UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING PROGRAM

Year 1: Counseling and Mental Health Services, M.S.Ed.
Year 2: Professional Counseling, M.Phil.Ed.

Program Manual
Fall 2021
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Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in the Penn GSE Professional Counseling program. The faculty and staff take great pride in offering students the opportunity to study and train for a dynamic career providing essential mental health supports to those in need. As a practitioner training program housed within a graduate school of education at one of the nation’s premier research universities, the Professional Counseling program at Penn GSE offers its students a unique combination of classroom instruction, field experience, direct training, and broad exposure to experts in theory, research, practice, and policy. The experience available to our students is a genuinely integrative experience, one that can be personalized to meet a particular student’s needs and interests because of the array of opportunities.

This manual provides you with important information about and a step-by-step guide to the program experience. It is meant serve as an overview for students who have accepted entry into the program, as well as an invitation to prospective students to apply to become a part of our extraordinary professional community.

Counseling Program Mission & Objectives

The Professional Counseling program has a similar global mission to that of our host school, the Graduate School of Education, and the wider University of Pennsylvania: to provide the most effective education and training possible to address society’s most challenging concerns, both here in the U.S. and around the world. Such education and training must be rooted in tenets of social justice, authentic valuing of human diversity, and the promotion of human well-being. At a more focal level, our counseling program’s mission emphasizes advocacy in social justice, diversity awareness and promotion, and a person- or student-centered counseling orientation. We work from a person-centered orientation out of a core belief that optimal support for people of all walks of life requires meeting them where they are and valuing who they are. In our counseling programs, students of diverse backgrounds come together and share in our aim of providing effective counseling to those populations who need it most: those in under-resourced environments here in Philadelphia, across the U.S., and around the world. Such services are provided in educational institutions, hospitals and health organizations, and state and federal criminal justice systems, among other settings.

The two-year sequence that makes up the Professional Counseling Program is designed to allow graduates to pursue both the Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) credential and Certification in School Counseling. We offer the option of pursuing the LPC and school counseling certification together based on our abiding belief that school counselors are professional counselors, and as such need training that includes a focus on essential mental health counseling skills. In many cases, school counselors are the only providers vulnerable
students and their families will encounter. In that role, they are positioned to provide important short-term interventions and to make appropriate referrals for more intensive treatment. Similarly, professional counselors who work with youth and their families in community agencies or in private practice benefit immensely from understanding the challenges faced by students at their schools. As such, all Professional Counseling students are required to understand aspects of school life and school counseling, even if they do their field placements in non-school settings and pursue the LPC only. This integration of school and mental health counseling is a hallmark of our counseling programs and serves not only to better prepare our students professionally, but also creates career flexibility within the counseling field. This latter point is critical to us, given the investment our students make in their education and training, and given the importance of their contributions to a broad range of clients.

**Program Objectives**

The University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education’s Professional Counseling program objectives are as follows:

- To develop ethical and skilled counselors who, through supervised collaborations with local schools and agencies, hone their clinical skills while providing quality mental health services to under-resourced Philadelphia communities.

- To teach counselors to exceed proficiency on the National Counselor Examination and the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination through innovative classroom instruction of a rich, evidence-based curriculum.

- To prepare counselors with theoretical orientations and robust skill sets that are evidence-based, culturally responsive, and ethically sound.

- To train counselors to manage the complexities of providing culturally responsive counseling services in urban schools and agencies, and to equip them with the advocacy skills required for advancing a social justice agenda in those settings.

- To provide counselors with a strong scholar-practitioner foundation that enables them to gain employment in a wide array of school and mental health settings, domestically and internationally.

- To inspire counselors to be innovators and agents of change by serving diverse communities on the global stage, and working to diminish the stigma surrounding mental health treatment around the world.
Program Orientation & Core Curriculum

The hallmark of the Professional Counseling program at Penn GSE is an emphasis on social justice and culturally responsive counseling interventions, in addition to growing opportunities for clinical training in under-resourced Philadelphia communities. Our goal is to prepare our graduates to effectively serve a diverse range of clients by understanding complex mental health issues and the way they affect individuals, schools, and entire communities.

The Professional Counseling program is structured as a two-year training program that prepares students for PA school counselor certification* and licensure as professional counselors. Professional Counseling program students take 20 three-credit classes across their two years in the program. Students enroll in 10 courses each year that are structured to ensure their preparation meets the requirements for licensure in Pennsylvania. They meet those standards through the combination of classroom training and practicum and internship experience. Sixty total credits are required for degree completion.

The two-year program is designed to confer two distinct degrees, with the option of completing just the first year:

- **Year 1: Counseling and Mental Health Services program (CMHS) | M.S.Ed**
  Opens the door to professional training in psychology, mental health counseling, school counseling, and/or research in these areas. The degree prepares students either to enter Year 2, the Professional Counseling program, or to continue on to other academic or professional pursuits.

- **Year 2: Professional Counseling program (PC) | M.Phil.Ed**
  Prepares school counselors and mental health professionals for licensing, certification, and career advancement. *The CMHS program is a prerequisite for this program.*

**Curricular Flexibility** Students are afforded three electives, one each that focuses on Human Development, Sociocultural issues, and Research. Additional flexibility comes in the form of one of the hallmarks of our program: the option to only complete the first-year Counseling and Mental Health Services program (CMHS). Students earn an M.S. Ed after completion of the first year of training, after which some go on to doctoral training; some acquire jobs that value foundational exposure to concepts of counseling, mental health, and human development; and still others take jobs in research in order to strengthen their overall appeal for doctoral programs.

*There is reciprocity for school counselor certification in the majority of states, but applicants should ensure that this is true for the state where they intend to practice.*
Program Requirements

Total 60 credits/20 course units

Year 1 (30 credits/10 Course Units)

- **Entry Term:** Fall
- **Course Requirements:** 10 courses (30 credits)
- **Typical Course Load:**
  - 4 courses
  - 4 courses
  - 2 courses
- **Practical Experience Component:** Practicum
  (224 hours,† 8-10 hours per week for 28-30 weeks)
- **Counseling Lab Component:** 3-5 sessions of supervised counseling skills practice (individual and group) with direct feedback from trained second year students, supervised by faculty
- **Culminating Experience:** Comprehensive Exam
- **Certificate/Licensure Offered:** Not at this level
- **Degree Conferred:** M.S.Ed.

Year 2 (30 credits/10 course units)

- **Entry Term:** Summer
- **Course Requirements:** 10 courses (30 credits)
- **Typical Course Load:**
  - 2 courses
  - 4 courses
  - 4 courses
- **Practical Experience Component:** Field Internship
  (600 hours, 20 hours per week for 30 weeks)
- **Culminating Experience:**
  - Oral Clinical Comprehensive Exam
  - Written Report of Oral Exam
- **Degree Conferred:** M.Phil. Ed.
- **Licensure:** Graduates are eligible for Licensure in Professional Counseling (after successful completion of the NCE or NCMHCE and completing all internship and post-master’s clinical hours)
- **Certificate Offered:** After finishing internship hours in appropriate school settings and passing the PRAXIS exam, students have the option of seeking state certification in School Counseling

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*† The hour requirements have been adjusted during the 2020–21 and 2021–2022 academic years due to the pandemic. This will be re-evaluated each year.*
Year 1 Overview: Counseling & Mental Health Services Program

The first-year program sequence is designed to introduce students to foundational theories and basic skills of the counseling profession. This is done through introductory coursework in counseling theory and practice, human development and sociocultural perspectives, and ethics, along with practicum placements. Additionally, all students participate in a counseling lab experience that provides them with the opportunity to practice individual and group counseling skills and receive feedback from trained second-year students. A vast majority of first-year students rate this as a very helpful experience in the development of their skills as a counselor. Students complete a practicum field placement totaling 224 hours (8 hours per week for 28 weeks). This experience, which goes well beyond the requirements of most counseling programs, allows students to begin implementing strategies and techniques with the support and supervision of skilled professionals. Students select placements from a pool of high-quality training sites, which include mental health centers, schools, hospitals, and college counseling centers. They receive supervision both on-site and in a small weekly seminar group. This combination of field placement and classroom discourse enables students to learn and practice counseling skills with deep, ongoing professional support. The depth of the practicum experience is particularly valuable to the small percentage of students who decline to pursue the licensable Professional Counseling degree through a second year in the program. It provides them with enough skills to succeed in non-licensure-based counseling positions and to be competitive for doctoral programs in counseling and mental health-related fields. Students typically complete these requirements (academic and practice-based) in two semesters plus a summer term. All students who complete this first year earn an M.S.Ed.

Year 2 Overview: Professional Counseling Program

The second year of the program entails advanced study in the mastery of professional counseling, clinical assessment, and consultation services. This is done through a deeper exploration of and experimentation with theoretical orientations both in the classroom—through presentations and more advanced research opportunities—and through the intense clinical training experience of the 600-hour counseling internship. Students who complete this second year of training earn the M. Phil. Ed, which is the degree that makes them eligible for the Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) credential.

The Professional Counseling program offers two options for specialization: LPC-only preparation, or both LPC preparation and training for PA School Counselor Certification. Those pursuing school counseling certification must complete internship hours at the elementary, middle, and high school levels as part of their requirements for PA school counselor certification. While all students are trained to work with clients across the entire

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As noted above, the hour requirements for practicum have been changed due to the pandemic and will be re-evaluated each year.
life span, students who are focused solely on the LPC are preparing, both through coursework and clinical training, to work exclusively in mental health settings. Students seeking dual certification are prepared to work both schools and mental health settings. In all cases, internship hours are supervised by an appropriately credentialed mental health professional on site, as well as by the program’s internship coordinators through weekly two-hour seminar classes and ongoing communication with site supervisors.

The overall Professional Counseling program emphasizes supervised counseling and clinical skills development for addressing the emotional and behavioral health challenges facing individuals and groups in a wide range of settings, including schools, hospitals, and community mental health centers. In addition to training counselors who are strong practitioners, the program prepares students for multiple pathways post-graduation:

**Preparation for Certification** The Professional Counseling program is certified by the National Board of Certified Counselors; as a result, students are prepared to take the National Counseling Examination (NCE) or the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (NCMHCCE) near the end of the second year in the program. In preparation for this, and also as a means of evaluating and ensuring that each student has met core academic standards, students take the Master’s Comprehensive Examination (MCE) before receiving their M.S.Ed. at the conclusion of the Year 1 Counseling and Mental Health Services program. The MCE helps prepare students to take the licensing examinations by exposing them to a wide range of multiple-choice questions from all the first-year course content areas.

**Research Training** Through assignments and experiential opportunities, we emphasize that strong practitioners cannot be effective without also being avid and informed consumers of research. Students are trained in foundational research methodology and learn to respect research as the foundation for ethical and innovative practice. There are also opportunities for students to become involved in research with program faculty.

**Future Professional and Academic Pursuits** The curriculum and training model prepare graduates for direct counseling/clinical services, assessment, and consultation positions in education and mental health fields in public and private institutions, hospitals and health organizations, and state and federal criminal justice systems, among other settings. Students who matriculate into the second-year Professional Counseling program typically do so to launch their careers as Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs), either with or without school counselor certification. Graduates are also well prepared to pursue further graduate psychology study at the doctoral level.

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1 Licensure in states other than PA may require a different exam, such as the National Clinical Mental Health Counselor Examination (NCMHCCE). See [www.nbcc.org/search/stateboarddirectory](http://www.nbcc.org/search/stateboarddirectory) to check specific state requirements, and to ensure this program meets licensure requirements in the state(s) in which you hope to work.
Prospective and current students can access detailed information on our program from the Human Development and Quantitative Methods division pages of the Penn GSE website, where important components of the catalogue are displayed.

- **Year 1: Counseling and Mental Health Services** program
  
  Admissions criteria, minimum requirements, and programs of study

- **Year 2: Professional Counseling** program
  
  Program of study and some general facts on licensure and certification options available to alumni

On these sites, students can also see our faculty and the various roles they play in the program. Applicants can also access the [program FAQs](https://www.gse.upenn.edu/pdf/aphd/CMHSProgramFAQ.pdf).

### Program Faculty & Staff

The Professional Counseling program is housed within the Division of Human Development and Quantitative Methods, chaired by [Dr. Michael Nakkula](mailto:mnakkula@upenn.edu), Ed.D. There are designated program directors for each year of the Professional Counseling program:

- **Program Director for Counseling and Mental Health Services (Year 1):**
  
  [Dr. Kyle Schultz](mailto:schkyle@upenn.edu), Psy.D.

- **Program Director for Professional Counseling (Year 2):**
  
  [Dr. Ariane Thomas](mailto:arianet@upenn.edu), Psy.D., J.D.

### Core Faculty & Staff of the Professional Counseling Program:

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**Footnotes:**

1. [https://www.gse.upenn.edu/aphd/cmhs/msed](https://www.gse.upenn.edu/aphd/cmhs/msed)
2. [https://www.gse.upenn.edu/aphd/pc](https://www.gse.upenn.edu/aphd/pc)
3. [https://www.gse.upenn.edu/pdf/aphd/CMHSProgramFAQ.pdf](https://www.gse.upenn.edu/pdf/aphd/CMHSProgramFAQ.pdf)
Application & Admissions Processes

When applying to our counseling programs, prospective students are able to find our planned programs of study, admissions guidelines, and application instructions on the Penn GSE website:

- general application requirements and information, and the application:  
  gse.upenn.edu/admissions_financial/howtoapply
- Year 1 general information and planned program of study:  
  https://www.gse.upenn.edu/academics/programs/counseling-mental-health-services-masters
- Year 2 general information and planned program of study:  
  https://www.gse.upenn.edu/academics/programs/professional-counseling-masters
- Answers to Frequently Asked Questions
- Applicants can also see jobs held by current graduates in the Our Graduates section of the Professional Counseling webpage.

Prior to submitting applications online, applicants can attend workshops and information sessions held by Penn GSE’s Office of Admissions and Financial Aid (OAFA). This office is the main point of contact for applicants, serving as a liaison between applicants and the faculty and staff of the counseling program. Applicants are also welcome to contact faculty or staff regarding course content and program structure. Those applying for the counseling program submit their applications online with all their materials through the Graduate School of Education website. Applications submitted prior to March of a given academic year have no application fee. This provides an equal opportunity for students to apply for the program.

The CMHS program receives over 300 applications each year and admits approximately 100 applicants. Of those admitted, typically 50–60 enroll. Generally, students admitted to the CMHS program have a background in counseling either through education or professional experiences. Most admitted students have a GPA above 3.0 and a GRE writing score above 3.5; however, at this time the GRE is not required in the application process.

When considering applications, qualified students of color and those from underrepresented demographics in the counseling field are given significant consideration. This is a particular priority because the program targets its service and resources toward the underserved and marginalized populations in the Philadelphia metropolitan area.
Year 1 Admission: Counseling & Mental Health Services Program

All applicants must submit:

▪ a personal statement
▪ official transcript
▪ three letters of recommendation

[international students only]:
▪ TOEFL scores

Each applicant is evaluated holistically and interviewed by faculty unless their prior academic performance and experience make them a poor fit for the program. There is no guarantee that having a high GPA will earn an applicant entrance into the program. Satisfactory grades in introductory psychology and related courses are desirable accomplishments for matriculation into the program; however, faculty reviews and regularly accepts applicants from all academic backgrounds, particularly if they have relevant experience in a counseling-related field. In their personal statement, applicants are prompted to describe their interest in the field of professional counseling and future professional goals.

With regard to English proficiency tests, applicants must have taken the test no more than two years prior to application submission. Applicants who do not intend on taking the test must prove they attended and graduated from an undergraduate institution where English was the language of instruction.

Once the online application has been submitted, applicants communicate with the OAFA for updates on their application and assistance in gathering required materials.

Year 1 Application Process

Committee Review  The CMHS Admissions Committee is comprised of three faculty members, two of whom are also first-year advisors. All components of the application are included in the decision-making process. The committee gives each application a preliminary review to determine if an applicant’s qualifications meet the standards outlined above. A senior member makes the initial determination, referring qualified applicants to the Admissions Committee to be interviewed.

While this review is largely about thresholds, there is a holistic approach to reviewing applications even at this stage in this process. As such, if there are extenuating circumstances that would explain an area of deficit in an application, a student may still be granted an interview if there are other strong indicators they would excel in the program and as a counselor; we encourage students to explain such circumstances in their statement of purpose. If the Admissions Committee decides an applicant is better suited for a different program within the division, the application is passed to the appropriate program in GSE for review. The review process can take up to eight weeks, and typically concludes within two weeks of having an interview.
Applicant Interviews  There are three faculty members who conduct applicant interviews. Applicants are typically interviewed in groups of 3–5, not only to effectively manage the large number of applications, but also as an additional means of evaluating the applicants’ interpersonal skills. Members of the Admissions Committee ask students a variety of questions, often emanating from the information they’ve shared in their statements of purpose. They will also be presented with questions that help interviewers get a sense of prospective students’ flexibility, capacity for engaging and developing rapport with new people, and commitment to learning to be a culturally responsive practitioner. A demonstration of good interpersonal skills during interviews is viewed as a solid indicator of an applicant’s potential for success at establishing strong, healthy therapeutic relationships and rapport with clients. For applicants who are at a distance or overseas, the Committee conducts virtual interviews with the same general approach.

After the interview, the interviewers discuss their assessments and experience. When there is a difference of opinion or uncertainty with regard to an application, members consult with faculty who didn’t participate in the interview to get an impartial opinion. Typically, within one to two weeks after the interview, a decision is communicated to applicants via an email from the program and a formal letter sent by the OAFA. Communication on fees, housing, orientation, matriculation, and assigned advisors are subsequently sent to accepted students.

Year 2 Admission: Professional Counseling Program

In January of the first year in the program, CMHS students are invited to apply for Year 2, which will allow them to complete their Professional Counseling degree. Those who desire to continue to the second year of the program must complete an additional application process. It requires students to think about and clearly articulate their reasoning for wanting to engage in a rigorous and demanding second-year curriculum, and to take on advanced training as professional counselors. By this point, students will have received regular feedback from their course instructors on their academic performance, and a mid-year evaluation from their practicum supervisors. In addition, in monthly faculty meetings there are regular discussions of student concerns—be they academic, health or mental health, interpersonal, intercultural, or otherwise. These discussions allow faculty advisors to gather information about their advisees outside of their own direct contact, and to follow up directly with students about concerns and needed supports.

Year 2 Application Process

Students applying to the second year are evaluated based on their academic work at GSE, their practicum performance, and their overall character and professional conduct. A student who has exhibited significant deficiencies in ethics or professionalism, or who has a GPA below 3.0, may not be accepted into the second year, a decision made at the discretion of the program faculty who meet to discuss each student’s performance.
Applications for the second year are reviewed for:
- Overall GPA of 3.0 or higher
- No course grades of C or below; no course failures
- No course Incompletes
- Satisfactory assessments by the practicum supervisor, without concerns
- Recommendation of the faculty based on individual course performance and interpersonal interactions
- Proficiency level on the comprehensive examination given at the end of Year 1

Students’ academic and training records, along with a new Statement of Purpose, are reviewed by the Year 2 Admissions Committee, which includes second-year faculty, administrative staff, and first-year instructors who are familiar with each student’s academic performance. After students submit their application online, the Committee meets to discuss the students’ performance at their practicum sites, their academic performance, and any other information from faculty-student interactions over the semester. Every offer of admission is contingent upon the criteria above, in addition to the demonstration of the overall level of professional conduct needed for admission into the counseling profession. The decisions of the Committee are to Accept; to Defer Decision; or to Deny Admission.

Remediation and Retention
The Year 2 additional application process enables and empowers the faculty to carry out its gatekeeping duties, offer students important feedback, and help them to consider their options, while at the same time protecting the integrity of the field and of the program. This is a responsibility that the faculty takes very seriously; however, it is never intended to disregard students’ important personal or developmental needs, nor is it intended to be punitive. The faculty’s gatekeeping responsibility is explained to students in their first semester Counseling Ethics class, so they are aware of faculty expectations in regard to both academics as well as professional and interpersonal conduct.

Students who have demonstrated difficulty functioning in the classroom or at practicum sites, or students who have incomplete grades in their first semester coursework, will be required to complete coursework and participate in remediation during the spring and summer semesters in order to proceed into the second year. If the adjustment is likely to take more time, students may be invited to complete the program via a three-year extended-enrollment plan to earn the M.Phil.Ed (detailed below).

Decisions to defer a student’s admission Year 2 decision are made in situations in which there may be indicators of concern (such as an Incomplete in a fall course, or a lack of student engagement and participation in courses such that faculty do not feel they can make an adequate assessment of a student’s interaction skills). In such cases, the faculty advisor meets
with the student to discuss the decision and to make a plan of action to address the committee’s concerns (e.g., making up the Incomplete work, addressing the student’s participation level in classes) and to indicate that the application will be reconsidered at the end of the spring semester, when there is more information available. Students and faculty often engage the Office of Student Affairs to help in working through these situations and determining a remediation plan and process. Every effort is made to help the student accomplish the milestones required to meet the admission standards to enter the second year.

If remediation efforts have not been successful, or the interpersonal, academic, and/or clinical deficiencies are deemed to be significant by faculty, a student may not be offered admission into the second year. Most years 1–2 first-year applicants are denied admission into the second year. These cases are characterized by a dramatic indicator of concern: multiple low grades and Incompletes, a very poor supervisor assessment, or consistent demonstration of concerning interpersonal behavior that raises serious questions of ethical and safe practice. In these cases, the faculty advisor meets with the student and reviews the committee’s decision and reasoning. Students can appeal the review decision and request the ability to respond to concerns. Students and faculty often engage the Office of Student Affairs to help in working through these situations and developing a remediation plan and process, if deemed appropriate. Such plans are documented in writing and are the joint responsibility of the program and OSA to monitor toward satisfactory completion.

**Extended Enrollment Option**

In an effort to retain and graduate every student we can, the faculty have collaborated with Penn GSE’s Office of Student Affairs to create an extended enrollment option for students who may require additional time to meet the thresholds for matriculation. This can be considered a remediation option for some students. This option is usually exercised when students have sufficient academic difficulty completing the first-year program that there remain concerns about their competency level, or they have exhibited significant health or mental health concerns that require more attention than can be given during full-time program enrollment. This option is separate from the process students follow for a needed leave of absence, which is communicated to students through the GSE Student Handbook and advising system.

In this situation, the first-year advisor works with the student and the second-year internship instructors, who are the advisors for all second-year students. Depending upon the nature of the student’s needs, a plan is established for the student to continue on to second year coursework at a reduced load, allowing for them to engage in additional mental health or health treatment; engage in cultural/language development opportunities that facilitate their ability to succeed in the program’s internship requirements; or provide a pace that reduces physical or emotional stress for students with disabilities. Typically, the “third year option” affords a student two full years to complete the typical second-year course and internship
requirements of the program, resulting in a full three years to complete all requirements. Since its inception, this option has led to the successful graduation of every student who has used this structure, with demonstrable positive change in the areas of difficulty that were identified as the reason for electing this approach. **Note: As a response to student needs during the COVID-19 pandemic, the three-year enrollment option has been formally adopted as a program structure available to all students for the 2020–21 and 2021–22 academic years.**

Financial Aid

The faculty are deeply conscious of and sensitive to the financial investment students make to come to the Professional Counseling program at Penn GSE. There are several different types of financial assistance that are available to help student defray the cost of their training: merit scholarships, need-based aid, Federal Work Study, Graduate Residential Advisor positions, Penn employee benefits, and on-campus job opportunities. Some details regarding available scholarships and financial aid can be found below and also at [PennGSE Funding Opportunities](#).

**Merit scholarships** Counseling students may be eligible for merit aid awards that are applied to their tuition. Financial awards are based on a combination of academic credentials and work experience. The school seeks to provide assistance to as many eligible candidates as possible, currently awarding scholarships to 75% of incoming master’s students. There is no application for these scholarships. The awards are made at the time of application review and are based on the academic merit of the application. Awards are communicated in the acceptance letter. Scholarships are not taxable and require no additional service.

**Graduate Assistantships** These are available to full-time master’s students. Students apply for assistantships by submitting a one-page résumé and a short statement detailing their skills and their interests. These statements are evaluated, and program assistants conduct a matching process to connect students and instructors whose interests and needs are somewhat aligned. Graduate assistants receive a partial-tuition funding of up to $6,300, which is taxable, in exchange for providing academically relevant services such as supervised participation in faculty research projects, teaching support, outreach activities, admissions recruiting, and student affairs assistance. This amount covers the entire academic year, based upon a $21-per-hour compensation for up to 10 hours of work per week; it is in addition to any merit-based aid students receive as part of their admission package.

**Other Financial Assistance Options** All students are eligible to apply for Federal work study, which affects federal loan amounts. Students are also able to become a Graduate Resident Advisor, coordinating activities and meetings with graduate students living in on-campus housing. They receive free room and board at one of the on-campus residences.
As a faculty, we continue to grapple with the challenge of managing the cost of tuition and working to recruit and maintain exceptional scholars of color. Observations from past cohorts suggest that we are able to attract extraordinarily talented students from minority and underrepresented backgrounds; however, we have had a difficult time keeping them in the program for the second year as a result of the financial burden. We have made a commitment to developing a program of targeted recruitment focused on attracting more students of color and students from underrepresented demographics, in an effort to expand diversity in our cohorts. One of our top priorities now is developing policies that not only attract, but also maintain and support, our minority talent through the entire two years of our program. To that end, Penn GSE recently created a new fellowship, The Dean’s Fellowship: Power of Possibility, specifically for underrepresented students. In addition, we are also developing a plan to request adjustment to the way scholarships are granted, so that completion of the two years is more feasible for more minority students. We recognize it can be a significant disadvantage for a student to come to the program, complete the first year, and then leave having not earned a licensable degree despite a hefty expense. Finding methods of improving our service to minority and underrepresented students is a priority for faculty.

**Experience in the Program**

**Year 1: Counseling & Mental Health Services Program (CMHS)**

If you are accepted into the Counseling and Mental Health Services program and decide to join us, you will start your journey during the summer, before Fall classes commence. One of your first points of contact will be with the practicum coordinator, who meets with all incoming students to discuss their professional plans and interests. These meetings enable the coordinator to provide you with practicum opportunities that will expose you to the types of skills and professional activities in which you’re interested. Most students get placed and begin their fieldwork sometime during the first semester, or early in the second semester. This first-year training opportunity enables you to practice basic counseling skills, begin developing a professional counseling identity, and to observe and experience the daily life of a counselor in a school or clinical setting. Of the required hours, 40 must be in direct service (face-to-face) with clients; the remaining hours can include observation, meetings, case planning, and paperwork. Details about the practicum experience, requirements, and forms are all contained in the CMHS Practicum Manual.

In the Fall semester, you will begin attending classes as described in the Planned Program of Study below. Because the program of study is the same for all students, the program assistant enrolls all students in their core courses. You will take four courses and potentially complete 5–8 hours of practicum training per week. Classes are scheduled on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday mostly between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., with the possibility of one course scheduled in the late afternoon or early evening. Students also attend a weekly
practicum seminar that is facilitated by a skilled practitioner and which provides a forum for students to process their practicum experiences. Wednesdays and Fridays are left open for students to complete practicum hours, participate on research teams, or enjoy the wide variety of offerings across campus and around the city of Philadelphia.

In January of the first year of the program, students decide if they want to matriculate into the second year, or just complete the first year of training and graduate with an M.S.Ed degree. They will be aided in this decision-making process by both their classroom and clinical experiences in the fall and early spring semesters. Academically, students are introduced to the core theories and skills that will enable them to practice fundamental counseling skills ethically and skillfully. Many practice these skills in their practicum sites. This experience gives students an initial sense of what life is like as a professional counselor and aids them in the process of beginning to develop a professional counseling identity. As students near the end of the spring semester, they use this information and experience to decide whether the advanced level of training suits their professional goals.

After the Spring semester, the first year concludes with a five-week summer semester comprised of two courses, which each meet for three hours, twice per week. In June, all students are also required to take the Master's Comprehensive Examination (MCE), which prepares students for future licensing examinations and ensures students have met core academic standards.

**Year 1 Planned Program of Study**
(AY 2020-2021)

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<tr>
<th>REQUIREMENTS: 10 C.U.s for M.S.Ed.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fall Semester</strong></td>
<td>4 C.U.s</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDUC 658 – Diagnosis &amp; Psychopathology</td>
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<td>EDUC 686 – Counseling Interventions</td>
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<td>EDUC 687 – Counseling Ethics &amp; Professional Principles</td>
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<td>EDUC 688 – Counseling Practicum I &amp; Seminar I</td>
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<td><strong>Spring Semester</strong></td>
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<td>EDUC 663 – Sociocultural Foundations in Counseling</td>
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<td>EDUC 688 – Counseling Practicum II &amp; Seminar II</td>
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<td>EDUC 613 – Group Counseling</td>
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<td><strong>Summer I Semester</strong></td>
<td>2 C.U.s</td>
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<td>EDUC 667 – Intro Statistics for Education</td>
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<td>EDUC 685 – Career Counseling &amp; Development</td>
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Year 2: Professional Counseling Program (PC)

If you accept an offer of admission to the second year of the program, your search for an internship placement will begin early in the spring of Year 1; this process is guided by your second-year advisor. Much like the practicum meetings before first year, these meetings enable the advisors to recommend sites that align with your long-term professional goals. Internships often require an application and interview process, which students engage in over the course of the spring. Students typically commit to an internship site before early July, just as they begin the second summer semester—which officially kicks off the second year of the program. However, as most sites are 9-month placements, most students do not begin attending internships and seeing clients until August or September. Details about the Internship placement process, requirements, and forms are contained in the PC Program Internship Manual.

The first summer semester concludes the CMHS program, and the second summer semester begins the PC program; there is about a week of break time between the two summer semesters. Beginning in early July, the five-week PC semester includes two elective courses that are structured the same way as classes in the first summer semester. Some students opt to defer this semester and courses until the end of the second year; in this case, graduation is delayed until August, rather than occurring in May of the graduation year.

The program assistant again registers all students for the required classes. In the Fall and Spring of the second year, most classes are held on Mondays and Tuesdays. Wednesday through Friday is largely reserved for completion internship training, typically 20 hours a week. In the Spring, students may have the last of their 3 elective courses scheduled in the late afternoon/early evening on any day from Monday to Thursday.

Year 2 internship students must complete a total of 600 internship hours, with 240 hours in direct service. For school-based interns completing the dual track, 420 of the total 600 hours must be completed in a school setting; the remaining 180 hours can be completed at their school site, or in a separate mental health placement. Students are responsible for tracking their hours, which they submit monthly with a signature from their site supervisor.

At the end of the Spring semester, students complete an Oral Comprehensive Examination as a capstone for the program. Most students also opt to take either the National Counseling Examination (NCE) or the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (NCMHCE) independently.
Year 2 Planned Program of Study
(AY 2020-2021)

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<td><strong>Summer II Semester</strong></td>
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<td>Elective [Please see list of elective courses]</td>
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<td><strong>School Counseling Certification Track Requirement</strong></td>
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<td>EDUC 553 – Foundations in Ed. for Diverse Learners Replaces second elective</td>
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<td><strong>Fall Semester</strong></td>
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<td>EDUC 717 – Professional Internship in Counseling I</td>
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<td>EDUC 725 – Advanced Professional Practice (in Communities, Agencies, and Organizations)</td>
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<td>EDUC 766 – Advanced Professional Counseling Interventions</td>
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<td>EDUC 603 – Wellness and Addictions Counseling</td>
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<td><strong>Spring Semester</strong></td>
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<td>EDUC 718 – Professional Internship in Counseling II</td>
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<td>EDUC 782 – Assessment for Counselors</td>
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<td>EDUC 585 – Advanced Group &amp; Family Counseling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elective [Please see list of elective courses]</td>
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Student Advising

Once students are enrolled and on campus, the faculty advising system is the main mechanism for providing support, feedback, and guidance on students’ academic, interpersonal, and other concerns that affect their growth and performance in the program. Faculty advisors for students are the core faculty in the CMHS and PC programs; they therefore see the students weekly, in multiple settings, and are able to develop relationships that students come to rely upon when struggles inevitably arise. The advisors are all mental health professionals themselves, and we take very seriously our dual roles as graduate educators and as role models of ethical and caring mental health practitioners.

Students in both the first and second year are assigned academic advisors who help support their academic decision-making and career development.
**Year 1 Advising** In the first year, students are assigned faculty advisors who help to integrate them into the program and support their academic and professional development. They meet with these advisors to review academic progress, performance in clinical training settings, and their overall adjustment to graduate school. Faculty maintain open-door policies, allowing for students to also seek out supports as needed. Students in the first year also receive advising and professional support from their practicum seminar leaders, who are experienced school and mental health counselors and professionals. This year-long course supports the practicum training experience.

**Year 2 Advising** In the second year, advising meetings are scheduled as part of the year-long internship seminar course. Advisors support students in their academic development and serve as the point person should a student struggle educationally or personally. Advisors also make themselves available as students in the second year confront difficult life decisions like whether to pursue doctoral training, where to seek licensure, and how to navigate the job search domestically and internationally. These advisory relationships are viewed by faculty as a means of providing a valuable service to students, and, in turn, it is an aspect of their job that faculty greatly value. Through ongoing mentorship and professional support, we develop meaningful relationships with students; and both informally and in our alumni surveys, we are told these relationships are a particular strength of the program. Our data suggest students feel heard and supported by the faculty and that the accessibility of faculty is frequently a meaningful experience for them, especially for those who come from larger undergraduate programs.

Students are given a different advisor during each year of the program, which allows them to establish strong relationships with multiple faculty members, and to benefit from a diversity of opinions and expertise. This also serves as a comfortable way to introduce students to the experience of professional networking. Faculty engage in ongoing discussions with students regarding their career trajectories, facilitate annual roundtable discussions regarding doctoral programs, and bring alumni back to share wisdom about their lives and career paths since graduating from the program. Through advising, Penn GSE establishes itself as a students’ academic home and the foundation of their professional network.
Program Policies & Standards

It is required that all students familiarize themselves with the policies and rules contained in the GSE Student Handbook. These policies are in addition to the program procedures and policies described in this manual.

Academic Policies

Satisfactory Academic Performance

All students in the Graduate School of Education are expected to maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 for all courses applied toward degree requirements. Students who fail to maintain this minimum standard of satisfactory performance will be placed on academic probation for the following semester. Failure to raise the cumulative GPA to a 3.0 at the end of the semester on probation will result in termination from the degree program. In addition to the grade point average requirement, continuation in all degree programs of the Graduate School of Education is dependent upon maintenance of satisfactory performance through all phases of the program as judged by the student’s advisor, and/or program. A student who has been determined to not have satisfactory performance will be withdrawn from the program. If a student wishes to appeal a decision of unsatisfactory performance, the student may appeal and petition the Committee on Degrees for a final determination.

Incompletes

Students are expected to complete all coursework during the semester in which a course is taken. However, faculty members may give a grade of Incomplete to a student who is unable to finish course assignments by the end of the term. No GSE instructor is required to give grades of Incomplete. It is up to each faculty member to decide if and when Incompletes will be given. When an Incomplete is assigned, both the faculty member and the student must comply with school regulations governing the timely completion of coursework.

For CMHS students, all incomplete coursework must be turned in by the deadline for registration to take the master’s comprehensive. If a student subsequently receives a grade of Incomplete in a course taken in the semester before they take the master’s comprehensive examination, all outstanding work for the course must be submitted to the instructor within the first week of the semester in which the exam is to be taken. Any grade of Incomplete appearing on the transcript at the time either the master’s comprehensive is taken will become a Permanent Incomplete and may not be removed from the record. Exceptions to this policy may be made by petition to the Assistant Dean.
**One-Year Time Limit**  Students have one year from the end of the term in which a grade of Incomplete is assigned to finish all coursework unless:

- the faculty member has informed the student in writing of a shorter time frame within which the outstanding work must be submitted; or

- the student has been granted an extension of the one-year time limit by the Assistant Dean, upon recommendation of the faculty member.

**Completing Incomplete Coursework**  Students must give the faculty member at least three weeks to read late assignments and submit a grade. More time may be required by individual faculty members, particularly at the end of the semester. It is the student’s responsibility to find out how much time the faculty member requires to review coursework and submit a grade. The student may not expect a faculty member to review their work during the summer unless a prior agreement has been reached between the student and the faculty member. Once the student submits all outstanding coursework to the faculty member for review, the faculty member evaluates the student’s academic performance and sends a signed, dated change of grade form to the Student Records Office for processing. The Registrar’s Office must receive the change of grade form by the end of the academic term that is one year from the term in which the course is taken. Furthermore, the Student Records Office needs one week to record and send the change of grade information to the Registrar’s Office.

If the student follows the timeline for submitting work, but the faculty member is unable to meet the Registrar’s deadline for having a grade recorded, the student will not be penalized with a Permanent Incomplete, and an extension will be granted. If a student fails to follow the timeline for having coursework reviewed by the deadlines, the faculty member and the school have no obligation to submit a grade by the Registrar’s deadline, or to grant a further extension. Refer to the policy on Incompletes listed above.

**Permanent Incompletes**  Any Incompletes (I) that are on a student’s transcript for one year or more become frozen by the Registrar’s Office as Permanent Incompletes (I*). The Registrar automatically changes I to I* after the end of the semester that is one year from the term in which the course is taken. For example, a grade of I given in fall semester becomes I* after the end of next fall term. There will be no refund of tuition for courses that are recorded as I*. Any required course that shows a grade of I* must be retaken at the regular tuition rate.

**Exceptions**  Exceptions to the school’s time limit on Incompletes are granted to students only with written recommendation of the faculty member and approval by the Assistant Dean for Academic and Student Affairs. Extensions are normally approved only when the student is experiencing a personal or family medical emergency or an ongoing debilitating condition, when the student is called for military duty, or when the faculty member does not submit the change of grade in a timely way. While other circumstances will be considered on a case-by-
case basis, students should be aware that exceptions are not normally granted when the student reports that family or job responsibilities prevent them from meeting academic obligations. When extensions are granted, a new time limit is established by the Assistant Dean for Academic and Student Affairs in consultation with the faculty member.

**GSE Student Academic Grievance Policy**

A GSE student who wishes to register a grievance regarding the evaluation of their academic work or a matter related to the program or a course should discuss the matter with the faculty member and then, if not satisfied, the Program Director and then, if not satisfied, with the Division Chair. If the grievance is not addressed, the student should then discuss this issue with the GSE Assistant Dean for Student Services, who may choose to include the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

**Professional Conduct**

The standard of students’ behavior on campus and at their professional training sites is extremely important. While clinical skills develop throughout a student’s involvement in the program, all students are expected to be professional in their conduct in courses and at their training sites. The program may be notified of departures from standards of professional conduct in the following ways:

- An incident or pattern of behavior may lead site supervisors to submit a negative evaluation in the interpersonal domain.
- Student behavior outside of the program may be relevant to their capacity to obtain licensure. Behaviors which lead to conviction for a felony or a misdemeanor may prevent the student from being permitted to sit for the licensing examination.
- Ethical violations may also be interpreted by the State Board as evidence of poor moral character. The State Board in Pennsylvania may refuse to issue a license if the candidate is “unable to practice ...with reasonable skill and safety by reason of illness, drunkenness, excessive use of drugs, narcotics, chemicals, or any other type of material, or as a result of any mental or physical condition.” Students should be familiar with the material in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Title 49, Chapter 49, Professional and Vocational Standards. A University-level Student Code of Conduct appears in the Graduate Student Handbook.

**Unsatisfactory Performance**

Students should be aware that satisfactory performance at the professional training site is a necessary component of the practicum and internship courses and the counseling program in general. If a student’s clinical site performance or their academic work in the practice-based courses is deemed by the faculty to be unsatisfactory, the faculty has the right to withdraw the
student from the program. Being able to demonstrate the ability to apply counseling theory to clinical practice settings in accordance with nationally recognized professional counseling standards is foundational. Students who are judged unable to meet these standards, for whatever reason, may be withdrawn from the program. In summary, faculty will evaluate each student’s capacity to continue his or her training as a professional mental health counselor based on both the academic work completed in the required practicum/internship course, as well as his or her performance at the clinical or school site. Students who are deemed unable to satisfactorily complete their practicum/internship course and clinical or school site duties despite remediation efforts will not be able to complete the program.

Criteria for Competence Assessment

Behavioral Characteristics

- Fully use their intellectual ability, exercise good judgment and promptly and accurately complete all responsibilities attendant to implementing an appropriate plan of care for students/clients across the life span.
- Develop a compassionate, effective, professional and therapeutic relationship with students/clients.
- Work constructively in stressful and changing environments with the ability to modify behavior in response to evolving events.
- Demonstrate ethical behavior, including adherence to the University Code of Academic Integrity.
- Demonstrate emotional and interpersonal skills sufficient to:
  - adapt to changing environments.
  - function efficiently and effectively in conditions of uncertainty inherent in the clinical problems exhibited by students/clients.
  - remain calm in an emergency situation.
  - function effectively and efficiently in times of physical and mental stress for short and/or for extended periods.
  - be aware of one’s emotional responses and biases.

Communication Characteristics

- Interrelate with colleagues, faculty, staff, students/clients and other professionals with honesty, sensitivity, integrity, respect and without bias.
- Communicate effectively with students/clients and families of diverse religious, cultural and/or social backgrounds.
- Express own ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrate a willingness and ability to give and receive feedback.
- Communicate effectively in oral and written forms in person and/or when using telephonic devices.
- Perceive and interpret non-verbal communication and verbal cues.
• Recognize and appropriately respond to emotions.
• Demonstrate the following communication abilities: speech, hearing, reading, writing, and electronic modality literacy.
• Demonstrate skills/ability sufficient to:
  o Elicit and record relevant information about health history, current health status or responses to treatment from students/clients, family members, or others.
  o Convey information to students/clients, members of the school/clinical team and others as necessary to teach, direct, and counsel individuals and groups.
  o Process and communicate information of the student/client's status with accuracy in a timely manner to members of the school/clinical team.

Cognitive Characteristics
• Demonstrate good judgment in student/client assessment, and the abilities to utilize prior knowledge and incorporate new information in the decision-making process.
• Possess the ability to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and the relationships of structures as they pertain to practice decisions.
• Demonstrate the ability to integrate and assimilate information from multiple sources and multiple educational experiences in a timely fashion, and be able to apply that information to problem solving and decision-making.

Mental Health & Wellness Concerns

As a graduate program dedicated to training mental health counseling professionals, it is of utmost importance to the faculty to demonstrate ethical and responsible behavior as mental health professionals. This commitment extends to the mental health and wellness care of our students. To ensure they are well and fit to provide essential services to clients in schools and communities, we work to serve as key resources for our students’ wellness needs and to connect them with broader university and community-based resources as needed. When students present with mental health and wellness concerns, we strive to model responsive and accommodating leadership and pedagogy. Students are encouraged to discuss concerns openly with GSE's Office of Student Services to determine what type of adjustments can be made to support their success in the program. When more significant interventions are called for, students are referred to the University’s Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). Through CAPS, students may be able to gain further clarity, establish additional supportive relationships, or be connected to important community resources that can assist them. In addition, our program maintains a continuously updated database of clinicians of all types in Philadelphia and surrounding areas who are available to work therapeutically with our students.
We also conceptualize supports more comprehensively than just traditional academic accommodations and mental health interventions. The program faculty realizes that students may confront a variety of developmental and social challenges while attending the program. As such, we encourage students to connect with the on-campus cultural houses like the Greenfield Intercultural Center, PAACH, Makuu: The Black Cultural Center, the LGBT Center, Penn Women’s Center, and La Casa Latina. These campus cultural houses serve as safe spaces and centers of comfort, fellowship, and advocacy for students. Some even choose to do their practicum training in these centers to focus on providing counseling supports for students with a wide variety of marginalized and intersectional identities.

Within the program there are recently emerging faculty- and student-led affinity groups as well. The student-led South Asian Counselors Group is meant to include students past, present, and future in a safe space to discuss experiences related to counseling and managing graduate school. Another is the faculty led-queer affinity group which provides social gathering opportunities for queer students in the counseling program. There is also the Penn Chinese Psychology Alumni Association, started by a recent graduate of the counseling program with the goal of supporting students applying for, attending, and graduating from the program in their professional journey, particularly if they are returning to China. An additional group that is GSE-wide, but facilitated by counseling faculty, is the Black Affinity Group, whose goal is to provide safe space for fellowship and healing for Black students who remain significantly underrepresented in programs throughout GSE. Through the Black Affinity Group, there is connection among Black students within and beyond the professional counseling program, collaboration with the GSE wide LatinX Affinity Group, in addition to current efforts to revive a GSE based organization called WSDM, which stands for We Support Diversity of Mind. WSDM is a student-led organization that existed a few years ago and hosted networking and social events for students of all identities who wanted to affirm, advocate for, and support each other and also to connect with faculty and staff as well. This served as a sort of umbrella organization under which all students who believed in the importance of centering and celebrating the diversity in our community could come together. These opportunities are a reflection of our ongoing work to create a more supportive lifestyle and learning environment for the students who come to train with us.

*Student Substance Abuse Policy*

The Graduate School of Education recognizes the importance of educating its students about the problems of substance abuse because this constitutes a significant health risk, and in many cases, a criminal matter. Aside from its impact upon the personal and psychological integrity of the abusers, substance abuse may significantly impact the ability of mental health providers to administer safe, competent student/client care. Recognizing that substance abuse is both a disease and a professional hazard, the Graduate School of Education has incorporated substance
abuse topical content areas into its curriculum. The Penn GSE counseling programs have likewise established this substance abuse policy.

This policy is designed to augment the student’s ability to maintain personal and professional integrity and facilitate the student’s success both clinically and didactically. It promotes a healthy learning environment for the student. In the clinical setting, this policy enhances student/client safety. It also fosters the development of Professional Counselors who are well educated about the prevalence and adverse outcomes of substance abuse. This policy applies to all students who have matriculated in the Graduate School of Education.

Any unlawful possession, use, manufacture, distribution, diversion, or improper use of any substances by any student in the Penn GSE counseling programs may constitute removal from clinical and/or cause for termination from the program. In addition, no student may consume or be under the influence of, or be in the possession of alcohol at any time the student is in the classroom and/or performing clinical duties. Improper use of alcohol may also constitute removal from clinical and/or cause for termination from the program. Students must also comply with all local, state, or federal laws and regulations controlling the possession, manufacture, use, or distribution of controlled or illegal substances and alcohol. Students must also adhere to all University of Pennsylvania Alcohol and Drug Policy. The policy can be found at: http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/alcohol/policy2.php

In addition, there are circumstances in which students may need to take over the counter or prescribed medications that have the potential to impair their performance or personal behavior. As such, all students are responsible for being aware of the effect these medications may have on performance and must notify the Program Director or Course Director within 72 hours prior to clinical attendance or drug testing about the use of any medication that could impair performance or has the potential to influence a drug screen. Failure or refusal to comply with the substance abuse policy may be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program. Any attempt to delay, hinder, or tamper with any testing or to alter the results of testing will be considered a refusal to comply with this policy. In addition, failure or refusal to comply with any aspect of the substance abuse policy may be reported to the University’s Office of Student Conduct for possible disciplinary action in accordance with the University’s Student Conduct Policy.

**Voluntary Self-Disclosure** Students who voluntarily self-disclose a substance abuse or mental health problem to a faculty member, academic advisor, Office of Student Services staff member or the Associate Dean for Academic Programs, prior to a positive drug/alcohol test result, and who are willing to enter in and complete an appropriate program of treatment may be granted a medical leave of absence while she/he undergoes treatment. In consultation with her/his health care provider and providers from the University (Counseling and Psychological Services and/or the Student Health Service), a treatment program will be identified and the student will be
assisted in entering it. The student must sign appropriate University forms providing designated University providers (Counseling and Psychological Services and Student Health Services) to communicate with the student’s private providers about her/ his recovery status and with the Graduate School of Education.

**Re-entry into the Academic and Clinical Environment** Return from medical leave of absence will be considered by the Assistant Dean for Academic & Student Affairs, the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and approval of the Academic Standards and Progressions Committee following successful treatment and sustained progress in addition to other conditions that may be stipulated in the leave of absence letter. All relevant University and School required documents must be completed, including a plan for successful return to course and clinical work that is approved by the student’s health care provider, relevant University experts (such as Counseling and Psychological Services and Student Health Services) and the Counseling faculty. Factors that have been identified as helpful for re-entry into practice include 12-step program participation, random drug screening, and sponsorship in a support group, or other mental health treatment. The student must also provide medical clearance from the appropriate individual coordinating therapeutic intervention and evidence of current adherence to treatment.

Re-entry to the Penn GSE counseling programs will be determined in consultation with the Counseling and Psychological Services and Student Health Services offices. Depending upon the length of absence from the program, the student may be required to restart the clinical and didactic components of their plan of study. Alternatively, the student may only be required to repeat specific semesters of clinical and didactic study, based on the decision of the Academic Standards and Progressions Committee in consultation with the relevant Program Director or the Division Chair. Before re-entry into the program, conditions will be established between the faculty of the counseling programs and the recovering student. The conditions will be appropriately individualized to the particular situation and needs of the student. A student recovering from substance abuse will be monitored closely, particularly in clinical practice, and frequent monitoring to ensure the student remains substance free will be required.

Re-entry can be difficult for students, especially those who have just started their educational program and have limited time invested in the program. Re-entry after relapse into substance abuse is definitely not advised for any student. Re-entry into the program’s curriculum after a period of absence, no matter what the reason, can be a stressful time of readjustment. A student who has been in rehabilitation for substance abuse requires the same period of adjustment as a person who has been away from clinical and didactic arena for any other reason. A student in recovery who is reentering the program will be encouraged not to resume their course of study too hastily, but instead allow themselves time to develop appropriate support systems to facilitate the re-entry. A student in recovery who is permitted to re-enter the counseling programs must comply with the conditions of return delineated as part of the program re-entry.
Evaluation Processes

The faculty of the Professional Counseling program is deeply committed to the continued improvement of the curriculum and training we provide. To that end, we have increased and sharpened our approach to evaluating our efficacy and acquiring input from our various stakeholders. This feedback, in addition to ongoing discussion, reflection, and collaboration, enables us to continually improve and to remain responsive to the students and communities we serve.

Faculty & Supervisor Evaluations of Students

Throughout their time in the program, students’ clinical and academic growth and competence are measured in a variety of ways. During both first and second years, instructors complete performance evaluations each semester, which are then discussed with each student by their advisors. These evaluations are not only a reflection of the students’ performance on written assignments and presentations, but also an indication of how actively involved students have been in discussion, in-class activities, and in the overall classroom dynamic. The student performance evaluation form is included in the Resources section below.

Students receive both formative and summative evaluations from practicum supervisors, and they review these with their first-year advisors at the end of the spring semester to assess progress. While these meetings are designated for formal review of supervisor and instructor feedback, if there are areas of concern, students may receive feedback from advisors at any time, so that support and remediation can be arranged if necessary. During the first year, practicum supervisor and instructor evaluations of students’ performance informs decisions for admission into the second year of the program.

During the internship year, students also receive formative and summative evaluations of their performance; the assessment reflects higher expectations, as these students are more advanced in their studies and training. Supervisors review these evaluations with students at the end of each semester. They reflect the supervisors’ assessment of the students’ clinical acumen and skills, their ability to engage in effective counseling relationships with clients, and their overall ability to function as a counselor in training in that particular clinical setting. These evaluations also account for 50% of a students’ grade in the Internship Seminar and help instructors to gauge student progress. These evaluations have helped us to determine levels of proficiency with regard to students’ academic and clinical skills, and they are clearly and deliberately aligned with standards of the Masters in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council (MPCAC) as well as Pennsylvania State standards for Licensed Professional Counselors and School Counselor Certification.
Another means by which we measure student skill and progress is through the first year Master’s Comprehensive Examination (MCE) and second year Oral Comprehensive/Grand Rounds presentations. Students complete comprehensive examinations in the first year in the form of a multiple-choice examination that requires them to answer a variety of questions from each of their first-year foundational courses. Proficiency on this examination is one of the requirements for admission into the second year, and it is also a means of determining that students have acquired a baseline level of fundamental theoretical knowledge that will enable them to be successful in advanced training. In the second year, students are required to present a clinical case to a panel of students and faculty in three Grand Rounds presentations, the last of which is considered a demonstration of proficiency to earn the M.Phil.Ed. Students must present to faculty the details of a client with whom they worked (maintaining confidentiality). They need to demonstrate the ability to conceptualize the case through a defined theoretical lens or lenses, to develop a treatment plan in accordance with that theory, and to assess progress and determine next steps in the client's treatment.

**Student Evaluations of the Program**

We solicit the feedback of our students through class/faculty evaluations at the end of each semester, which informs changes and adjustments to the program. Each student is invited to offer candid feedback on both the deficits and strengths of each course and instructor. Subsequently, every instructor is able, and expected, to review those evaluations, and to respond appropriately. Furthermore, as part of ongoing professional consultation and quality management, our Division Chair reviews all of these evaluations and consults with faculty about necessary changes in curriculum content or instructional practices. In addition to these course evaluations, which are implemented school-wide, we have initiated a targeted survey process within our program to get annual feedback from students on their levels of satisfaction with various aspects of the program.

**Resources**

- [State-by-state school certification information](#)
- [State-by-state mental health licensure information](#)
- Student Performance Evaluation [next page]
Name of Student: ____________________________________ DATE: _____________________________

Evaluator/Reason for Evaluation: _______________________________________________________

Place a check in the box which most closely matches the student’s performance. Comments should include observations that are both positive and constructively critical.

N/A Not Applicable
1 unsatisfactory—failure to meet minimal expectations on a consistent basis
2 further development needed—minimal expectations met some of the time; however, not on a consistent basis
3 satisfactory—performance meets general expectations; but does not exceed them
4 above average—often exceeds requirements and completes tasks in an outstanding way
5 exceptional—consistently and substantially exceeds expectations on a regular basis

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS</th>
<th>N/A</th>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment Completion</td>
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<td>Student completes assignments in a timely manner; performs high quality work that is accurate and thorough.</td>
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<td>Writing Skills</td>
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<td>Ability to communicate effectively in writing, demonstrating knowledge of basic grammar and writing skills and APA guidelines when required.</td>
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<td>Oral Communication Skills</td>
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<td>Ability to communicate effectively verbally; easily understood.</td>
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<td>Response to Feedback</td>
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<td>Responds maturely, positively, and promptly to suggestions and feedback; is open-minded.</td>
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<td>Reflection and Integration of Course Material and Prior Learning</td>
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<td>Frequently shows evidence of thinking deeply or reflecting in order to link previous learning experiences (from class and/or placement) with current course material.</td>
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<td><strong>Attitude/Class Participation/Professionality</strong></td>
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<td>Student is enthusiastic, interested, diligent, courteous, and willing to engage in class; attends each class and is punctual; and is not distracted by use of technology.</td>
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<th><strong>Interpersonal Interaction Skills</strong></th>
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<td>Student expresses thoughts clearly and professionally when interacting with faculty, staff, and/or peers.</td>
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<td><strong>Comments:</strong></td>
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**GENERAL COMMENTS:**
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**ACADEMIC STANDING:**
Student maintains a 3.0 or better in all courses and has no incompletes: YES _____ NO _____.
If no, please comment:
________________________________________________________________________

**REMEDIATION PLAN:** (if warranted and based on any “2’s” identified; also include and areas of need identified in site evaluations).
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Signature ___________________________  Date ___________________________