



## **COUNSELING PROGRAM MANUAL**

### *Degrees:*

**Master of Science in Counseling: Clinical Mental Health  
Master of Science in Counseling: School  
Certificate: Special Issues in Counseling  
CAGS IDIS: Counseling/Psychology**

*Twentieth Edition*

*Published: Fall 2023*

**FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE COUNSELING PROGRAM**

(978) 665-3603

**Chairperson, Graduate Counseling Program**

*Daneen P. Deptula, Ph.D.*

**Chairperson, Department of Behavioral Sciences**

*Richard Wiebe, Ph.D.*

**Coordinator, Field Placement Office**

*Megan Krell, Ph.D., NCC, ACS*

**Graduate Counseling Committee**

*Henry Culver, Ed.D.*

*Daneen P. Deptula, Ph.D.*

*Megan Krell, Ph.D., NCC, ACS*

*Kori Ryan, Psy.D.*

*Mark Williams, Ph.D.*

Behavioral Sciences Department Administrative Assistant

McKay 206

(978) 665-3241

**Editions**

1987, 1989, 1992, 1993, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2007,  
2008, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023

## Counseling Handbook and Policy Acknowledgment Form

I acknowledge that I have carefully read the counseling program handbook and its policies and regulations. I am responsible for understanding and adhering to the Counseling policies stipulated by this handbook, the Fitchburg State Graduate School policies, and the licensure requirements of the respective boards. I also acknowledge that licensure regulations and school policies can change at any time. Although my advisor and the program will do their best to notify the students of any changes, it is my responsibility to stay informed and to adhere to any policies set down by Fitchburg State, the licensure board, and/or the Department of Education.

In particular (and this is not a comprehensive list of the requirements of the program), I agree that it is my responsibility to:

- 1) Monitor my Fitchburg State email account as this is the official mechanism of communication at the University. I am responsible for any information sent to this account.
- 2) Maintain a 3.25 GPA overall as well as earn a 3.0 minimum grade in each course
- 3) Adhere to the most current form of the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics and for school counselors, the American School Counselor Association Ethical Standards.
- 4) Petition for a Stage 2 review the semester before going on internship/practicum
- 5) Maintain the originals of my practicum and internship forms that are necessary to apply for licensure (for LMHC licensure only).

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signed name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

**This form must be signed by you and submitted to your advisor before you are presented for your Stage I review. Failure to do so will result in postponement and/or denial of your Stage I review.**

2023

# Table of Contents

<b>I.</b>	<b>Greetings to students</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Mission Statement and Program Objectives</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Professional Counseling Organizations</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Matriculation Requirements and Status</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Expectations of Students</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Academic Appeal Policy</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Written Endorsement Policy</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Policy for Student Retention, Remediation, and Program Dismissal</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Other SGOCE Policies</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>Clinical Mental Health Counseling (M.S. Only)</b>	<b>24</b>
	Plans of study, cross-maps with LMHC requirements	
<b>III.</b>	<b>School Counseling (M.S and CAGS)</b>	<b>30</b>
	Plans of study, cross-maps with licensure requirements	
<b>IV.</b>	<b>CAGS: IDIS in Counseling/Psychology</b>	<b>34</b>
	Directions for developing plan of study	
<b>V.</b>	<b>Special Issues in Counseling (Certificate)</b>	<b>35</b>
	Course requirements	

# Greetings to current and prospective students:

Welcome to the Graduate Counseling Program at Fitchburg State University!

The primary goal of the Fitchburg State University Graduate Counseling Program is to develop license-eligible clinical mental health and school counselors who can work with a diverse group of clients and students. The program also provides training and education to those who wish to expand their understanding of the field of mental health. Students in the program frequently bring experience in working in a helping profession; others enter directly from university or following a career or life experience not directly related to counseling. Regardless of background, it has been our experience that students in the program demand and participate in dynamic classroom exchanges. Your instructors are accustomed to maximizing the benefits derived from this challenging atmosphere; we consider it one of the significant strengths of the education program we offer.

Some of the faculty members teaching your classes will be Fitchburg State University academicians; others are practitioners either involved in clinical practice or employed as school counselors. As a student, you will find that this mix of background among your instructors provides a solid theoretical framework balanced with perspectives reflecting the practical issues confronted regularly by active clinicians.

The program is designed both for students who wish to complete the program part-time, as well as students who wish to commit to a full course load to complete the program as quickly as possible. With a summer start, it can be completed in as little as 2 years including the internship/practicum. However, students can take up to six years to complete the program. All internship/practicum placements start in the Fall semester. Classes are typically offered during late afternoons, evenings, and weekends. A limited number of hybrid and online courses are also available.

An important exception to this general accommodation to the part-time schedule is the nine-month Internship/Practicum. While some placements may permit flexible scheduling, it is important to note that many placements require daytime commitments or other specific restrictions on scheduling. Since the Internship/Practicum forms a central part of your training, it is essential that you plan for the flexibility that will permit you to participate in an experience that is your best academic choice.

Non-degree students may apply up to twelve credits of counseling course work toward a Master's degree in Counseling. It is important to decide early whether to seek a Master's degree in order to avoid losing degree credits for courses taken as a non-degree student.

We hope you find your education in the counseling program at Fitchburg State University stimulating and productive, where the process of learning is as rewarding as the acquisition of your master's degree and eventual licensure. Good luck on your journey!

Daneen P. Deptula, Ph.D.  
Chairperson, Graduate Counseling Program

# **1. Mission Statement and Program Objectives**

## **Mission**

The mission of the Fitchburg State University Graduate Master's Counseling Program is to meet the needs of an educated citizenry in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in the areas of: Licensed Mental Health Counselor (Board of Allied Mental Health and Human Service Professionals) and School Counselor (PreK-8) (5-12) Provisional Certification with Advanced Standing and Standard Certification (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Commonwealth of MA).

## **Degrees offered by the Program**

The Counseling program offers Master's degrees in Counseling, with concentrations in either school counseling or clinical mental health counseling. The program also offers a CAGS for those that have a Master's degree. The CAGS is only offered to students who wish to apply for school counseling licensure. The CAGS is not available for mental health counseling. The program also offers a certificate program in special issues in counseling, which is a non-licensure option for those seeking to expand their knowledge in the field.

## **Objectives**

The goal of the Fitchburg State University Graduate Counseling Program is to develop counselors who can assist clients in the enhancement of their well-being. It is based on a developmental socialization model of intervention, which recognizes that at each developmental stage throughout the lifespan, individuals face tasks that can lead to problems needing professional assistance. Counselor education is based on the belief that effective counselors are both personally and professionally integrated. For this reason, a balance between didactic and experiential learning is maintained. While the importance of research in both academic and clinical settings is recognized, the program is clearly seen as an educator program for counselor practitioners. Throughout the program students increase their sensitivity to others, their effectiveness as facilitators, and they develop skills traditionally associated with counseling.

The learning objectives of the Master's and CAGs program are:

1. Students will demonstrate effective counseling skills
2. Students will engage in professional behavior
3. Students will display caring for others
4. Students will demonstrate effective written and oral communication skills

The learning objects of the Certificate program are:

1. exhibit empathy and understanding the process of helping others
2. critically analyze our understanding of mental health, in terms of differentiation of diagnoses as well as connection to the broader field of integrated wellness (e.g., physical, educational)
3. articulate an application of their coursework to their professional development goals
4. demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills.

## 2. Professional Counseling Organizations

As a beginning professional in the field, there are several professional counseling organizations that students should be aware of and consider joining.

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

ACA is the largest professional association dedicated solely to counseling. This organization is appropriate for both students specializing in clinical mental health and school counseling. Benefits to joining ACA include access to continuing education opportunities, conferences, networking events, and student professional liability insurance. Student membership also provides access to ACA journals.

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

AMHCA's organizational focus is on practicing mental health counselors and has developed their own code of ethics, and clinical standards of practice. Student membership includes free liability coverage, access to AMHCA webinars, communities, and blogs, and other student resources.

- C. American School Counselor Association  
<https://www.schoolcounselor.org/>

ASCA, the school counseling division of ACA, represents school counselors across all ranges of education, from elementary settings to college. ASCA membership provides access to example lesson plans, sample forms, an online professional networking site, and access to liability insurance.

- D. Massachusetts School Counselors Association  
<http://masca.org/>

MASCA is an association specifically for school counselors in Massachusetts. Students have the opportunity to attend and present at the conferences, which tend to be geographically convenient. MASCA also provides timely information about developments in the field and networking opportunities.

- E. Massachusetts Mental Health Counselors Association, Inc.  
<http://www.mamhca.org/>

MaMHCA is a Massachusetts organization devoted to issues related to the practice of mental health counseling. They provide opportunities for continuing education, supervisor training,



liability coverage, and student scholarships. In particular, they provide workshops and services specific to obtaining Massachusetts State LMHC licensure.

### **3. Matriculation Requirements and Status**

#### **A. Admissions Requirements**

Applicants for the Master's degree and the certificate program are required to submit:

1. Official transcript of a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution
2. Three letters of recommendation. These letters should be requested from individuals under whom an applicant has studied and/or whose immediate supervision he/she has worked in a professional capacity.
3. Professional resume
4. Official transcripts of graduate level course work from a regionally accredited institution (if applicable)
5. Graduate application and fee set by the admissions office
6. A personal statement (maximum 300 words) describing goals and reasons for applying to the program
7. Applicants to the school counseling program must submit passing scores on the Communication and Literacy portion of the Massachusetts Test for Educator Licensure
8. Successful completion of both undergraduate prerequisites with a minimum of a B- (or a 2.5): Developmental Psychology and Statistics (Statistics, Psychological Statistics, or Applied Statistics for Counselors)

Applicants for the CAGS in Interdisciplinary Studies – Counseling/Psychology degree are required to submit:

1. Official transcript of a master's degree from a regionally accredited institution
2. Three letters of recommendation. These letters should be requested from individuals under whom an applicant has studied and/or whose immediate supervision he/she has worked in a professional capacity.
3. Professional resume
4. Graduate application and fee set by the admissions office
5. Successful completion of both undergraduate prerequisites with a minimum of a B- (or a 2.5): Developmental Psychology and Statistics (Statistics, Psychological Statistics, or Applied Statistics for Counselors)

#### **B. Matriculation Status**

Students taking classes in the Master's or CAGs program fall into one of three categories, non-matriculated, pre-candidacy (or pre-matriculation), and candidacy status (matriculated students). The certificate program does not include a candidacy stage.

Non-matriculated students: Students may take up to 12 credits in the program without being admitted to the program. Please be aware that taking courses as a non-matriculated student may have implications for financial aid. Non-matriculated students are not allowed to take courses with a field experience component. Non-matriculated courses in excess of this 12 credit limit will NOT be allowed to apply to the Counseling degree.

Pre-candidacy (pre-matriculation): Successful completion of the admissions requirements results in pre-candidacy acceptance to Stage I of the Counseling program. Students are required to take the Stage I courses: COUN 7010 and COUN 7030. However, they may also take other coursework as well. See the plan of study for the suggested sequence of classes.

Candidacy (matriculation): After completion of the Stage I courses, COUN 7010 and COUN 7030, the student's progress is reviewed for candidacy in the program. This process is initiated by the advisor in the semester following completion of the Stage 1 courses.

As part of this process, students submit a Candidacy Paper which is written in COUN 7010 Counseling Theories. Disposition assessments which reflect interpersonal skills and respect for diversity are completed by the faculty in both COUN 7010 and 7030 (see Appendix). Student academic achievements are also reviewed by the committee. In particular, the committee considers the relevance of the client's theoretical orientation and their motivation to join the field to their career goals, academic performance, ability to relate to others and form successful counseling relationships, and respect for diversity and cultural differences.

Candidacy is awarded based on:

1. Completion of the Stage 1 required courses (COUN 7010: Counseling Theories and COUN 7030: Introduction to Professional Counseling). If a CAGS student does not need to take one or both of these courses, appropriate course substitutions will be made by the advisor.
2. 3.25 minimum overall cumulative average in all courses taken
3. Minimum 3.0 final grades in each Stage I course.
4. The demonstration of appropriate ethical behavior (as based, for instance, on the Candidacy Statement and Candidate Dispositions Assessments from courses).
5. The demonstration of competent interpersonal behaviors (e.g., with peers, faculty, supervisors, clients) as noted for instance, in the Candidacy Statement, Candidate Disposition Assessments from courses Field Experience Evaluations.
6. The demonstration effective writing and oral communications skills as evidenced, for instance, in Candidacy Statement and Field Experience Evaluations.

Failure to meet these Stage I requirements, either academic or interpersonal, is grounds for removal from the program.

#### C. Transfer Courses

Students are eligible to petition for acceptance of up to 12 semester hours of transfer credits (6 sh. from outside institution and 12 sh. from within this institute) toward the degree. Courses

taken outside the Counseling Program should be submitted for pre-approval prior to one taking the course. Courses taken before enrollment in the Program must be submitted for approval. COUN 7010 and COUN 7030 are not eligible for transfer credit.

The Graduate Counseling Committee determines approval of acceptance of transfer credit. It is the responsibility of the petitioner to demonstrate the justification for awarding transfer credits. Appropriate evidence includes, but is not limited to, catalog descriptions, syllabi, and copies of the tables of contents of texts used in the course. Official transcripts must be submitted following completion of the course. A grade of B (3.0) or higher is required for transfer. Courses previously counted toward a degree from Fitchburg State University or another accredited institute do not qualify for transfer. Transfer credits must be taken within six years of the date of graduation, for they automatically become invalid for the degree six years after the date of their completion. *No requests for transfer credits will be accepted during the Spring Semester prior to a student's anticipated May graduation.*

#### **4. Expectations of Students**

##### **A. Ethical Behavior**

Students, in all counseling programs, are expected to adhere at all times to the ACA's Code of Ethics as well as the American School Counselor Association Ethical Standards (for school counseling students). It is the student's responsibility at the start of the coursework to review and engage in professional ethical behavior as outlined by these codes. If students are a member of other professional organizations, they are expected to abide by their code of ethics as well.

The 2014 ACA Code of Ethics can be found here. <http://www.counseling.org/resources/aca-code-of-ethics.pdf>. The code of ethics for ASCA can be found here: <http://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/Ethics/EthicalStandards2016.pdf>

Students are expected to follow the most current code of ethics.

##### **B. Academic Integrity Policy**

Every member of the Fitchburg State University community is expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. A student shall not submit work that is falsified or is not the result of the student's own effort. A student who is in doubt regarding standards of academic integrity in a course or assignment should consult the faculty member responsible for that course or assignment before submitting the work. A student's lack of understanding of the academic integrity policy is not a valid defense to a charge of academic dishonesty.

A violation of academic integrity is any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for the student or any other member or members of the academic community. A violation of academic integrity can include, but is not limited to:

- **Plagiarism.** Plagiarism is defined as use of intellectual material produced by another person without acknowledging its source. Plagiarism includes using the views, opinions, or insights of another without acknowledgment as well as misuse of your own scholarly work (e.g., submitting a paper, or a portion of a paper that you previously submitted in another course). Plagiarism also applies to definitions provided without quotations and/or citations. Plagiarism occurs when portions of sentences or phrases are not appropriately acknowledged. It also applies to the non-referenced use of textbook material.
- **Cheating.** Cheating is defined as fraud, deceit, or dishonesty in an academic assignment.
- **Providing False Information.** Providing false information includes fabricating or altering information or data and presenting it as legitimate as well as providing false or misleading information to an instructor or any other university staff member.
- **Collaborating on Assignments.** Collaboration may be allowed as long as an instructor gives permission; otherwise, it may be considered a violation of academic integrity. If an instructor has not specified, collaboration should be assumed to be prohibited.
- **Copyright Violation.** Fitchburg State recognizes and respects intellectual property rights and requires all members of the university community to use copyrighted materials in a lawful manner.
- **Theft or Damage of Property.** Theft or damage of property includes, but is not limited to, obtaining a copy of an assignment or exam prior to its approved release by the faculty member.
- **Alteration of University Documents.** Examples of alteration of university documents include forging the signature of an instructor or university official on a document and submitting an altered transcript of grades.

Violations of academic integrity may result in various penalties, including, but not limited to, loss of credit for an assignment, course failure, or expulsion from the university. In the counseling program, plagiarism is noted on the Disposition Assessment and will be reviewed by the Graduate Counseling Committee. Faculty are also asked to file a report with the Student Conduct office. For more information, see Fitchburg State's academic integrity policy at:

<http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/campus-life/student-services/office-of-student-conduct-mediation-education/academic-integrity/>

### C. Attendance

Attendance is often crucial in counseling classes, as students are required to interact with each other or engage in role-plays which are set-up in a face-to-face format. In addition, as many courses meet only once per week or less, missing classes can result in a significant portion of the course being missed. As a result, the need for class attendance is strongly stressed in the program.

Each instructor has the prerogative to place a value upon class attendance subject only to the limitation that the members of each class be informed of that value early in the semester. The instructor's class attendance standard should be stated in the course syllabus. In some cases, course failure can result from a lack of attendance, regardless of reason.

#### D. Email

Email is the official communication mechanism of Fitchburg State University and it is university policy for email to be sent to each student's Fitchburg State University account. This is important for monitoring purposes, as the university can verify that an official notification was sent and also received by the student account. Each student has the responsibility to monitor their Fitchburg State University account for any official communications from the University. Any information about advising meetings or other announcements will be made via email. Students who are concerned that they are not receiving emails should notify their advisor.

#### E. Record-keeping

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all pre-practicum, practicum, and internship paperwork is delivered to the appropriate licensure board. For school counseling students, all originals must be delivered to the Education Unit. For the clinical mental health students, all originals **MUST** be kept by the student until the time of licensure application. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the necessary paperwork is completed by the faculty, field supervisor, or advisor and follow-through in a timely manner if it was not delivered.

The counseling departmental office will maintain records of any copies provided for seven years. At that point, the records are destroyed. The department does **NOT** store any originals. Please keep in mind that originals are required by the LMHC board.

#### F. Advising

Each admitted (certificate, pre-candidacy or candidacy) student is assigned an academic advisor who develops, in conjunction with the student, a plan of study. The advisor's name and their contact information are communicated via the admissions letter.

It is the responsibility of the student to communicate with their advisor each semester. The student must receive written approval for each course that is to be counted toward the degree. All variations from an approved Program Plan of Study must be approved by the Graduate Counseling Committee and must be filed with the Graduate Office. Each student is responsible for knowing and following all program rules and regulations; the student is ultimately responsible for decisions made.

As part of the advising process, Master's and CAGs students are responsible for making three petitions to have their progress reviewed to be allowed to take further coursework.

1. Application to take COUN 8900/8901. In the Fall, typically as part of the mid-semester advising meeting, students must apply to their advisor to take COUN 8900/8901. Their request, and the documentation of meeting all prerequisites, will be reviewed by the Counseling Graduate Committee. Approval by the committee is required to be allowed to enroll.
2. Intention to enroll in internship/practicum. In the Spring semester before starting the year-long field experience, students are responsible for either attending the internship meeting held by the Field Experience Coordinator or communicating with the coordinator to complete the necessary paperwork.
3. Petition for their Stage 2 review. While the Stage 1 review is initiated by the advisor, students must complete the Stage 2 paperwork and request to meet with their advisor. This petition occurs during the Spring semester before starting the year-long field experience.

#### G. Application for Graduation

During the Fall semester of the final year of the program (i.e., internship for clinical mental health students and practicum for school counseling), students are responsible for contacting the registrar's office and applying for graduation. Failure to do so in a timely manner will result in delaying the student's graduation date. Students are required to complete their application by September 15<sup>th</sup> for May graduation. Certificate students are required to contact the registrar's office the semester before they plan to graduate.

#### H. Field Experiences

Several courses require field-based experiences, which are required for licensure. For clinical mental health, students obtain field experiences referred to as Practica through hours obtained in two courses.

COUN 8130 Psychopathology II: Treatment Planning and Outcome  
 COUN 8901 Counseling Techniques and Case Analysis: Mental Health Counseling

For school counseling, students obtain field experiences referred to as Pre-practicum through hours obtained in four courses.

COUN 8200 Principles of School Counseling  
 COUN 8210 College and Career Readiness  
 COUN 8220 Counseling in the Elementary School  
 COUN 8900 Counseling Techniques and Case Analysis: School Counseling

Students planning to take these courses should be thinking about potential sites for placements prior to the beginning of the course. Field experiences are approved by the course instructors, who will review the requirements of the experiences, including qualifications of supervisors, type of clinical experience required, etc. The instructors will discuss these

requirements with the class, so although you should start thinking of sites, these cannot be finalized with instructor approval, typically at the start of the semester. These practicum/pre-practicum experiences *may* be able to be conducted where employed, provided the work meets the academic criteria and licensure requirements for field experiences. If assistance is needed in selecting a site, consult with your course instructor or consult the Field Placement Coordinator. Students should select their sites with care, keeping in mind potential learning experiences relevant to your career goals and licensing requirements.

Field Experience Agreements are needed for all practica and will be made available to you by the course instructors. The student is responsible for securing the required signatures and for seeing that completed forms are on file in a student's Advising File. Students applying for Licensure need to determine the suitability of the field-placement site and supervisor. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the supervisor meets all licensure requirements as your course instructor is dependent on information provided by the student for approval of the site.

## I. Internship/Practicum

Students also have responsibilities in initiating their 600-hour internship/practicum. Additional information about the year-long field experience can be found in the internship manual. Planning for the internship/practicum starts the January before the Fall internship/practicum start. The internship coordinator meets with all students in COUN 8900/8901 to review the process, requirements, and paperwork. It is important that students about to go on internship/practicum attend all required meetings and meet all deadlines for the process.

In setting up the internship/practicum experience, the site, the university, and the student sign a contract, establishing responsibilities of both the student and the site. Termination of an internship/practicum placement has significant consequences for the clients/students being served as well as the site itself, which may have turned away other possible applicants for the training position. Therefore, students are allowed to change/terminate their internship/practicum placement only in significant extenuating circumstances, such as the site no longer being able to provide satisfactory supervision or posing a safety risk to the intern.

Placement changes can be initiated by the program, such as for safety or supervisor concerns, and are typically addressed in consultation with the student, supervising faculty, internship coordinator, and chair. In some cases, the Education Unit will also need to grant approval. After a new placement is secured, new contracts must be completed. Students cannot start their new placement or accruing hours until the contracts have been finalized and approved.

Students who wish to petition for a change in their internship/practicum site must first communicate with the internship coordinator regarding their specific extenuating circumstances and to obtain information about the process. Thereafter, students must get written approval from their existing internship site that supports the student's request to discontinue the placement, as well as written documentation from their proposed site that offers the new position and verifies that it meets licensure and program requirements. The student must follow the formal petition process to request the change, which will be reviewed

by the graduate counseling committee as well as the respective dean. All approvals must be obtained **before** the student terminates their existing internship/practicum position. Failure to do so may result in a postponement of internship/practicum to be restarted in the next year or program dismissal. Please note that this process can take a significant amount of time, which cannot be estimated due to the uniqueness of the circumstances. Students cannot start their new placement or accruing hours until the contracts have been finalized and approved.

## **5. Academic Appeal Policy**

Students have the right to confer with their instructor, advisor, chair of the counseling program, the Dean of Education, Dean of Arts and Sciences, and/or Dean of Graduate and Continuing Education. For a full description of the student complaints policy, please see the Graduate Catalog.

A student who has a complaint regarding a class and/or instructor should first discuss it directly with the faculty member and then with their advisor. The chair of the department is responsible for informal mediation of student concerns. Depending on the case, the student may be asked to meet with the Chair, or with the Chair and the instructor together to discuss the case.

Students who wish to file a formal academic appeal should download the student petition form from the registrar's website. It is recommended that students attach a letter to the form which details the circumstances of their case. The burden of proof rests with the student.

The counseling program advisor is available to explain the formal appeals process to the student. In general, the chair of the counseling program will present the appeal to the Graduate Counseling Committee. The committee meets once per month during the academic year. Their decision will be transmitted in writing to the student. Formal petitions are also heard by the respective Deans of the programs. For school counseling students, the appeal is heard by the Dean of Education. For clinical mental health students (including Certificate students), the appeal is heard by the Dean of Arts and Sciences. The Dean will also communicate their decision to the student in writing.

In addition, Fitchburg State has a Bias Incident Response Team which provides an additional mechanism for students who have been affected by bias. Students can submit an incident electronically to be reviewed by the team.

<https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/resources/faculty-and-staff/human-resources-and-payroll-services/equal-opportunity-diversity-and-affirmative-action/title-ix/bias-incident-response-team>

## **6. Written Endorsement Policy: Procedures for Recommending Students for Credentialing and Employment**

The program and individual faculty within the program are committed to supporting students in obtaining licensure and employment. The chair of the program will provide, as



needed, written verification of the successful completion of the program. For school counseling students, the Education Unit will submit the student's licensure packet.

Faculty may also be asked to provide written recommendation letters or serve as references for employment purposes. However, faculty reserve the right to decline such requests.

## **7. Policy for Student Retention, Remediation, and Program Dismissal**

The policy for student retention is the following:

In addition to the requirements of the graduate school, and to maintain enrollment in the counseling program, students must:

1. Maintain an overall GPA of 3.25
2. Earn at least a 3.0 in each course
3. Demonstrate appropriate ethical/professional behavior
4. Demonstrate competent interpersonal behaviors

Students should note that these requirements are more stringent than the SGOCE university-wide standards.

### Automatic Dismissal

Automatic dismissals are issued by the SGOCE office and do not undergo review by the Graduate Counseling Committee.

1. Students who meet SGOCE criteria for dismissal will be automatically dismissed
2. Any student who earns a grade of 0.0 in any class will be automatically dismissed

### Dismissal following Program Review

Student progress is reviewed at the Stage 1 and 2 time points. In addition, a program review may be initiated by the student's advisor at any time. Students may be dismissed for any of the following

1. Failing to maintain an overall GPA of 3.25
2. Not earning a 3.0 in each course
3. Failing to demonstrate appropriate ethical/professional behavior
4. Failing to demonstrate competent interpersonal behavior

As part of the program review, it is possible that the committee may require additional documentation from the student and/or require a face-to-face meeting with the student.

### Readmission to the Counseling Program

A graduate student who has been dismissed from the program because of failure to request a leave of absence may reapply to the program. A graduate student who is dismissed from the program for academic reasons may seek readmission after one year, but the decision for readmission rests with

the department in consultation with the Dean of Graduate & Continuing Education and is considered final.

Students seeking readmission must reapply by completing a petition form. The form will be reviewed by the graduate counseling committee and additional documentation and/or face-to-face meetings may be required. For readmission for the Summer and Fall semester, students are required to submit their petition no later than March 1st. For readmission for the Spring semester, students are required to submit their petition no later than October 1st. As part of the readmission process, it is the student's responsibility to provide evidence of successfully resolving the issues that prompted the program dismissal. The committee will also consider the reasons for the initial dismissal. Readmission is also contingent on the capability of the student to maintain at least a 3.25 GPA and on evidence that there are sufficient courses remaining in the student's program to achieve a 3.25 GPA. The program/policies in effect at the time of readmission are those that the student must follow.

### Retention and Remediation

The Fitchburg State Counseling Program strongly desires students to succeed in the program. Students are encouraged to consult with individual faculty during the course of the program to obtain feedback and direction as to how to improve. The University has the following programs available to all students and they are strongly encouraged to utilize them:

1. Tutor Center: This resource provides MTEL test preparation seminars, as well as resources in writing skills. In particular, it offers etutor, an online service which will provide writing feedback on student work.
2. Disability Services: Graduate students are also eligible for this service. If a student believes that accommodations may be appropriate, they are encouraged to contact the disability services office for more information. Please note that students are responsible for requesting services themselves from the office of disability services and those requests must be made in a timely fashion.

Because it is the responsibility of the program to provide timely student feedback and evaluate student appropriateness for the field, Master's and CAGs students are evaluated at three stages in the program. At each stage, the student may 1) pass the requirements, 2) be required to remediate their deficiencies (e.g., repeat of coursework, obtaining of tutoring, requiring improvements to be made in disposition assessments) and be re-evaluated in the future, or 3) dismissed from the program.

By conducting three sets of evaluations, the program aims to address concerns in a timely manner.

Stage 1: Conducted after completion of COUN 7010 Counseling Theories and COUN 7030 Introduction to Professional Counseling. *Note: these courses cannot be transferred in from a different program*

Student progress is reviewed by the Graduate Counseling Committee after the completion of these two courses. Faculty members complete student disposition assessments for all students, regardless of status of admittance to the program. The disposition assessments assess areas of interpersonal skills, respect for diversity, academic competence, and communication skills. The faculty also review that students meet the minimum grade requirements (3.0) and overall GPA requirements (3.25) in all classes and evaluate the candidacy paper for evidence of program fit and writing skill. A formal evaluation of student progress is made and communicated in writing to the student. Passing the Stage 1 review results in formal matriculation in the program.

### Stage 2: Required for admittance to internship/practicum

Student progress is reviewed by the Graduate Counseling Committee during the Spring Semester before the start of the year-long internship/practicum experience. All course grades as well as disposition assessments from field supervisors are reviewed. Students are not allowed to begin the process of securing an internship/practicum until they have received Stage 2 approval. A formal evaluation of student progress is made and communicated in writing to the student. Passing the Stage 2 review results in approval to be placed in internship/practicum.

### Stage 3: Completed at the end of internship

The final evaluation of student progress is made by the Graduate Counseling Committee during the final semester of internship. This evaluation is based on the recommendation of the course instructors regarding the successful completion of the internship/practicum. For school counseling students, passing the Stage 3 review results in recommendation for endorsement for licensure.

In addition, the Graduate Counseling Committee can conduct an evaluation of student progress at any time during the program. Any faculty members, not just those in COUN 7010 and 7030, can file a disposition assessment reflecting concerns about student behavior at any time. Alternatively, they may also decide to file a program alert form, which is a mechanism utilized by the Education Unit to identify and remediate student behavior. As examples, these disposition assessments, concerns by core faculty, or complaints by field supervisors can prompt a review which is not timed at the formal stages listed above. Often, the goal of these intermediate stage reviews is to provide the opportunity for remediation. However, it can also provide the opportunity to detect a lack of student appropriateness for the field, which would result in program dismissal.

Specifically, the following is a partial list of characteristics which are grounds for student dismissal, including failure to achieve a 3.0 in each course, failure to maintain an overall GPA of 3.25, disposition ratings below “acceptable” in any area of disposition assessment, evidence of unethical behavior including plagiarism, failure to engage in acceptable interpersonal behavior, or a failure to demonstrate the clinical skills necessary to work in the field.

## **8. Other SGOCE Policies**

All graduate students are held to the SGOCE policies which are found in the Graduate Catalog (<http://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/index.php>). Some of the more relevant policies are listed here

for student convenience. However, the catalog is the final authority on these policies, and the catalog should be monitored for any changes. Students are also responsible for following all SGOCE policies, even those listed only in the catalog.

Also, keep in mind that the Counseling program is allowed to apply stricter requirements (e.g., GPA requirements in some cases) than those applied by SGOCE. However, the Counseling program is not allowed to apply less strict requirements than those applied to the entire graduate school.

#### A. Course registration

Students must register for courses within the curriculum requirements as set in the University Catalog of the year of their matriculation. However, it is the right of the university to alter the requirements to meet statutory, educational, or professional standards. For regularly scheduled courses, students must register before the second class meeting. Early registration is recommended for all degree seeking graduate students and graduate applicants in order to secure seats in the courses needed to progress in degree programs. The regular registration period ends two weeks prior to the start of the semester, with late registration and late charges commencing thereafter. Please refer to the website for specific dates.

#### B. Course Load

Graduate students must register for a minimum of six credits in the fall and/or spring to be considered full-time. Course load for part-time status is less than six credit hours; halftime status is three credit hours.

Graduate assistants who work 20 hours per week and are registered for at least six credit hours are considered to have full-time status. Students who are registered for at least six credits in thesis, continuation of thesis, or internship/practicum are also considered to have full-time status.

The maximum course load for any graduate student is 12 credit hours in fall, spring or the combined summer I/II sessions. The maximum course load for graduate students is three credits for the winter session. Students who want to register for credit beyond the normal load must have written approval from the dean of graduate and continuing education prior to registering. Forms are available from the Office of Graduate and Continuing Education, university website or from the academic advisors.

#### C. Student Health Insurance

Every graduate student registered for 6.75 or more credits is required by law to purchase health insurance. Students must purchase the school sponsored health plan or show proof of comparable coverage in an alternate health plan in order to enroll. For more details, see the [Student Health Services](#) section in this catalog.

#### D. SGOCE Retention, Probation and Academic Dismissal

Counseling students are also subject to SGOCE policies regarding probation and academic dismissal. In most cases, the Counseling program standards are more stringent. However, in some cases students may be dismissed and/or put on probation due to overall SGOCE policies before a counseling stage review. The SGOCE policy is below:

To maintain enrollment in a graduate program, students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 in their academic program. (Please see the retention policies for the MS programs in Counseling)

A graduate student will be placed on probation if:

- Their overall GPA falls below 3.0.
- They receive a failing grade (below 2.0) in any course; students who fail a course must retake the course the next time it is offered in order to replace the failing grade with a passing grade. Students on probation have one year to raise their GPA to 3.0 or better. A minimum GPA of 3.0 is required for graduation.

A graduate student enrolled in a program may be dismissed if:

The student is found in violation of the Academic Integrity Policy

- The student violates ethical/professional standards as defined by the profession and/or the academic department
- The student receives failing grades (below 2.0) in two or more courses
- The student's GPA remains below 3.0 for three consecutive semesters

A graduate student who is dismissed from a program may seek readmission after one semester, but the decision for readmission rests with the department and/or the Dean of Graduate & Continuing Education, and is considered final.

A student who has been dismissed from a program because of failure to request a leave of absence may reapply to the program. (Please see the readmission policies for the MS programs in Counseling) A graduate student who is dismissed from a program for academic reasons may seek readmission after one semester, but the decision for readmission rests with the department and/or the Dean of Graduate & Continuing Education, and is considered final. Readmission is contingent on the capability of the student to maintain at least a 3.0 GPA and on evidence that there are sufficient courses remaining in the student's program to achieve a 3.0 GPA. Students seeking readmission to a program must reapply by completing a Petition Form. For those seeking readmission into a different degree program, the admissions process must be completed after permission from the dean is secured. The program/policies in effect at the time of readmission are those that the student must follow

#### E. Changing a Major or Degree Program

Graduate students may change their major or degree program as long as they can meet the requirements for their new major/degree. Frequently, changing one's major or degree increases the amount of time required to complete a graduate program. Courses taken from the previous major or degree may not count towards the new major or degree. A review of courses would be conducted by the chair of the receiving major or degree.

Graduate students must fill out a student petition form to request a change of major. They will need to obtain the signature/approval of the program chair for the major they wish to enter and the appropriate dean. If you are an education major you will need the approval of the dean of education. All other majors will need the approval of the dean of graduate and continuing education. To obtain a student petition form go to:  
<http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices/academic-offices/gce/evening-student-resource-center/policies-and-forms/>

Students seeking to change their degree (ex: MBA to M.Ed.) will need to formally withdraw from their degree through the Office of the Registrar and then reapply for the new program through the Office of Admissions. All application materials required for the new degree must be submitted with the exception of official transcripts previously submitted to the Office of Admissions.

#### F. Grade Substitution Policy

Students who have been dismissed from a graduate program on academic grounds and who are subsequently readmitted to a program may retake courses in which they have received a 2.0 or a 0.0 grade. If the class is repeated, the new grade will be substituted for the original grade in calculating the student's cumulative GPA. The original grade, however, will continue to appear on the transcript. Transfer courses cannot be used to substitute for courses in which a grade of 2.0 or a 0.0 has been obtained.

#### G. Incomplete Courses

An incomplete (IN) may be awarded with the recommendation of the instructor when the student has completed 80% of the coursework but cannot complete the rest due to illness or some other serious reason. A student who has received an Incomplete in lieu of a course grade must make up the missing part of their coursework during the first four weeks of the following semester. Failure to do so will result in an automatic 0.0 for the course.

#### H. In-Progress Course

A grade of IP (In-Progress) may be awarded for thesis, practicum, internships, Arts and Music Presentations, and clinical experience at the end of a given semester. Practicums, internships, and Arts and Music Presentations need to be completed within two semesters. The time limit for thesis is the six years allowed for the completion of a degree. If the thesis, internship and/or practicum are not completed within the allotted time then the IP grade will be changed to either an incomplete (IN) or a grade of 0.0.

#### I. Withdrawal from Courses

Withdrawal from courses may be made prior to the 11th class for regularly scheduled courses and prior to the 26th class hour for special scheduling or institute courses without academic

penalty. Withdrawals may be initiated by phone by calling the Registrar's Office, or by visiting that office in the Anthony Building.

#### J. Cancellation of a Course

The university may cancel courses for insufficient enrollment or for other reasons deemed to be in the best interest of the university. Students who registered for a course which is canceled may transfer to another course or receive a full refund of tuition and fees.

#### K. Course Changes

Changes to courses (drop/add) must be made by the second meeting. (Class meeting time defined as 2.5 hours) No change in credit is permitted after the second class meeting. After the start of the second class meeting, the dropping of a class will be considered a withdrawal.

#### L. Graduation Requirements

Students must:

- Maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.25 in the degree program with no graduate coursework below a 2.0 (note the higher requirements for counseling)
- Successfully complete all program requirements
- Submit completed petitions/waivers for review to the Office of Graduate and Continuing Education no later than the eighth week of the spring semester prior to anticipated graduation
- Students who are writing a thesis should refer to the thesis guidelines for specific requirements
- An application for degree or certificate must be filed with the Registrar's Office no later than September 15 for May graduation or March 1 for December graduation.

#### M. Time Limits

Graduate degree programs must be completed within six years of the date of the student's first course in the program.

## II. Clinical Mental Health Counseling (M.S.)

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling Course of Study prepares professionals for counseling positions in a wide variety of settings including working with individuals, families, couples, and children, and groups. Clinical Mental Health Counseling involves the applications of the principles of psychotherapy, human development, learning theory, group dynamics and the etiology of mental illness and dysfunctional. The program consists of required courses emphasizing core skills as well as courses in family counseling, substance use disorders, etc. This course of study offers students the opportunity to apply for licensure as mental health counselors.

The curriculum of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling course of study conforms to the National Education and Training Standards for Clinical Mental Health Counselors adopted by the American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA) in 1993; the standards of The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP); as well as the regulations adopted by the state of Massachusetts, the Board of Allied Mental Health Professions in 1989, and as amended in following years for Licensure as a Mental Health Counselor.

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling course of study requires a minimum of 60 semester hours of credit, which includes 12 semester hours of internship. Students and their advisors develop a Plan of Study which best meets a student's career goals; all courses must have advisor approval prior to registration. The program only provides the Master's degree option for clinical mental health counseling.





**Two-year program for M.S. in Counseling, Clinical Mental Health**

*Students complete the majority of their coursework in 4 semesters, starting with the summer session. The internship year of the licensure-required 600 field hours spans from the Fall to the Spring semesters.*

Summer I	COUN 7010: Counseling Theories (3 credits) COUN 7030: Intro to Professional Counseling: Issues and Skills (3 credits)
Summer II	COUN 8130: Psychopathology I (CMH Focus, 3 credits) COUN 8015: Research and Program Evaluation (3 credits)
Fall Year 1	COUN 7005: Professional Practice, Standards, and Ethics (3 credits) COUN 8710: Family Systems: Models and Interventions (3 credits) <sup>2,3</sup> COUN 8300: Psychological Testing and Assessment (CMH Focus, 3 credits) COUN 8132: Psychopathology II (with 50 hours field experience, 3 credits) <sup>3,4,7</sup>
Spring 1	COUN 8901: Counseling Techniques and Case Analysis: CMH(Practicum, 6 credits) <sup>1-7</sup> COUN 8215: Lifestyle and Career Development (3 credits) COUN 8030: Lifespan Development (3 credits)
Summer	COUN 8190 Social and Cultural Foundations: Issues in Counseling (3 credits) COUN 8700: Group Work and Leadership in Mental Health (3 credits) <sup>2,3</sup> COUN 8625: Crisis Intervention for Counselors (3 credits) <sup>2,3</sup>
Fall Year 2	COUN 9090 Internship (6 credits) <sup>8</sup> COUN 8140: Substance Use and Addictive Disorders (3 credits)
Spring Year 2	COUN 9091 Internship (6 credits)

**Total Credits = 60**

Notes:

- 1: Course Requires COUN 7005 as a prerequisite
- 2: Course requires COUN 7010 as a prerequisite
- 3: Course requires COUN 7030 as a prerequisite
- 4: Course requires COUN 8130 as a prerequisite
- 5: Course requires COUN 8132 as a prerequisite
- 6: Course requires COUN 8300 as a prerequisite
- 7: Requires admission to the counseling program
- 8: Internship requires all coursework with the exception of 8140 to be completed.

**Three-year program for M.S. in Counseling, Clinical Mental Health**

- Fall Year 1 COUN 7010: Counseling Theories  
COUN 7030: Intro to Professional Counseling: Issues and Skills  
COUN 7005: Professional Practice, Standards, and Ethics
- Spring Year 1 COUN 8215: Lifestyle and Career Development  
COUN 8030: Lifespan Development  
COUN 8015: Research and Program Evaluation
- Summer 1 COUN 8130: Psychopathology I (CMH Focus)  
COUN 8625: Crisis Intervention for Counselors<sup>2,3</sup>
- Fall Year 2 COUN 8710: Family Systems: Models and Interventions<sup>2,3</sup>  
COUN 8300: Psychological Testing and Assessment (CMH Focus)  
COUN 8132: Psychopathology II (with 50 hours field experience)<sup>3,4,7</sup>
- Spring 2 COUN 8901: Counseling Techniques and Case Analysis: CMH (Practicum)<sup>1-7</sup>
- Summer 2 COUN 8700: Group Work and Leadership in Mental Health<sup>2,3</sup>  
COUN 8190 Social and Cultural Foundations: Issues in Counseling
- Fall Year 3 COUN 9091 Internship<sup>8</sup>  
COUN 8140: Substance and Addictive Disorders
- Spring Year 3 COUN 9090 Internship

**Total Credits = 60**

## Notes:

- 1: Course Requires COUN 7005 as a prerequisite
- 2: Course requires COUN 7010 as a prerequisite
- 3: Course requires COUN 7030 as a prerequisite
- 4: Course requires COUN 8130 as a prerequisite
- 5: Course requires COUN 8132 as a prerequisite
- 6: Course requires COUN 8300 as a prerequisite
- 7: Requires admission to the counseling program
- 8: Internship requires all coursework with the exception of 8140 to be completed.

## **Cross-map of Clinical Mental Health Coursework with LMHC Requirements (Pre-July 1 2017 Program Matriculation)**

Clinical Mental Health Counseling: Students in the Graduate Counseling Program must demonstrate the following knowledge and skill competencies in order to successfully complete the Program based on the Massachusetts Board of Allied Mental Health Professions for Licensure as a Mental Health Counselor standards. The board requires that each course can be used to fill only one requirement. Therefore, each course is only listed once and not in a grid as might be commonly expected.

***Counseling Theory:*** The theories of psychotherapy and counseling, theories of personality, treatment and prevention modalities

Course(s): COUN 7010 – Counseling Theories  
COUN 8710 – Family & Systems: Models & Interventions

***Human Growth and Development:*** Understanding the nature of human development

Course: COUN 8030 – Lifespan Development

***Social and Cultural Foundations:*** Issues and trends of a multicultural and diverse society; working with minority populations

Course: COUN 8190 – Social and Cultural Foundations: Issues and Diversity

***Helping Relationships.*** Counseling techniques, skills, and procedures

Course(s): COUN 7030 – Intro to Professional Counseling: Issues and Skills  
COUN 8130 – Psychopathology I: Diagnosis and Assessment  
COUN 8132 – Psychopathology II: Treatment Planning and Outcome  
COUN 8901 – Counseling Techniques and Case Analysis: Mental Health Counseling

***Group Work:*** Dynamics and Processes

Course: COUN 8700 – Group Work and Leadership in Mental Health Counseling

***Special Treatment Issues.*** For example: Psychopharmacology, substance abuse, school, career issues, marriage and family treatment, sexuality and lifestyle choices, treating special populations.

Course: COUN 8215 –Life Style and Career Development

***Appraisal:*** Appraisal and psychological assessment and techniques

Course: COUN 8300 – Psychological Testing and Assessment: Theory & Practice

***Research and Evaluation***

Course: COUN 8015 – Research and Program Evaluation

***Professional Orientation:*** Ethical and legal issues in counseling

Course: COUN 7005 – Mental Health and Family Counseling: Professional Practice, Standards, and Ethics

## **Cross-map of Clinical Mental Health Coursework with LMHC Requirements (Post-July 1 2017 Program Matriculation)**

Clinical Mental Health Counseling: Students in the Graduate Counseling Program must demonstrate the following knowledge and skill competencies in order to successfully complete the Program based on the Massachusetts Board of Allied Mental Health Professions for Licensure as a Mental Health Counselor standards. The board requires that each course can be used to fill only one requirement. Therefore, each course is only listed once and not in a grid as might be commonly expected.

***Counseling Theory:*** Examination of the major theories, principles and techniques of Mental Health Counseling and their application to professional counseling settings.

Understanding and applying theoretical perspectives with clients.

Course(s): COUN 7010 – Counseling Theories

***Human Growth and Development:*** Understanding the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental stages of life. Understanding major theories of physical, cognitive, affective and social development and their application to Mental Health Counseling practice.

Course: COUN 8030 – Lifespan Development

***Psychopathology:*** Identification and diagnosis and mental health treatment planning for abnormal, deviant, or psychopathological behavior, includes assessments and treatment procedures.

Course(s): COUN 8130 – Psychopathology I: Diagnosis and Assessment

COUN 8132 – Psychopathology II: Treatment Planning and Outcome

COUN 8901 – Counseling Techniques and Case Analysis: Mental Health Counseling

***Social and Cultural Foundations:*** Theories of multicultural counseling, issues and trends of a multicultural and diverse society. Foundational knowledge and skills needed to provide Mental Health Counseling services to diverse populations in a culturally competent manner.

Course: COUN 8190 – Social and Cultural Foundations: Issues and Diversity

***Clinical Skills:*** Understanding of the theoretical bases of the counseling processes, Mental Health Counseling techniques, and their therapeutic applications. Understanding and practice of counseling skills necessary for the mental health counselor.

Course: COUN 7030 – Intro to Professional Counseling: Issues and Skills

***Group Work:*** Theoretical and experiential understandings of group development, purpose, dynamics, group counseling methods and skills, as well as leadership styles. Understanding of the dynamics and processes of Mental Health (therapeutic, psychosocial, psycho-educational) groups.

Course: COUN 8700 – Group Work and Leadership in Mental Health Counseling

**Special Treatment Issues.** Areas relevant to the practice of Mental Health Counseling, *i.e.* psychopharmacology, substance abuse, school or career issues, marriage and family treatment, sexuality and lifestyle choices, treating special populations.

Course(s): COUN 8215 –Life Style and Career Development  
COUN 8710 – Family & Systems: Models & Interventions  
COUN 8140 – Substance Use and Addictive Disorders  
COUN 8625 – Crisis Intervention for Counselors

**Appraisal:** Individual and group educational and psychometric theories and approaches to appraisal. Examination of the various instruments and methods of psychological appraisal and assessment including, but not limited to, cognitive, affective, and personality assessment utilized by the mental health counselor. The function of measurement and evaluation, purposes of testing, reliability and validity.

Course: COUN 8300 – Psychological Testing and Assessment: Theory & Practice

**Research and Evaluation:** Understanding social science research, evaluative methodologies and strategies, types of research, program evaluation, needs assessments, ethical and legal considerations.

Course: COUN 8015 – Research and Program Evaluation

**Professional Orientation:** Understanding of professional roles and functions of Mental Health Counselors, with particular emphasis on legal and ethical standards. Ethical case conceptualization, analysis and decision making as it relates to clinical practice. Knowledge and understanding of the standards set by the code of ethics of the American Counseling Association and the American Mental Health Counselors Association. Understanding of licensure and regulatory practices.

Course: COUN 7005 – Mental Health and Family Counseling: Professional Practice, Standards, and Ethics

### III. School Counseling (M.S. and CAGS)

The School Counseling Course of Study prepares professionals in school counseling at both the Elementary (Pre-kindergarten-grade 8) or Secondary (grades 5-12) level. Course work centers on preparation to work with children and adolescents, especially those with emotional, cognitive, and behavioral disorders. School counselors work with teachers, parents, administrators, nurses, school psychologists, and other members of the instructional and student personnel services team, in assisting youngsters to obtain an appropriate education and to participate productively in society. This course of study offers students the opportunity to apply for Massachusetts licensure as a school counselor.

Students enrolled in the Master's school counseling program complete 60 semester hours, including twelve semester hours of Practicum. The number of credits of the CAGS may exceed the minimum number based on how many credits are needed for licensure.

The curriculum of the School Counseling course of study conforms to the *Standards for Preparation of Counselors and Other Personnel Specialists* adopted by the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) in 1973; the *Standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs* (CACREP); as well as the regulations adopted by the State of Massachusetts, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in 2001 for School Counselor (PreK-8, 5-12) initial licensure. The curriculum reflects the trend in professional training programs toward competency / performance based instruction.

**Two-year program for M.S. in Counseling, School Counseling**

*Students complete the majority of their coursework in 4 semesters, starting with the summer session. The internship year of the licensure-required 600 field hours spans from the Fall to the Spring semesters.*

Summer I	COUN 7010: Counseling Theories COUN 7030: Intro to Professional Counseling: Issues and Skills
Summer II	COUN 8030: Lifespan Development COUN 8015: Research and Program Evaluation
Fall Year 1	COUN 8200: Principles of School Counseling <sup>7</sup> COUN 7000: School Counseling: Professional Practice, Standards, and Ethics COUN 8100: Childhood Trauma and Its Impact on School Based Services COUN 8210: College and Career Readiness <sup>3,7</sup> or COUN 8220: Counseling in the Elementary School <sup>3,7</sup>
Spring Year 1	COUN 8900: Counseling Techniques and Case Analysis: SG Counseling <sup>1-7</sup> COUN 8300: Psychological Testing and Assessment: Theories and Practice COUN 8205: Psychology of Learning COUN 8130: Psychopathology I (SC focus)
Summer	COUN 8190: Social and Cultural Foundations: Issues in Counseling COUN 8700: Group Work and Leadership <sup>2,3</sup>
Fall Year 2	COUN 9085: Practicum in School Counseling <sup>8</sup> COUN 8210: College and Career Readiness <sup>3,7</sup> or COUN 8220: Counseling in the Elementary School <sup>3,7</sup>
Spring Year 2	COUN 9085: Practicum in School Counseling

**Total Credits = 60**

Notes:

1. Course requires COUN 7000 as a prerequisite
2. Course requires COUN 7010 as a prerequisite
3. Course requires COUN 7030 as a prerequisite
4. Course requires COUN 7000 as a prerequisite
5. Course requires COUN 8200 as a prerequisite
6. Course requires COUN 8210 or 8220 as a prerequisite
7. Requires admission to the counseling program
8. Practicum requires all coursework be completed with the exception of either 8210 or 8220

**Three-year program for M.S. in Counseling, School Counseling**

- Fall Year 1 COUN 7010: Counseling Theories  
COUN 7030: Intro to Professional Counseling: Issues and Skills  
COUN 8200: Principles of School Counseling<sup>7</sup>
- Spring Year 2 COUN 8300: Psychological Testing and Assessment: Theories and Practice  
COUN 8015: Research and Program Evaluation  
COUN 8130: Psychopathology I (SG focus)
- Summer II COUN 8030: Lifespan Development
- Fall Year 2 COUN 7000: School Counseling: Professional Practice, Standards, and Ethics  
COUN 8100: Childhood Trauma and Its Impact on School Based Services  
COUN 8210: College and Career Readiness<sup>3,7</sup>  
or  
COUN 8220: Counseling in the Elementary School<sup>3,7</sup>
- Spring Year 2 COUN 8900: Counseling Techniques and Case Analysis: SG Counseling<sup>1-7</sup>  
COUN 8205: Psychology of Learning
- Summer COUN 8190: Social and Cultural Foundations: Issues in Counseling  
COUN 8700: Group Work and Leadership<sup>2,3</sup>
- Fall Year 3 COUN 9085: Practicum in School Counseling<sup>8</sup>  
COUN 8210: College and Career Readiness<sup>3,7</sup>  
or  
COUN 8220: Counseling in the Elementary School<sup>3,7</sup>
- Spring Year 3 COUN 9085: Practicum in School Counseling

**Total Credits = 60**

Notes:

1. Course requires COUN 7000 as a prerequisite
2. Course requires COUN 7010 as a prerequisite
3. Course requires COUN 7030 as a prerequisite
4. Course requires COUN 7000 as a prerequisite
5. Course requires COUN 8200 as a prerequisite
6. Course requires COUN 8210 or 8220 as a prerequisite
7. Requires admission to the counseling program
8. Practicum requires all coursework be completed with the exception of either 8210 or 8220



<b>Standard: DESE Licensure Requirements*</b>	<b>7000</b>	<b>7010</b>	<b>7030</b>	<b>8010</b>	<b>8015</b>	<b>8100</b>	<b>8190</b>	<b>8200</b>	<b>8205</b>	<b>8210</b>	<b>8220</b>	<b>8300</b>	<b>8705</b>	<b>8900</b>	<b>9085</b>
a. Awareness of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and their use in advising and supporting students	I									M	M	M	H		M
b. Skills in utilizing and disseminating results from academic, career, and college assessments for advising and supporting students										H	M	M			I
c. Knowledge of the psychology of learning (cognitive, social, physical, mental illness, and emotional development).		M		M					H						
d. Understanding of the diagnosis and treatment of learning and behavior disorders.		I		H		M		H	H			M		H	
e. Knowledge of strategies used for the prevention and treatment of addiction, maltreatment and neglect, and violence	I	I		M		M									M
f. Knowledge of philosophy, principles, and empirically supported practices in school counseling	H					M	I	H		M	H			H	H
g. Knowledge and application of ethical practices, regulations, and laws (federal, state, and school).	H					M						M			M
h. Skills in college and career counseling, including the knowledge of associated resources	I			I			I			H	M				M
i. Knowledge of research in counseling (statistics, research design, data collection, and program evaluation)	I				H							M			M
j. Skills in group counseling			M								I		H	M	I
k. Ability to consult and collaborate with parents, teachers, administrators, and the community	M	I				H		H			M		H	M	H
l. Application of principles of therapeutic relationships		I	I							M	M			M	H
m. Skills in multicultural counseling, identity development, social justice, and advocacy, including the understanding of the historical and social role of schools and schooling in perpetuating causal inequality due to individual and systemic racism	I	I	I				M			M	M	M		M	H
n. Skills in engaging families and students to provide feedback on their experience and to continue to recognize, challenge, and promote anti-racism in the school experience			I				M			M	M			M	H

**Based on MA SMKs for School Counselors. \*\*Codes for level of coverage: I = Introductory, M = Moderate, H = High**

## **IV. Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS) – Interdisciplinary Students in Counseling/Psychology**

### **Special Status Student (Students Who Already Hold a Master's Degree)**

Students apply for enrollment in the CAGS-Interdisciplinary Studies in Counseling/Psychology Program at Fitchburg State University and develop a Plan of Study in consultation with an advisor from the Graduate Counseling Program. This course of study can be designed to prepare professionals who already hold a Master's degree for Massachusetts licensure as a School Counselor. A second Master's degree is not awarded through this course of study.

Applicants are required to apply to the University for acceptance into the CAGS-Interdisciplinary Study Program in Counseling/Psychology with advisement from the Graduate Counseling Program. To pursue this course of study you should:

- Schedule a meeting with the CAGS-IS Interdisciplinary Studies in Counseling/Psychology Chairperson;
- Familiarize yourself with the FSU descriptions of courses for the school counseling program
- Bring to the meeting a copy of your graduate transcript and information regarding content of the courses you have taken, catalog descriptions syllabi, tables of contents of texts, papers or examinations, etc.;
- Compare your background with that required by the School Counseling Course of Study, and with the assistance of the Chairperson, develop a Plan of Study;
- Submit a proposed Plan of Study to the Coordinator of the CAGS Interdisciplinary Studies in Counseling/Psychology Program.
- Make an application to the CAGS-Interdisciplinary Studies in Counseling/Psychology Program at FSU; and
- With acceptance to the CAGS-Interdisciplinary Studies in Counseling/Psychology Program and with an approved Plan of Study, start your course work at Fitchburg State University.

## **V. Special Issues in Counseling (Certificate)**

The Special Issues in Counseling certificate program is designed to provide individuals with specialized knowledge in the field of counseling that could either broaden the student's expertise in the field of counseling, or form a foundation for more extensive work at the master's level. This concentration would be ideal for educators, including school counselors, who desire a stronger knowledge base in the field of mental health counseling.

The concentration consists of 15 credits, with two required classes, and the choice of 3 elective courses. Students may transfer/apply up to 2 courses from other graduate programs. COUN 7030 cannot be transferred from another institution.

### **Required Courses, (6 credits)**

COUN 7030 - Introduction to Professional Counseling: Issues & Skills

COUN 8130 - Psychopathology I: Diagnosis and Assessment

### **Elective Courses (Choose 3)**

COUN 7005 - Professional Practice, Standards and Ethics: Mental Health and Family Counseling

COUN 8030 - Life Span Development

COUN 8100 - Childhood Trauma and Its Impact on School Based Services

COUN 8140 - Substance Use and Addictive Disorders

COUN 8190 - Social and Cultural Foundations: Issues in Counseling

COUN 8215 - Lifestyles and Career Development

COUN 8300 - Psychological Testing and Assessment: Theory and Practice

COUN 8625 - Crisis Intervention for Counselors

Note: Students must earn a 3.0 in each course for it to count towards the certificate.