

Sul Ross State University Middle Rio Grande
Counseling Program

Department of Education

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Practicum in Counseling

EDUC 7316

3 semester credit hours

Summer Sessions 2020

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Student Availability and Office Hours:

Available to meet with students by appointment in Uvalde on Mondays 4:00 – 6:00 pm and 8:45 – 10:00 pm
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Practicum Overview

The ***Practicum in Counseling*** (EDUC 7316) is designed to provide the advanced graduate student in the Counseling Program with a closely supervised experience to facilitate further development as a professional counselor in a variety of work settings. The practicum experience requires dedication, a willingness to risk new behaviors and experiment with new methods, assumption of personal responsibility, and a major commitment of emotional and physical energy.

Practicum Purpose

The purpose of this fieldwork experience is to provide students with supervised practice in guidance, counseling, and psychotherapy to enhance their skills and development as professional counselors. This practicum experience will provide the counselor-trainee with opportunities to work directly under the supervision of a qualified professional who will provide feedback and assistance.

Note: The practicum counselor must provide the University Instructor with proof of liability insurance before beginning the direct-contact experiences of practicum by completing and returning the Insurance Verification Form. (*Students continuing the practicum experience from a previous semester are not required to resubmit the practicum documentation.*)

Practicum Prerequisites

This practicum course can only be taken after successful completion (i.e., a grade of B or better) of *Techniques of Counseling II* (EDUC 6322) and *Group Counseling* (EDUC 7315), the completion of a minimum of 30 semester credit hours of required counseling courses, and the approval of the University Instructor. Before engaging in direct counseling contact, the practicum counselor must show proof of professional liability insurance.

Practicum Structure

The *Practicum in Counseling* is not structured like a traditional graduate course. The practicum counselor's primary responsibility is to practice counseling in a school, agency, or institutional setting. To successfully complete this three-semester credit hour fieldwork experience, each trainee must complete a minimum total of 160 clock hours of counseling experience, with a minimum of 100 direct-contact clock hours (face-to-face counseling). When all requirements have been met, the practicum counselor will be granted a final letter grade which signifies completion of the required experience. The practicum counselor is responsible for maintaining regular weekly contact with the University Instructor via weekly group supervision meetings on Collaborate Ultra, online blog, telephone, email, or in-person meetings. The practicum counselor is required to maintain a weekly blog (an informal and personal journal of the practicum experiences) on the Blackboard site for the *Practicum in Counseling* (EDUC 7316). Practicum counselors who are not able to complete all specified requirements in a given semester will be awarded a grade of **I** (incomplete) for that semester of practicum work and they will have up to one calendar year to complete all specified requirements. Once all requirements have been completed, and the **Practicum Portfolio** submitted to the University Instructor, the grade of Incomplete (I) will be changed to a final letter grade. Exemplary completion of all requirements of the practicum will earn the student a final grade of A. Students are encouraged to pace the practicum work in appropriate balance with other career and life demands.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successfully completing this fieldwork experience, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate professional counseling skills, at the entry level of competence, under the supervision of experienced supervisory professionals.

Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Practicum Counselor Evaluation, the Comprehensive Counseling Experiences and Recordkeeping, and instructor observation of video recorded counseling sessions.

2. Identify and describe the basic principles and paradigms of human growth and development, and how these factors impact the counseling process.

Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Practicum Counselor Evaluation, the Comprehensive Counseling Experiences and Recordkeeping, and instructor observation of video recorded counseling sessions.

3. Formulate and implement counseling hypotheses and treatment plans that reflect a keen awareness of the theories, techniques, and procedures relevant to the counselor's emerging integrated personal approach to counseling.

Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Practicum Counselor Evaluation, the Practicum Experience Record, the Comprehensive Counseling Experiences and Recordkeeping, Comprehensive Self-Evaluation, and instructor observation of video recorded counseling sessions.

4. Initiate, maintain, and successfully terminate professional counseling relationships in both individual counseling and small group counseling settings.

Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Ethical Practice Agreement, the Practicum Counselor Evaluation, the Practicum Experience Record, the Comprehensive Counseling Experiences and Recordkeeping, Comprehensive Self-Evaluation, and instructor observation of video recorded counseling sessions.

5. Conduct, interpret and clinically apply a variety of assessment devices for personal, education, and career counseling purposes.

Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Practicum Experience Record, the Practicum Counselor Evaluation, the Practicum Skill Evaluation, and instructor observation of video recorded counseling sessions.

6. Work with other professional personnel in a comprehensive counseling approach to meet the individual needs of clients.

Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Practicum Counselor Evaluation, the Practicum Experience Record, the Comprehensive Counseling Experiences and Recordkeeping, Comprehensive Self-Evaluation, and instructor observation during university-based clinical supervision.

7. Utilize published resources and community agencies in assisting persons with personal, educational, or career needs.

Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Practicum Counselor Evaluation, the Comprehensive Counseling Experiences and Recordkeeping, Comprehensive Self-Evaluation, and instructor observation during university-based clinical supervision.

8. Demonstrate a commitment and loyalty to professional counseling ethics, statutory standards of professional practice, and client confidentiality.

Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Ethical Practice Agreement, the Practicum Counselor Evaluation, the Comprehensive Counseling Experiences and Recordkeeping, Comprehensive Self-Evaluation, and instructor observation during university-based clinical supervision and the clinical review of the video recorded counseling sessions.

9. Organize, integrate and present case study information, maintain appropriate counseling records, and make appropriate reports to clinical supervisors, professional site personnel, parents, and others as requested.

Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Practicum Counselor Evaluation, the Practicum Experience Record, the Comprehensive Counseling Experiences and Recordkeeping, Comprehensive Self-Evaluation, and instructor observation during university-based clinical supervision and the clinical review of the video recorded counseling sessions.

10. Recognize personal and professional limitations and the ability to make appropriate referrals that enhance the achievement of a client's unique counseling goals.

Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Ethical Practice Agreement, the Practicum Counselor Evaluation, the Comprehensive Counseling Experiences and Recordkeeping, Comprehensive Self-Evaluation, and instructor observation during university-based clinical supervision and the clinical review of the video recorded counseling sessions.

11. Cooperate and collaborate with clinical supervisors.

Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Practicum Counselor Evaluation, the Comprehensive Self-Evaluation, and instructor observation during university-based clinical supervision.

12. Initiate and maintain a positive and professional working relationship with the university instructor and supervisor of the *Practicum in Counseling*.

Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Practicum Experience Record and instructor observation during university-based clinical supervision.

13. Cultivate a personal and professional identity that is genuine, authentic, and mindful, yet at the same time communicates a commitment to personal values.

Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Practicum Counselor Evaluation, Comprehensive Self-Evaluation, and instructor observation during university-based clinical supervision and the clinical review of the video recorded counseling sessions.

14. Develop and demonstrate a professional identity that incorporates a dynamic awareness of self, an understanding of and respect for human diversity, and a social justice orientation to counseling.

Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Practicum Counselor Blog, the Practicum Counselor Evaluation, the Practicum Experience Record, Comprehensive Personal Review and Self-Evaluation, Practicum Skill Evaluation and instructor observation of the practicum counselor's interactions and responses during clinical supervision.

15. Model a commitment to lifelong learning and professional development in the field of counseling.

Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Practicum Counselor Blog, the Practicum Counselor Evaluation, the Practicum Experience Record, Comprehensive Personal Review and Self-Evaluation, Practicum Skill Evaluation and instructor observation of the practicum counselor's interactions and responses during clinical supervision.

Proficiencies for Counselors

Proficiencies that students must master in this fieldwork experience are derived from two sources: the *State of Texas Standards Required for the School Counselor Certificate* (§239.15) and the *Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs* (CACREP).

The following school counselor certification standards (TAC §239.15) are addressed in this fieldwork experience:

Standard I. Learner-Centered Knowledge: The certified school counselor has a broad knowledge base. The certified school counselor must know and understand:

- (2) counseling and consultation theories and practices;
- (4) the roles and responsibilities of a comprehensive school counseling program that emphasizes college and career readiness and postsecondary options for all students, including college admissions, college financial aid resources, application procedures, and workforce and career opportunities;
- (5) assessment principles and procedures, including the appropriate use of tests, test interpretation, and test results;
- (6) changing societal trends, including demographic, economic, and technological tendencies, and their relevance to school counseling;
- (7) environmental, social, and cultural factors that affect learners' development and the relevance of those factors to educational, career, personal, and social development, along with comprehensive school counseling programs;
- (8) learners' developmental characteristics and needs and their relevance to educational and career choices;
- (9) legal and ethical standards, practices, and issues and the importance of commitment to and implementation of ethical principles;
- (10) the characteristics and educational needs of special populations;
- (11) techniques and behavioral interventions to assist teachers with classroom management;
- (13) the roles and responsibilities of a comprehensive school counseling program that is responsive to all students;
- (14) counseling-related research techniques and practices;
- (17) the comprehensive school counseling program model;
- (19) an understanding of systems, including family dynamics and school environments.

Standard II. Learner-Centered Skills: The certified school counselor applies the knowledge base to promote the educational, personal, social, and career development of the learner as outlined in *The Texas Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs*. The certified school counselor must:

- (1) develop processes and procedures for planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating *The Texas Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs*;
- (2) provide a proactive, comprehensive, developmental school counseling program based on the needs of students, as set forth in *The Texas Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs*;
- (3) counsel individuals and small groups using appropriate counseling theories and techniques in response to students' needs;
- (4) consult with parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, and other individuals as appropriate to enhance his or her work with students;
- (5) coordinate resources, referrals, and follow-up procedures for students within the school and community;
- (6) demonstrate proficiency in teaching small and large groups by actively engaging students in the learning process;
- (8) use multiple sets of information and data to make decisions about students, programs, and services;
- (9) use counseling-related research techniques and evidence-based practices to address student needs;
- (10) advocate for a comprehensive school counseling program that is responsive to all students;

Standard III. Learner-Centered Process: The certified school counselor participates in the development, monitoring, revision, and evaluation of a campus based on *The Texas Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs* that promotes learners' knowledge, skills, motivation, and personal growth. The certified school counselor must:

- (1) collaborate with others in the school and community to implement a guidance curriculum that promotes learners' development in all domains, including cognitive, social, and emotional areas;
- (2) facilitate learners' ability to achieve their potential by helping them set and attain challenging educational, career, personal, and social goals based on various types of information;
- (3) use both preventive and intervening strategies to address the concerns of learners and to help them clarify problems and situations, set goals, explore options, and implement change;
- (5) act as a consultant to help learners achieve success inside and outside of school;
- (6) advocate for a comprehensive school counseling program and recognize the required time commitment to fully apply the program implementation cycle;

Standard IV. Learner-Centered Equity and Excellence for All Learners: The certified school counselor promotes academic success for all learners by acknowledging, respecting, and responding to diversity while building on similarities that bond all people. The certified school counselor must:

- (1) understand learner differences, including those related to cultural background, gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic levels, academic ability, and learning styles, and know ways to create and maintain a positive school environment that is responsive to all learners;
- (2) advocate for a school environment in which diversity is acknowledged and respected, resulting in positive interactions across all cultures, genders, ethnicities, and learning styles;
- (3) facilitate learning and achievement for all students to ensure services that cover an array of exceptionalities, including special populations, by promoting a cooperative, inclusive, purposeful learning environment;
- (4) take a positive, strength-based approach that builds on commonalities versus differences in all learners;
- (5) understand how environment and behavior may impact or influence individual learners;
- (6) ensure equitable access to programs and services for all students;
- (7) understand how family values, group membership, and culture intersect;
- (8) acknowledge learners' gifts, strengths, and extracurricular talents when considering programs and services;
- (9) increase students' awareness and include their voices regarding educational and individualized plans; and

Standard V. Learner-Centered Communications: The certified school counselor, an advocate for all students and the school, demonstrates effective professional and interpersonal communication skills. The certified school counselor must:

- (1) demonstrate effective communication through oral, written, and nonverbal expression;
- (2) use knowledge of group dynamics and productive group interaction;
- (3) support responsive interventions by effectively communicating with parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, and community members;
- (5) develop and implement strategies for effective internal and external communications;
- (8) work effectively as a team member to promote positive change for individuals, groups, and the school community;
- (9) take a positive, strength-based approach that verbalizes commonalities versus differences in all learners;
- (11) adhere to best practices connected to ethical and legal considerations around appropriate use of technology and email, documentation, record keeping, privileged communication, and informed consent process; and

Standard VI. Learner-Centered Professional Development: The certified school counselor continues professional development, demonstrating a commitment to learn, to improve the profession, and to model professional ethics and personal integrity. The certified school counselor must:

- (1) use reflection, self-assessment, and interactions with colleagues to promote personal professional development;
- (3) strive toward the highest level of professionalism by adhering to and modeling professional, ethical, and legal standards;
- (4) apply research-based practice to improve the school guidance and counseling program;
- (5) engage in ongoing professional development to improve the school guidance and counseling program; and

The following CACREP Common Core standards are addressed in this fieldwork experience:

Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice

- b. the multiple professional roles and functions of counselors across specialty areas, and their relationships with human service and integrated behavioral health care systems, including interagency and interorganizational collaboration and consultation
- c. counselors' roles and responsibilities as members of interdisciplinary community outreach and emergency management response teams
- d. the role and process of the professional counselor advocating on behalf of the profession
- e. advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impede access, equity, and success for clients
- f. professional counseling organizations, including membership benefits, activities, services to members, and current issues
- g. professional counseling credentialing, including certification, licensure, and accreditation practices and standards, and the effects of public policy on these issues
- h. current labor market information relevant to opportunities for practice within the counseling profession
- i. ethical standards of professional counseling organizations and credentialing bodies, and applications of ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling
- j. technology's impact on the counseling profession
- k. strategies for personal and professional self-evaluation and implications for practice
- l. self-care strategies appropriate to the counselor role
- m. the role of counseling supervision in the profession

Social and Cultural Diversity

- a. multicultural and pluralistic characteristics within and among diverse groups nationally and internationally
- b. theories and models of multicultural counseling, cultural identity development, and social justice and advocacy
- c. multicultural counseling competencies
- d. the impact of heritage, attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences on an individual's views of others
- e. the effects of power and privilege for counselors and clients
- f. help-seeking behaviors of diverse clients
- g. the impact of spiritual beliefs on clients' and counselors' worldviews
- h. strategies for identifying and eliminating barriers, prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination

Human Growth and Development

- e. biological, neurological, and physiological factors that affect human development, functioning, and behavior
- f. systemic and environmental factors that affect human development, functioning, and behavior
- g. effects of crisis, disasters, and trauma on diverse individuals across the lifespan
- h. a general framework for understanding differing abilities and strategies for differentiated interventions
- i. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for promoting resilience and optimum development and wellness across the lifespan

Career Development

- b. approaches for conceptualizing the interrelationships among and between work, mental well-being, relationships, and other life roles and factors
- c. processes for identifying and using career, avocational, educational, occupational and labor market information resources, technology, and information systems
- d. approaches for assessing the conditions of the work environment on clients' life experiences
- f. strategies for career development program planning, organization, implementation, administration, and evaluation
- j. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for addressing career development

Counseling and Helping Relationships

- a. theories and models of counseling
- b. a systems approach to conceptualizing clients
- c. theories, models, and strategies for understanding and practicing consultation
- d. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for establishing and maintaining in-person and technology-assisted relationships
- f. counselor characteristics and behaviors that influence the counseling process
- g. essential interviewing, counseling, and case conceptualization skills
- h. developmentally relevant counseling treatment or intervention plans
- i. development of measurable outcomes for clients
- j. evidence-based counseling strategies and techniques for prevention and intervention
- k. strategies to promote client understanding of and access to a variety of community-based resources
- l. suicide prevention models and strategies
- m. crisis intervention, trauma-informed, and community-based strategies, such as Psychological First Aid
- n. processes for aiding students in developing a personal model of counseling

Group Counseling and Group Work

- d. characteristics and functions of effective group leaders
- e. approaches to group formation, including recruiting, screening, and selecting members
- f. types of groups and other considerations that affect conducting groups in varied settings
- g. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for designing and facilitating groups

Assessment and Testing

- c. procedures for assessing risk of aggression or danger to others, self-inflicted harm, or suicide
- d. procedures for identifying trauma and abuse and for reporting abuse
- g. statistical concepts, including scales of measurement, measures of central tendency, indices of variability,
- i. use of assessments relevant to academic/educational, career, personal, and social development
- k. use of symptom checklists, and personality and psychological testing
- m. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment and test results

Research and Program Evaluation

- a. the importance of research in advancing the counseling profession, including how to critique research to inform counseling practice
- b. identification of evidence-based counseling practices
- c. needs assessments
- d. development of outcome measures for counseling programs
- e. evaluation of counseling interventions and programs
- j. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for conducting, interpreting, and reporting the results of research and/or program evaluation

Counseling Program Objectives: Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the Counseling Program, the candidates for the degree of Master of Education in Counseling, will clearly and unambiguously demonstrate to the Counseling faculty that they:

- ✿ Understand traditional and contemporary personality and counseling theories and can apply appropriate counseling interventions and strategies in individual and small group counseling.
- ✿ Identify and utilize basic assessment principles related to standardized assessments and designing an appropriate treatment plan.
- ✿ Comprehend the role and function of the counselor in a variety of work settings.
- ✿ Know and apply the professional standards of practice and the relevant code of ethics.
- ✿ Attend to their own personal growth, as well as that of their students and clients, through utilizing supervision, valuing interpersonal feedback, and engaging in mindful self-examination.
- ✿ Possess the knowledge and skills necessary to practice as a highly competent counseling professional.
- ✿ Employ personal self-awareness and professional sensitivity to the divergent values, behaviors, traditions, and counseling needs of all students and clients regardless of gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, ability, language, religion, ethnicity, or race.
- ✿ Engage in compassionate cultural sensitivity by applying core counseling concepts, mindfulness-based skills, and professional practices with diverse populations, in particular, the bilingual and bicultural students and clients living in the South Texas border region.
- ✿ Model intellectual curiosity and a strong personal commitment to continually expanding their counseling knowledge and proficiency through lifelong learning and professional development.

Counseling Program Marketable Skills

Upon successful completion of the Counseling Program, the candidates for the degree of Master of Education in Counseling will possess the following marketable skills:

1. The Master of Education Counseling student will demonstrate analytical and critical thinking skills.
2. The Master of Education Counseling student will demonstrate empathy and listening skills.
3. The Master of Education Counseling student will demonstrate deductive and inductive cognitive skills.

Marketable Skills Dissemination Strategy: The marketable skills are included in the course syllabi for the Master of Education in Counseling; and the faculty present and discuss these skills online or in-class with students. Each marketable skill includes consideration of the cultural influences on an individual's perceptive outlook. The cultural focus will be reflected in all courses and considered explicitly in *Multiculturalism and Diversity in Counseling* (EDUC 6318) and *Bilingual and Bicultural Counseling* (EDUC 6340). Reflective writing or research assignments will be emphasized in all counseling classes with specialized research focus in the following graduate courses: *Research Methodology* (EDUC 5301), *Psychopathology* (EDUC 6319), *Substance Use, Abuse and Addiction* (EDUC 6320), and *Counseling and the Neurosciences* (EDUC 6350).

Practicum Requirements

A student's final grade in the *Practicum in Counseling* (EDUC 7316) will be based on the successful completion of the following:

1. Carefully review the *Ethical Standards of the American Counseling Association* and sign and submit the **Ethical Practice Statement** prior to logging contact hours
2. Select a practicum site and site supervisor, complete the **Practicum Placement Form**, and return to the University Instructor prior to logging contact hours. Practicum counselors may choose to work at more than one practicum site. Complete the **Practicum Placement Form** for each site and supervisor and email to the instructor prior to logging contact hours toward the *Practicum* requirements.
3. Obtain professional liability insurance, complete the **Insurance Verification Form**, and email to the University Instructor prior to logging contact hours toward the *Practicum* requirements.
4. Develop and disseminate to all clients a personalized **Professional Disclosure Statement** (and a Spanish version if necessary), approved by both the site supervisor and the University Instructor, before engaging in direct contact with clients.

5. Allocate, and be available for, at least five (5) hours per week of counseling contact through the **College and Community Counseling Clinic**. Clients are assigned to practicum counselors by the Clinical Manager and Mentor in consideration of geographic convenience and client caseload.
6. Successfully complete a minimum of 160 clock hours of practicum experience, which includes a minimum of 100 clock hours of direct contact. A minimum of 20 hours of direct contact in a volunteer (unpaid) capacity is required as part of the 160 clock-hour total for those practicum students who are participating in a paid practicum experience.
7. Maintain a regular journal of your practicum experiences online in the form of a **Practicum Counselor Blog** on the Blackboard site for the *Practicum in Counseling*. The blogs should include at least twice-per-week entries (300-500 words in length) based on the events and experiences of that week's practicum encounters. You are required to interact with fellow practicum counselors by commenting on their blog content through posting replies. Your initial blog entry must be posted by the end of the first full week of the semester or summer session.
8. Maintain the **Weekly Practicum Log** of counseling-related experiences and complete an end-of-the-experience **Summary of Practicum Hours** (when you have completed all requirements); weekly logs and summary are due, as part of your final **Practicum Portfolio**, to the University Instructor, when you have completed all specified requirements. If you do not complete the practicum requirements at the end of the initial semester of enrollment, and you are granted an Incomplete (I), you are not required to submit anything to the University Instructor.
9. Establish and maintain three (3) continuous-contact counseling relationships (at least eight weekly sessions per each of the three cases), and complete weekly case notes (SOAP, DIP, or agency specific) and a **Comprehensive Case Summary**; comprehensive case study files should be included in the final portfolio. Site supervisors should approve case notes. Practicum counselors are not required to maintain such copious documentation for all clients, but rather only for the three specific cases that will be counseled for at least eight sessions. The particular school or agency in which the practicum is being conducted may require additional documentation and/or record-keeping to be maintained on each client.
10. Maintain contact with the University Instructor (through weekly group supervision on Collaborate, in person, via online blogs, via telephone or text, or via email) on a regular basis for the review and supervision of counseling skills.
11. Read various texts and articles posted on Blackboard and/or recommended by the University Instructor. This is an individualized requirement based on the practicum counselor's specific needs.
12. Engage in self-review and self-evaluation for at least one hour per week, and complete a comprehensive written **Self-Evaluation** which is to be included in the **Practicum Portfolio**. The final **Self-Evaluation** is a narrative of two to three pages in length that critically examines and discusses the practicum experience, personal strengths and weaknesses, acquired knowledge and skills, and goals for continued professional growth.

13. Include site supervisor's completed **Practicum Counselor Evaluation Checklist** in the **Practicum Portfolio**. Student counselor's final grade is partially based on the feedback from the site supervisor. Any unprofessional or unethical behavior on the part of the practicum student will result in the student's immediate removal from the *Practicum*; the student will receive a final grade of F; and the student will be denied enrollment in any future *Practicum* courses at Middle Rio Grande.
14. Include a completed **Evaluation of Clinical Supervisor** in the **Practicum Portfolio**. This instrument provides a platform for the Practicum Counselor to evaluate the supervision, guidance and mentoring of the Clinical Supervisor. The general objective of this evaluation is to provide the Clinical Supervisor with constructive feedback to help improve and enhance future supervisory processes and relationships. Practicum Counselors must complete this evaluation form at the end of the practicum experience and share the feedback with the Clinical Supervisor during an exit interview or final supervision session.
15. Include a completed **Practicum Site Evaluation** in the **Practicum Portfolio**.
16. Upon completion of all *Practicum* requirements, schedule an individual exit interview with the University Instructor. You will provide recordings and clinical documentations of your counseling work and the University Instructor will complete the **Practicum Skill Evaluation**, which must be included in the final **Practicum Portfolio**.
17. Finalize and submit to the University Instructor your complete **Practicum Portfolio**, if you have completed all stated requirements for the *Practicum* on or before the first day of the university-specified final examination period.

Remember these important dates:

January 13	First day of Spring Semester 2020
January 16	Last day for late registration and schedule changes
January 20	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
March 9-13	Spring Break: No Classes
March 16	Mid-Semester
April 3	Last day to drop a course or withdraw from University
April 10	Good Friday Holiday
May 9	Spring Commencement in Eagle Pass at 3:30 pm

- ☉ **Note:** Only those counselor-trainees who successfully complete all of the *Practicum* requirements during a given semester are required to submit a completed **Practicum Portfolio** to the University Instructor by the specified date. Practicum counselors who plan to complete the practicum requirements in a future semester are not required to submit any documentation by the specified dates.

Practicum Counselor Blog

The **Practicum Counselor Blog** includes documentations and demonstrations of personal growth, struggle, awareness and professional/academic understanding. Blog posts should include cognitive and affective responses to fishbowl demonstrations, debriefings, and discussions. The blogs should include a minimum of two entries per week (300-500 words in length) that are based on the events and experiences of that week's practicum and supervision experiences. The level of analysis woven throughout your blog entries must reflect a depth of awareness and introspection characteristic of graduate student insight and sophistication. You are required to interact with other students via the blogs. When you open this subheading click on "Create Blog Entry", this will allow you to create your personal blog for the practicum. It is important that you keep the same blog throughout the semester. After the initial creation of your blog, you should not have to click on "create blog entry" again. You can modify your blog entries by clicking the down arrow that is beside the title of your blog. By selecting the Edit option the blog will allow you to type your weekly responses to classroom experiences and your individual counseling sessions. Remember to add your new entry prior to your previous blog entry; making sure to date and time each entry. The blogs should include at least twice-per-week entries (300-500 words in length) based on the events and experiences of that week's practicum encounters. When commenting on your fellow student's blogs simply click on the Comment button at the bottom of their blog. At various points throughout the semester, the instructor will provide feedback to individuals regarding the content and depth of the journal blog entries. You are required to read and comment on other students' journal blogs by posting appropriate replies. Our discussions, disclosures, and debates across the **Practicum Counselor Blogs** serve as our weekly group supervision meeting; this is our virtual supervision class. You are encouraged to respond to the questions and comments of others in the body of your blog, as opposed to posting individual replies to replies.

Your **Practicum Counselor Blog** should include a detailed account of the activities and experiences encountered during your fieldwork experiences. Additionally, you will include your personal reactions, thoughts, and feelings about these experiences and adventures. Blogs should not be used as critiques of colleagues or supervisors, but rather thorough demonstrations of personal awareness and professional understanding. Practicum counselors must protect the confidentiality of clients and fellow staff members by using first names only. In your initial blog entry, please tell us about your practicum plans for this semester, your personal and professional goals, and your expectations for the practicum. Additionally, in your initial blog entries describe and discuss your practicum site(s) and situation(s). You must protect the confidentiality of clients and fellow staff members by using first names only. In accordance with the *Ethical Standards of the American Counseling Association*, counselor blogs can only be viewed by fellow counselors, clinical supervisors and the university instructors.

Distance Education Statement

Although the *Practicum in Counseling* (EDUC 7316) is a field-based practice experience, a large portion of the information and learning resources will be shared via the Blackboard platform. All practicum counselors are required to participate in weekly group supervision meetings on the Collaborate Ultra feature of Blackboard. During the spring semester 2020 the weekly Collaborate meetings will be on Wednesday from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. All group supervision meetings will be recorded and will be accessible to students for review. Recommended readings, resources, blogs, presentations, and videos will be posted on Blackboard. All students are expected to regularly access the class site on Blackboard and participate fully in the virtual aspect of this field-based course.

The policy on Distance Education at Middle Rio Grande is as follows:

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, library resources, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should submit online assignments through Blackboard or SRSU email, which require secure login information to verify students' identities and to protect students' information. The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.

Accessibility and Safe Learning Environment

The Counseling Program of Middle Rio Grande is committed to providing a learning environment that is free from intentional or unintentional sexual harassment, as defined below, or harassment on the basis of any protected classification including, but not limited to race, gender, color, religion, sexual orientation, age, national origin, disability, medical condition, marital status, veteran status or on any other basis protected by law. Such conduct is unprofessional, unproductive, illegal, and generally unacceptable. All conduct of this nature is expressly prohibited, regardless of whether it violates the law.

The Counseling Program of Middle Rio Grande supports equal employment and educational opportunities for all persons. No person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity sponsored by Middle Rio Grande on any basis prohibited by applicable law, including but not limited to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age or disability.

The Counseling Program is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Students with disabilities are provided assistance in gaining opportunities for full participation in

programs, services and activities. The Coordinator of Student Services (830-279-3003), Ms. Kathy Biddick (kbiddick@sulross.edu), serves as the Disability Services Coordinator and she is located in Uvalde. Services available to all students include consultation, information and referral as well as personal counseling and academic advising. A student is eligible for disability services if s/he has been admitted to Middle Rio Grande and has a documented physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Qualified students with disabilities who need academic adjustments, auxiliary aids or services or other accommodations to ensure equal access must register with Disability Services. It is the student's responsibility to bring disability documentation with them to an appointment with the Disability Services Coordinator to discuss their individual needs at this time. Each request is considered on an individualized, case-by-case basis. As considerable time may be involved in obtaining complete and adequate documentation and arranging for qualified service providers, prospective and current students should request services in a timely manner. These services should be requested well in advance of the anticipated need.

Recent disability documentation from appropriate qualified professionals must be provided by the student to establish current functional limitations and the impact of the disability. Any recommendations for specific accommodations may be helpful in making determinations and these will be considered as part of the documentation review process. Documentation of disability status and other related information is handled in a confidential manner and is maintained in files separate from a student's educational record.

In compliance with applicable laws, unless Middle Rio Grande can demonstrate that an academic requirement is an essential component of a degree or program, the University will make reasonable adjustments to requirements to ensure that the requirements do not discriminate against qualified students with disabilities. A student with a disability may request a course substitution or a modification of a degree or program requirement through the following process.

The student's first point of contact for assistance with this process should be the Disability Services Coordinator. The student should submit:

1. A written request for the modification explaining his/her difficulties in the relevant areas and reasons for requesting the modification;
2. Information about the results of previous efforts in the relevant area (transcripts, etc.); and
3. Comprehensive documentation of the disability and the specific aspects of the disability which impair the student's ability to learn or perform in the area in which the student is requesting the modification. The Disability Services Coordinator will meet with the student, review the documentation and prepare a recommendation on the request.
 - a. A diagnostic statement identifying the disability, date of the current diagnostic evaluation (within a 5 year period), and the date of the original diagnosis.
 - b. A description of the diagnostic criteria and/or diagnostic test(s) used.
 - c. A description of the current functional impact/limitations of the disability.
 - d. Treatments, medications, assistive devices/services currently prescribed or used.
 - e. A description of the expected progression or stability of the disability over time.
 - f. The credentials of the diagnosing professional(s) to include the training and experience which enable the person capable of making the diagnosis(es).

Recommendations for accommodation are helpful and will be given due consideration. If a student feels that s/he has been discriminated against based on disability, it is recommended

that the student first attempt to resolve the issue directly with the individual or group suspected of discrimination. If this procedure is non-productive, a second step may be to seek assistance from the Disability Services office. Students may also file a complaint with the appropriate university officer for ADA/504 compliance, the ADA Compliance Officer, according to the student grievance procedure.

Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to: unwanted sexual advances; demands for sexual favors in exchange for favorable treatment; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; graphic commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess, or sexual deficiencies; leering; whistling; touching; pinching; assault; coerced sexual acts; suggestive, insulting or obscene comments or gestures. The Counseling Program prohibits all conduct of this nature whether or not such conduct violates any applicable laws.

Professional Counseling Identity and Behavior

In registering for classes in the Counseling Program at Middle Rio Grande, graduate students accept responsibility for attending scheduled class meetings, completing assignments on time, contributing to class discussions, and fully participating in all experiential learning activities. Counseling faculty members maintain specific attendance and participation requirements for each particular class. Faculty members may impose academic penalties upon absences from some classes and/or experiences; however, such penalties for absences will be a part of each course syllabus and will be distributed to each class at the beginning of each class and a copy filed in the departmental office.

The Counseling Program expects graduate students to demonstrate the following characteristics and attitudes at all times inside and outside the classroom:

- ☉ **Commitment** to professional identity as a counselor, investment, advocacy, collaboration, and interpersonal competence
- ☉ **Openness** to ideas, learning, change, giving and receiving feedback, others, and self-development
- ☉ **Respect** to self and others, including honoring diversity, self-care, and personal wellness
- ☉ **Integrity** demonstrated through personal responsibility, maturity, honesty, courage, and congruence
- ☉ **Self-awareness** modeled through humility, self-reflection, and understanding of context

The Counseling Program has specific policies and procedures which provide students with a sequential, growth-oriented progression of courses to take; students are fully responsible for knowing and following these policies and procedures. By the time a student is admitted to the Experiential Block, it is expected that she or he has thoroughly read and comprehended the complete policies, procedures and recommendations of the most recent issue of the **Counseling Program Handbook**. This document details and describes all aspects of the Counseling Program, from taking the first courses to passing the Comprehensive Oral Examination and graduating with the Master's in Counseling. This is not a singular academic program to prepare students for advanced levels of teaching or beginning levels of administration, but rather a distinctly different profession entirely. Counseling is not an appropriate career field for all students. In the process of pursuing professional training in counseling, some students discover (or faculty may advise) that they are not appropriate for the counseling field and/or the field of counseling is not appropriate for them. Faculty of the Counseling Program will provide continuous, honest and pragmatic feedback to each student regarding progress and suitability in this program.

Unethical behavior (as defined by the *Code of Ethics* of the American Counseling Association) by a student enrolled in any counseling course will result in the exclusion of that student from the Counseling Program of Middle Rio Grande, and may subject the student to civil penalties as well. Professional behavior is expected of each and every student at all times across all counseling courses. Failure to maintain professionalism is considered unethical behavior.

The Counseling Program emphasizes professional, personal, and academic development as essential in counselor education and training. Students must not only excel academically, but must adhere to the professional and ethical standards of the profession, demonstrate effective counseling skills and competencies, and focus on their own personal development as it impacts their ability to work effectively and ethically as counseling professionals.

Counseling students are expected to attend to their own social and emotional development through extensive self-reflection and mindfulness. They must be open to new and divergent ideas, prepared to examine their own values and assumptions, ready to recognize their own prejudices and biases, willing to be present in the moment with highly uncomfortable (painful) emotions that initially evoke the "fight-flight-freeze" hijacking of the primitive limbic system, able to receive critical feedback in the company of peers with an open mind and a tender heart, and capable of engaging in personal growth and transformation. At times this will involve examining one's own life experiences while creating space and understanding for one's inner demons and emotional obstacles to personal growth. Willingness to do this important personal work is an integral part of any counselor's professional training.

Therefore, graduation from the Counseling Program requires that students successfully complete the academic and experiential requirements with mindful regard to both professional and personal development. Students must, in the professional judgment of the faculty and supervisors, understand and behave in accordance with the professional standards of behavior, meet the requisite counseling competencies and skills to work as an effective professional counselor, and be free from any psychological or emotional impairment that may act as a barrier to effective interpersonal and therapeutic interventions.

Throughout the counseling course work and the practical experiences, the faculty members regularly review student progress on the following basic qualities:

- Openness to new ideas
- Flexibility
- Cooperativeness with others
- Willingness to accept and use feedback
- Awareness of own impact on others
- Ability to deal with conflict
- Ability to accept personal responsibility
- Ability to express feelings effectively and appropriately
- Attention to ethical and legal considerations
- Initiative and motivation
- Development of professional skills and competencies
- Psychological functioning and mindful self-management