

Master of Arts in Counseling
(COUN)

Program Handbook

2021-2023

**Stockton University
Counseling Handbook**

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FACULTY PRECEPTORS

In order for students in entry-level programs to have an assigned advisor at all times during the program who helps them develop a planned program of study, each student will be assigned a faculty preceptor (or advisor) during which the student is enrolled in the counseling program. It is the student's responsibility to know who is serving as her/his faculty preceptor. This information may be found on the Stockton Portal Student Services tab. If a student wishes to change preceptors at any time, fill out a change of preceptor form and submit the form to Academic Advising for approval.

Your faculty preceptor is your primary source of contact and communication with the program. Therefore, the program encourages the formation of effective, professional relationships between students and their faculty preceptors. Please note that a large portion of the responsibility for the formation of such a relationship with your preceptor falls upon you. The program encourages you to show initiative in getting to know your preceptor.

ADJUNCT FACULTY

Adjunct faculty members assist the program through the provision of instructional services, supervision of students in Practicum and Internship, or other activities necessary for the effective conduct of the program. Persons who hold this status in the program must be approved by the Director and faculty, as well as the Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences (SOBL) and are appointed on an annual or academic term basis.

STATEMENT ON PROFESSIONALISM

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B. COUNSELING PROGRAM

PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

The Master of Arts in Counseling program is designed to educate students about best practices in mental health and human services and train students in the skills necessary to work with clients in a variety of settings, such as hospitals, social service agencies, residential treatment centers, community mental health centers, and other organizations. The goal of this program is to prepare graduate students for success in the field upon graduation and to successfully achieve their professional goals.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

According to the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code for Mental Health Counseling, it is a program that prepares individuals to provide evaluations, referrals, and counseling services to help people prevent or remediate personal problems, conflicts, and emotional crises. The program will provide instruction in human development, psychopathology,

- a. To provide meaningful educational experiences to prepare graduates with foundational skills, critical thinking ability, and dedication to the counseling profession,
- b. To prepare graduates for employment-13(e)7(s)-6(t)7(o pr)-20(e)7(pa)7(re)6(gra)6(dua)-13(t)7(e)7(s)-6(w)-6(i)

Passing the NCE exam qualifies graduates as a Nationally Certified Counselor (NCC). See the section on *Accreditation* below to verify the proposed program’s eligibility for CACREP accreditation.

State licensure. Graduates who have passed the NCE will also be qualified to apply for licensure in the State of New Jersey as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) after an additional 4,500 hours of supervised experience. This license allows them to work as counselors in non-profit organizations, for profit organizations, or in private practice in New Jersey. Graduates will also be eligible to apply for a specialty designation in any of the following: clinical mental health, addictions, career, school counselor, or gerontology.

ACCREDITATION

The program is designed in accordance with the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) 2016 Standards. The program will begin the accreditation application process in the fall of 2020. Students who graduate from a program that has not yet received accreditation will have eighteen months AFTER graduation to be considered graduating from a CACREP program. The program will be assessed using the following methods:

- i. Graduates will demonstrate competence in the core areas related to the program objectives as described in Appendix B. Students will take the NCE exam during the spring of their final year, so the program will have access to data regarding students’ success on the exam.
- ii. The program faculty will evaluate the program objectives using (1) aggregate student assessment data that address student knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions; (2) demographic and other characteristics of applicants, students, and graduates; and (3) data from systematic follow-up studies of graduates, site supervisors, and employers of program graduates, including the percentage of graduates who take the NCE and the percentage who pass.
- iii. The program faculty will provide evidence of the use of program evaluation data to inform program modifications via its Annual Report and Five-Year Program

data for this

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. They notify their faculty and/or supervisors and seek assistance for problems that reach the level of professional impairment, and, if necessary, they limit, suspend, or terminate their professional responsibilities until it is determined that they may safely resume their work.”

The Counseling program fully endorses the [ACA Code of Ethics](#) and the elements of a competent and ethical counselor. Counseling not only demands the highest levels of performance, it also subjects counselors to stresses and challenges that may threaten individuals’ coping abilities. Therefore, students are encouraged to seek professional assistance if they feel that their work is being affected. Additionally, the faculty recommend that students notify their course instructors and faculty advisor if they feel their work is being affected. The University does provide counseling services free of charge through the Wellness Center on the Galloway Campus.

The faculty will notify students if their performance requires additional self-assessment and self- reflection. Failure to address the concerns and improve their performance may result in disciplinary action including a review by a Student Retention Committee. The faculty reserves the right to exact grading penalties for any unprofessional or unethical behaviors and discuss ramifications with the faculty.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

CURRICULUM

See the bulletin for specific course requirements. The following table provides a guideline for program completion indicating required courses:

YEAR 1 COURSES (30 CREDITS)			
FALL	CREDIT	SPRING	CREDIT
COUN 5110 - Pre-Practicum	3	COUN 5135 - Assessment and Testing	3
COUN 5115 - Theories of Counseling	3	COUN 5140 - Statistics and Research	3

PRACTICUM AND INTERNSHIP

The field placement experience at Stockton University is divided into a three-credit practicum (COUN 5900) and up to six credits in clinical internships (COUN 5901, COUN 5902). The practicum (COUN 5900) is the student's first off-campus counseling experience. As such, it is likely to be the first time the counseling student meets with a real client and the first time the student applies the body of knowledge of the counseling profession to helping another person. During the practicum, the student counselor is steered through initial experiences of counseling with intense supervision provided by both an off-campus site supervisor, and an on-campus faculty member in group settings in a weekly class. The goal is to reach a higher level of autonomy, confidence, counseling knowledge, and skills.

The clinical internship (COUN 5901, COUN 5902) assumes that the goals of the practicum have been successfully accomplished. During the clinical internship, the student is again provided individual supervision by a qualified site supervisor and weekly group supervision by a Stockton faculty member. The goal of the clinical internship is for the student to become a confident, independent, and knowledgeable counselor, who is able to support clients and integrate her/his own skills with input from other appropriate sources. In both the practicum and the internship, students are evaluated both by their site supervisors and the supervising Stockton faculty members. The feedback from these evaluations provides useful input to guide further professional growth. Students in the program are required to complete two semesters of clinical internship.

For complete information regarding both the practicum and internship experience, including the student checklist for both, please refer to the [Clinical Handbook](#).

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

Faculty assess students' knowledge and skills regularly through a review of student performance on assignments designated assignments referred to Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Students are expected to demonstrate a mastery level of 83% or higher on the following KPIs:

Num bers	Course	KPI Assignment	When?	Target for Students
1	COUN 5125 Ethical and Legal Issues in Counseling	Professional Counselor Identity Reflection Paper	Year 1, Semester 1	83% or better
2	COUN 5205 Foundations of Mental Health Counseling	Advocacy Proposal	Year 1, Semester 1	83% or better
3	COUN 5125 Ethical and Legal Issues in Counseling	Reflection Paper on counselor advocacy	Year 1, Semester 1	83% or better
4	COUN 5210: Multicultural Counseling	Cultural Immersion Assignment	Year 1, Semester 2	83% or better

8	COUN 5225 Career Counseling	Comprehensive Exam	Year 2, Semester 2	83% or better
9	COUN 5900: Practicum	Case Staffing & Transcription	Year 1, Semester 2	83% or better
10	COUN 5901/2: Internship I/II	Clinical Case Presentations	Year 2, Semesters 1/2	83% or better
11	COUN 5215: Group Counseling	Support Group Observation Paper	Year 1, Semester 2	83% or better
12	COUN 5215: Group Counseling	Comprehensive Exam	Year 2, Semester 2	83% or better
13	COUN 5120: Psychopathology	Diagnostic Report	Year 1, Semester 1	83% or better
14	COUN 5135: Assessment and Testing	Test Administration Interpretation Reports	Year 1, Semester 2	83% or better
15	COUN 5135: Assessment and Testing	Instrument Critique	Year 1, Semester 2	83% or better
16	COUN 5140: Statistics and Research	Article Critique	Year 1, Semester 2	83% or better
17	Coun 5900: Practicum	Counseling Skills Evaluation	Year 1, Semester 2	83% or better
18	COUN 5901/2: Internship I/II	Internship Counselor Evaluation	Year 2, Semesters 1/2	83% or better

KEY PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

Applicants and students in the Counseling program should develop and demonstrate key professional dispositions in the three categories: professional readiness, personal readiness, and interpersonal readiness. Students will be made aware of the dispositions and the review of the dispositions measure at orientation and at their first preceptor meeting. Faculty may identify unethical or unprofessional behaviors (e.g., violates ACA ethical standards; does not abide by university requirements) in students' functioning, provide constructive feedback to them, and require a remediation plan to address those difficulties.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The program requires 60 credits for completion. Students will typically take a total of 20 three-credit courses to achieve that goal. Forty-eight of the 60 credits will be taken in a required core that introduces the student to mental health counseling. The remaining credits will be earned in elective courses selected from a variety of offerings. The program requires students to take and pass a comprehensive exam prior to graduation.

GRADING SYSTEM

Grades awarded in graduate courses at Stockton are assigned by the following chart. Students must successful pass course work with a B or better in order to complete the graduation requirement of a 3.0. Quality point equivalencies are:

A	=	4.0	C	=	2.0
A-	=	3.7	C-	=	1.7
B+	=	3.3	D+	=	1.3

C. REGULATIONS AND

STUDENT EVALUATION

Evaluations of student knowledge, skills and professional dispositions are ongoing throughout a student's time in the program. This takes place in each course, during clinical supervision, and during faculty meetings. Core faculty regularly consult with supervisors and adjunct faculty about

student and copy the student on the letter.

3. If after the meeting with the student, the student's behavior is determined to constitute a violation that could result in suspension or dismissal from the program, the Director will appoint a retention committee and collect all relevant materials prior to determining a date for the Retention Committee meeting. The Retention Committee will be composed of three faculty members to investigate all aspects of the situation and to make recommendations concerning the student's eligibility to remain in the program and, if permitted to remain in the program under what conditions. The student is always informed, in writing, of these proceedings.

4. The Retention Committee will only be convened within either a fall or spring academic term. The Retention Committee will complete its investigation and provide its report to the program faculty within 30 days of the committee's appointment. In the event the committee cannot convene because of an academic break (e.g. summer or winter break), the committee will convene within 14 days of the start of the next academic term.

5. In the interest of protecting the health, safety and/or welfare of the University, or any member of the University community, or any off-site activities associated with their academic program, the program may temporarily suspend a student from the program until the proceedings of the Retention Committee have been completed.

6. The Retention Committee's report, including recommendations and/or requirements, is presented to the program faculty, who are then responsible for implementing the recommendations.

7. When the faculty members have acted upon the retention committee's report, the Director and the student's preceptor meet with the student to convey the program's decision(s) and/or recommendations. The Director and the student preceptor subsequently monitor the student's progress in carrying out the program's recommendation for the student. If this student's Retention Committee recommends that the student no longer continue in the program, the program will dismiss the student.

If the student is not satisfied with the student retention policy, he or she may pursue an appeal by following the student affairs policies:

<https://stockton.edu/policy-procedure/documents/procedures/2019.pdf>

GATEKEEPING

Gatekeeping is the legal authority and responsibility of counselor educators to determine whether a student or potential student has the capability and willingness to uphold the counseling profession's standards of care and ethical protocol. Counseling professional organizations expect counseling training programs to screen and monitor competencies of student counselors. The purposes of gatekeeping in the counselor education profession revolve around ensuring that a counselor-in-training is suitably competent and prepared to effectively and ethically interact with clients, colleagues, and the community in a professionally appropriate manner. Counselor educators must be mindful of any behavior, characteristic, or disposition, which may negatively impact the work of a counselor-in-training. Ultimately, the protection of the public and the profession is the goal.

Our *Student Retention Policy* (see previous section above) defines the expected Academic and Non-Academic Performance Standards. A student's acceptance into the program does not guarantee his or her fitness to remain in that program. As counselor educators, we have an ethical and professional responsibility to protect current and future clients/students, the profession, and our program by insuring to the best of our ability that all students consistently meet the professional and ethical standards of the field. The faculty is responsible for assuring that only those students who continue to meet program and professional expectations are allowed to hat only

students at the Galloway campus, as well as telehealth services. The Counseling Center provides individual counseling, group counseling, education and outreach programs, as well as crisis intervention services. Students may contact Counseling services via phone at 609-652-4722.

PROGRAM DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION POLICIES

The Stockton faculty are committed to facilitating honest and respectful discussions regarding different points of view pertaining to values and cultural issues. This is increasingly important as the diversity of our population continues to change and issues of difference continue to rise in the counseling field. Further, the University provides information regarding their [commitment to diversity](#).

Consistent with the American Counseling Association's *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, the Counseling program requires that its students commit themselves to respecting the dignity and promoting the welfare of, as well as affirming individuals from diverse populations.

The program further recognizes the culturally competent counselor, or counselor-in-training, is one who is actively (a) in the process of becoming aware of his or her own assumptions about human behavior, biases, preconceived notions, and personal limitations, (b) attempting to understand the worldview of his or her culturally different clients, and (c) in the process of developing and practicing appropriate, relevant, and sensitive intervention strategies and skills in working with his or her culturally different clients.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Although the university has a Maintenance of Matriculation requirement for graduate students, a Leave of Absence may be granted, normally for medical reasons. A Leave of Absence is the process of leaving school temporarily for up to one year, generally used for family medical leave or military service. A Leave of Absence is valid for one year and is renewable yearly, for a maximum of five years, by notifying the Office of the Registrar in writing before the Leave expires. Students should request a Leave of Absence Form from the Office of the Registrar, and submit it to that office

RESEARCH AND ETHICS

If faculty and/or student research or scholarship involves contact with human or animal subjects, the research project requires pre-approval from the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before conducting the research. In addition to the IRB guidelines, Stockton's counseling faculty and students must adhere to the American Counseling Association's code of ethics regarding research. The complete code of ethics may be found at the following website: <https://www.counseling.org/docs/default->

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

In the event of severe weather or other types of emergencies, check the university's website for information on class cancellations. Area radio and television stations may also announce the status of the university. Students may "opt-in" to the Emergency Text Messaging System which enables select administrators to make emergency announcements. Students may access the text alert signup on the Stockton Portal.

D. PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The program faculty members recognize that students' financial resources are limited. Therefore, the faculty do NOT require that you become a member of one or more professional organizations pertinent to your professional goals. However, the faculty believe that membership in professional organizations is an important aspect of professionalism, and therefore strongly encourage you to join professional organizations if you have the financial resources to do so. A listing of some of the pertinent professional organizations may be found here:

American Counseling Association (ACA)
American College Counseling Association (ACCA)
Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES)
Association for Gay, Lesbian, Transgender and Bisexual Issues in Counseling (AGLBIC)
Military and Government Counseling Association (MGCA) formerly (ACEG)
American School Counselor Association (ASCA)
American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA)
Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW)
Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD)
American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA) Association for Adult Development and Aging (AADA)
Association for Spiritual, Ethical and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC)
Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ)
International Association of Addiction and Offender Counselors (IAAOC)
National Employment Counselors Association (NECA)
National Career Development Association (NCDA)
Association for Assessment and Research in Counseling (AARC)
Association for Creativity in Counseling (ACC)
Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling (ACAC)
Association for Humanistic Counseling (AHC)
International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors (IAMFC)

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

The counseling faculty believes it is prudent in today's working environment, and therefore requires, students (as professionals-in-training) to obtain professional liability insurance before beginning their practicum and internship experiences. For students enrolled in the program, professional liability insurance can be obtained (at no cost) through student membership in

