonstrate a commitment to culturally responsive and socially just professional practice.

Consistent with university policies and applicable law, the Department of Counselor Education supports equal access to educational opportunities and does not discriminate on the basis of legally protected characteristics. Students requiring accommodations or accessibility-related support are encouraged to work with the University's designated accessibility services office to establish appropriate accommodations.

Personal Wellness and Professional Self-Care

The Department of Counselor Education views wellness as a foundational component of professional effectiveness. Effective counselors, student affairs professionals, and counselor educators must attend to their own personal wellbeing while simultaneously serving the needs of others.

Students are expected to engage in ongoing self-reflection and to develop strategies that promote physical, emotional, relational, intellectual, and professional wellness. Throughout the program, students will be asked to examine the impact of their experiences, beliefs, values, strengths, and growth areas on their professional development and effectiveness.

Faculty members encourage students to seek support when needed and to proactively address personal concerns that may interfere with academic performance, professional development,

ethical decision-making, or the welfare of clients and students. Consistent with professional counseling values, self-awareness and self-care are viewed as lifelong professional responsibilities rather than isolated activities.

Counseling and Student Support Services

Shippensburg University provides a variety of resources designed to support student wellbeing, academic success, and professional development. Students experiencing academic, personal, emotional, financial, or professional challenges are encouraged to seek assistance early and utilize available university resources.

The University Counseling Center provides confidential counseling services designed to support student growth, adjustment, and mental health. Counseling services offer students the opportunity to experience the counseling process from the client perspective while receiving support for personal concerns.

Students should be aware that Department of Counselor Education faculty members serve in educational, advising, supervisory, and evaluative roles. Faculty members do not provide personal counseling to students enrolled in the program. When appropriate, faculty may assist students in identifying appropriate campus or community resources for personal support.

Additional university resources may include accessibility services, academic support services, wellness programs, career development services, multicultural programs, student organizations, recreation and fitness programs, and other services intended to promote student success and wellbeing.

Technology Competence and Professional Communication

Technology is an integral component of contemporary counseling, supervision, student affairs practice, scholarship, and professional communication. Students are expected to develop and maintain competence in the use of technologies relevant to their professional roles and to utilize technology in a manner consistent with professional ethical standards.

Students are expected to:

- Regularly monitor and respond to university email communications.
- Utilize the university's learning management system and other instructional technologies required for coursework.
- Demonstrate professionalism in electronic communication with faculty, supervisors, peers, clients, and community partners.

- Utilize technology for research, scholarship, presentations, and professional development.
- Develop competence in the use of video recording, videoconferencing, and other technologies used in counseling, supervision, and training.
- Protect the confidentiality, privacy, and security of client, student, and research data.
- Adhere to applicable ethical standards governing the use of technology in professional practice.

Technology competence is evaluated informally throughout the program and is considered an important component of professional readiness. Students are expected to remain informed regarding emerging technologies and their ethical application within counseling and student affairs professions.

Department and Program Policies

The following policies govern student progression, academic planning, professional preparation, and participation in the Department of Counselor Education. Students are responsible for becoming familiar with these policies and consulting with their advisor regarding questions or concerns.

Change of Specialization

Students who wish to change their area of specialization are encouraged to do so prior to attaining candidacy. Following candidacy, coursework becomes increasingly specialized and transferring from one specialization to another may be more complex. Because coursework may not transfer directly between specializations, additional coursework may be required to complete a new area of study and may delay one's original graduation date.

The process for changing specializations is as follows:

1. Notify your current advisor of your interest and intent to change specializations.
2. Consult with the Specialization Coordinator of the intended specialization to discuss program requirements and implications of the change.
3. Submit a written explanation outlining the rationale for changing from the current specialization to the intended specialization.
4. Submit the Change of Specialization form to the Department of Counselor Education.

5. Develop a mutually agreeable Plan of Work with the newly assigned advisor. The Plan of Work must reflect the minimum coursework required for completion of the new specialization.

Students requesting a change of specialization after attaining candidacy must complete the same process. In addition, the request will be reviewed by the department faculty for approval.

Thesis Option

Students may elect to complete COUN 612: Master's Thesis and COUN 613: Master's Thesis as six (6) elective credits. Students interested in pursuing the thesis option should consult with their advisor prior to beginning the application process.

Students completing a thesis must satisfy all Graduate School and university requirements related to thesis preparation, formatting, submission, and approval. A student pursuing the thesis option may not graduate until all thesis requirements have been completed and approved.

Transfer of Credit

The Department follows Graduate School policies regarding transfer credit from other colleges and universities.

A maximum of nine (9) semester hours of graduate credit earned at another accredited institution may be accepted provided that:

- The coursework is appropriate to the student's program of study.
- The coursework was completed with a grade of B (3.0) or higher.
- The credit meets Graduate School requirements regarding transfer eligibility and recency.

Transfer grades are not included in the student's Shippensburg University grade point average.

The following courses are not eligible for transfer:

- COUN 578: Pre-Practicum in Counseling
- COUN 585: Practicum in Counseling
- Clinical Field Experience courses
- Group Counseling

Students seeking transfer credit must submit official transcripts and any required documentation through the appropriate university procedures. Students who intend to

complete coursework at another institution after admission to the program must obtain prior written approval from their advisor before enrolling in the course.

It is the student's responsibility to initiate and complete all transfer credit procedures.

Course Waivers

Students may request a waiver of required content courses. A course waiver does not grant academic credit; rather, it permits the student to substitute another approved elective in place of the waived course.

Experiential courses, including Pre-Practicum, Practicum, Clinical Field Experiences, and Group Counseling, may not be waived.

A maximum of six (6) graduate credits may be waived based upon:

- Previous graduate-level coursework; or
- Exceptional professional experience demonstrating attainment of the course competencies.

Students requesting a waiver must provide appropriate supporting documentation and consult with their advisor. Faculty may approve the request, deny the request, or require additional evaluation through written and/or oral examination.

The responsibility for initiating and documenting a course waiver request rests with the student.

Informed Consent for Skills Practice

Throughout the program, students may be required to conduct practice counseling, helping, interviewing, or student affairs interactions with peers as part of course requirements.

The Department requires that informed consent be obtained from all individuals participating in these activities. Students are responsible for maintaining appropriate documentation and adhering to all ethical and confidentiality requirements associated with these experiences.

New Student Orientation

The Department conducts orientation sessions for new students at the beginning of each academic term prior to the beginning of the semester.

Orientation provides important information regarding program expectations, departmental policies and procedures, advising, professional development, field experiences, technology requirements, and student resources. Students are expected to attend orientation and are responsible for information provided during the session.

Academic Integrity

The Department of Counselor Education expects all students to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity.

Students must comply with all university policies regarding academic integrity including policies related to plagiarism, cheating, falsification of information, unauthorized collaboration, the unauthorized and/or undisclosed use of artificial intelligence (AI) in academic work, and other forms of academic misconduct. Violations of academic integrity policies may result in sanctions imposed by the course instructor, the department, and/or the university.

General Academic Policies

Students are responsible for complying with all Graduate School and university academic policies, including policies related to registration, withdrawal, academic standing, graduation requirements, and student conduct.

Non-Degree Students

Non-degree students must obtain permission from the course instructor prior to enrolling in Department of Counselor Education courses and may be required to provide documentation supporting their readiness for graduate-level study.

Enrollment in courses as a non-degree student does not guarantee admission to a degree program, nor does it guarantee that completed coursework will be applied toward future degree requirements.

Individualized Instruction and Independent Study

Students interested in pursuing Independent Study or Individualized Instruction should consult with their advisor and, if approved by the Dean of the College of Education and Human Services, complete the required university approval procedures.

Grades and Academic Standing

Grades are assigned according to Graduate School policies.

Students are expected to maintain satisfactory academic standing as outlined in the Graduate Catalog. A cumulative graduate QPA of 3.0 (B) or higher is required for good academic standing and graduation. Students whose cumulative QPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation in accordance with University policy. Students whose cumulative QPA falls below 2.0, or who fail to meet the conditions for continued enrollment while on academic probation as outlined in the Graduate Catalog, will be dismissed from the degree or professional certification program.

Students who earn a grade below the program's minimum course requirements may be required to repeat the course, consistent with Graduate School and Department of Counselor Education policies.

Additional academic standards related to progression, retention, remediation, and dismissal are outlined in the Student Expectations and Retention sections of this handbook and in the Graduate Catalog.

Professional Ethical Standards

Beginning with admission to the program, students are expected to adhere to the ethical standards of their profession, including applicable codes of ethics and professional standards. Ethical conduct is evaluated throughout the program and is considered an essential component of professional readiness. In consultation with the Dean of the College of Education and Human Services, students who incur a serious legal infraction, ethical violation, or deviation from professional standards may be removed from their program even if they've met all academic requirements. Significant breaches may be defined as actions or events that would bar the Pennsylvania State Licensure Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists from granting licensure as a professional counselor (LPC) or the Pennsylvania Department of Education to bar certification as a School Counselor to this individual for their actions or lack thereof.

Research

Students engaging in research involving human participants must comply with all university policies and procedures governing human subjects research and should consult with their advisor prior to beginning research activities. Most research involving human subjects requires approval from the Human Subjects Committee/Institutional Review Board [IRB].

The Department regularly sponsors research teams and scholarly activities coordinated by faculty members. Students interested in participating in departmental research initiatives are encouraged to consult with faculty members regarding available opportunities.

Financial Assistance

Financial support for graduate students may be available through a variety of university and external sources. Opportunities may include graduate assistantships, residence life positions, student employment, scholarships, loans, and other forms of financial aid. Students are encouraged to consult the Graduate School, Financial Aid Office, and departmental faculty regarding available opportunities.

Graduate Assistantships

A limited number of graduate assistantships (GAs) may be available during the academic year and summer sessions. Graduate assistantships typically provide financial support in exchange for service to the university and may include tuition assistance and/or a stipend. Eligibility requirements, application procedures, and available positions are determined by the university.

Residence Director Positions

Graduate students may be eligible to serve as Residence Directors (RDs) within the Division of Student Affairs. Residence Directors are responsible for the supervision and operation of a residence hall and contribute to the academic, social, and personal development of residential students.

Residence Director positions typically include compensation, housing, and other benefits established by the university. Students interested in these opportunities should consult the appropriate university office for current position descriptions, eligibility requirements, and application procedures.

Student Employment

Graduate students may be eligible for part-time student employment opportunities throughout the university. Employment opportunities are administered in accordance with applicable university, state, and federal policies and regulations.

Financial Aid and Student Loans

Students may be eligible for federal, state, institutional, or private financial aid programs, including student loans. Information regarding financial aid eligibility and application procedures is available through the Office of Financial Aid.

Scholarships

Scholarship opportunities may be available to continuing graduate students. Students are encouraged to consult their advisor, specialization coordinator, the Graduate School, and university scholarship resources for information regarding available funding opportunities and application procedures.

Career Development Services

Graduate students are encouraged to utilize the career development resources available through Shippensburg University. Career services support students in identifying professional goals, preparing for employment opportunities, and successfully transitioning into professional practice.

Career development services may include:

- Career planning and job search assistance
- Career exploration resources and employer directories
- Career assessments and career development tools
- Resume, curriculum vitae (CV), and cover letter review
- Interview preparation and mock interview opportunities
- Networking and professional development events
- On-campus and virtual recruitment opportunities
- Access to employment and internship postings
- Assistance with professional credential and application materials

Students are encouraged to begin career planning early in their program and to work closely with faculty advisors, supervisors, and career services staff as they prepare for employment, licensure, certification, and other professional opportunities.

Information regarding graduate employment outcomes, alumni achievements, and continuing professional development opportunities may be available through the Department of Counselor Education and university career services resources.

Sexual Harassment and Discrimination

Shippensburg University prohibits sexual harassment, discrimination, and other forms of unlawful harassment. Students who experience or witness conduct that may violate university policies are encouraged to seek assistance through appropriate university reporting and support channels.

Concerns may be reported to the Department Chair, faculty members, the university's Title IX office, or other designated university resources. Students should consult current university policies and procedures regarding reporting options, supportive measures, and complaint processes.

Privacy and Educational Records

Student educational records are protected in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and applicable university policies.

Information regarding the privacy of student records, student rights related to educational records, and procedures for accessing or amending records is available through the Graduate

School and university policies. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with these policies and their rights regarding educational records.

Licensure and Certification



Overview

Students who graduate from the Clinical Mental Health Counseling, School Counseling, and College Counseling programs will be eligible to pursue licensure as a Professional Counselor in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Graduates in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling will have fully met the licensure educational requirement for 60 graduate semester hours (PA Codes 49.1 and 49.2). College Counseling graduates will need to complete an additional 12 graduate semester hours before applying for licensure (these can be completed post-master's). Additional post-master's licensure requirements for graduates of all programs include, but are not limited to:

- Satisfactory passing score on one of the approved licensure exams (e.g., the National Counselor Exam)
- Successful completion of 3000 hours of supervised practice
- Attestation of good moral and legal standing

View answers to [frequently asked questions about the NCE](#).

[View NCE Handbook](#)

Pennsylvania state licensure requirements are detailed and may have been amended since the publication of this information.

For current and detailed licensure information, please visit [the website for the State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists, and Professional Counselors](#).



Pennsylvania Department of Education Certification

Information about Pennsylvania Department of Education certification is available from the College of Education and Human Services.