

*Master of Education in Counseling*

# **HANDBOOK**

*for*

# **COUNSELING FIELDWORK**



**Practicum in Counseling**

*(EDUC 7316)*

**&**

**Internship in Counseling**

*(EDUC 7317)*

Summer 2021

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# *Counseling Program*

# **Practicum in Counseling**

EDUC 7316

3 semester credit hours

Summer 2021



**Instructor: Todd T. Russell, Ph.D.**

Office: SRSU Uvalde Campus A126

Office Phone: (830) 279-3025

Cell Phone: (210) 253-0884

Email: [trussell@sulross.edu](mailto:trussell@sulross.edu)

**Student Availability and Office Hours:**

Available for virtual assistance via Collaborate, email, text or voice

9:00 am – 12:00 pm Mondays and Wednesdays

Available at other times by appointment

**Teaching Assistant & Graduate Student Mentor:**

**Ms. Enedelia Soto-Quintanilla**

Cell: (830) 275-2906

RGC Email: [exs18hz@sulross.edu](mailto:exs18hz@sulross.edu)

Gmail: [eny2121@gmail.com](mailto:eny2121@gmail.com)

**Clinic Director & Graduate Student Mentor:**

**Mr. Tad Martinez**

Cell: (830) 255-0962

RGC Email: [tam16ij@sulross.edu](mailto:tam16ij@sulross.edu)

Gmail: [tad.mtz@gmail.com](mailto:tad.mtz@gmail.com)

Community Counseling Clinic: <https://www.srsu-mrg-ccc.org/>

Clinic Email: [srsu.mrg.counseling@gmail.com](mailto:srsu.mrg.counseling@gmail.com)

Counseling Program Web Page: <https://www.sulross.edu/page/4849/master-education-counseling>

# 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 Practicum Instructor (Field Supervisor) 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 I* (EDUC 6321) and *Group Counseling* (EDUC 7315), the completion of a minimum of 36 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

Practicum is not structured like a traditional course. The counselor-trainee's primary responsibility is to practice counseling in a school, agency, or institutional setting. To successfully complete this three-semester credit hour practicum, each trainee must complete a minimum total of 100 clock hours of counseling experience, with a minimum of 40 direct-contact clock hours (face-to-face counseling). When all requirements have been met, the counselor-trainee 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, Zoom, 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 "PR" (In-Progress) 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 In-progress (PR) 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 Objectives

**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 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 of human growth and development, and how these principles 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 small groups and individual settings in a professional and ethical manner. *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. Utilize and appropriately interpret a variety of assessment devices for personal, education, and career counseling purposes. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Practicum Experience Record.*
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 teachers, principals, parents, psychologists, social workers, and other professionals 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. Collaborate and work effectively under the direction of supervisory personnel. *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 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 life style 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. Model professional identity and development by participating in learning experiences beyond the minimum requirements of the degree plan, and by maintaining involvement in the Graduate Counseling Club, as well as professional counseling organizations such as the Texas Counseling Association and/or the American Counseling Association. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Professional Liability Insurance Coverage, the Practicum Counselor Evaluation, Comprehensive Self-Evaluation, and instructor observation during university-based clinical supervision.*

# **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.

# 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, and complete the **Practicum Placement Form**, and return to the University Instructor prior to logging contact hours. Student 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 **University and Community Counseling Clinic**. Clients are assigned to practicum counselors by the Coordinator of the Counseling Program and the Clinical Manager in consideration of geographic convenience.
6. Successfully complete a minimum of 100 clock hours of practicum experience, which includes a minimum of 40 clock hours of direct contact. A minimum of 20 hours of direct contact in a volunteer (unpaid) capacity is required as part of the 100 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 system. 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 (PR), 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 with recommendation** in the **Practicum Portfolio**. Student counselor's final grade is partially based on the site supervisors feedback and recommendation. 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 Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College.
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:

Dates	SUMMER SESSION I 2020
May 1	New Student Screening Interviews
May 14	Conversation about the Brain: How Isolation Impacts Addiction-Dr. Judith Grisel, PhD <a href="#">Register Here</a>
May 20	Summer I Classes Begin
May 25	Memorial Day Holiday
May 22	Last Day for Registration and Schedule Changes
May 29-31	The Varela International Symposium: Exploring the Great Landscape of Awareness <a href="#">Register Here</a>
Jun 12	Last day to Drop a Course with a “W”
Jun 12	New Student Screening Interviews
Jun 19	Last Day to Apply for Summer 2020 Graduation without Pay late fee.
Jun 22-23	Final Exams Due * Practicum Portfolios Due Upon Completion of Practicum or Internship
SUMMER SESSION II 2020	
Jul 1	Summer II Classes Begin
Jul 3	Last Day for Registration and Schedule Changes
July 10	New Student Screening Interviews
Jul 18	Summer Mindfulness Retreat with Dr. Russell: 10 am – 4 pm. Open registration to anyone.
Jul 24	Last day to Drop a Course with a “W”
Aug 3-4	Final Exams Due * Practicum Portfolios Due Upon Completion of Practicum or Internship
Aug 14	New Student Screening Interviews
Fall 2020	
Aug 24	Fall Classes Begin
Aug 24-Sep 11	First Contact Practicum Students
Aug 27	Last Day for Registration and Schedule Changes
Sep 7	Labor Day Holiday
Sep 9	Last day to Drop a Course with a “W”
Sep 11	New Student Screening Interviews
Sep 18	Last Day to Apply for December 2020 Graduation
Sep 25	Practicum Conference/Observation 1 Deadline
Oct 9	New Student Screening Interviews
Oct 30	Practicum Conference/Observation 2 Deadline
Nov 11	Veteran’s Day holiday
Nov 11-14	Annual Texas Counselors Conference, Dallas, TX <a href="#">Register Here</a>
Nov 13	Last day to Drop a Course with a “W”
Nov 13	New Student Screening Interviews
Nov 25-27	Thanksgiving Holiday
Dec 3-10	Final Exams Due * Practicum Portfolios Due Upon Completion of Practicum or Internship
Dec 4	New Student Screening Interviews
Dec 4	Practicum Conference/Observation 3 Deadline
Dec 12	Fall Commencement – International Center for Trade, Eagle Pass, 3:30 p.m.

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**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 counselor-trainees are required to participate in weekly group supervision meetings on the Collaborate feature of Blackboard. 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 Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College 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 Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College 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 Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College 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 Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College 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](mailto: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 Sul Ross State University Rio Grande University 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 Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College 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 Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College, 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 Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College, 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



# Professional Disclosure Statement



The Counseling Program in the Department of Education at Sul Ross State University Sul Ross State University Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College conducts counseling practicum experiences each semester and during the summer. This semester (*practicum counselor's name*) will be working at (*name of practicum site/agency*) as a practicum counselor.

## Education and Experience

The counseling practicum is open to advanced graduate students in the Counseling Program. Before participating in the practicum experience, trainees must complete required course work, and must demonstrate competency in and knowledge of counseling theories and techniques. (*practicum counselor's name*) has a bachelor's degree in Psychology or related field of study and has (relevant work experience). In addition, (*she or he*) has skills and knowledge in multicultural issues; group counseling, ethical and legal issues, human growth and development, family counseling, community referral resources, and testing and assessment.

## Counseling Services

Practicum counselors are expected to work with clients who are seeking counseling services. Practicum counselors may conduct individual and small group counseling sessions, large group guidance and training, and consultation with persons regarding a specific client.

## Confidentiality

All client and counseling information is highly confidential and cannot be released without the written permission of the client, or in the case of a client under the age of 17, permission of the parents. However, Texas state law requires the reporting of persons who present a danger to themselves or others and any known or suspected cases of child abuse.

## Supervision

As a practicum counselor, (*counselor student name*) is closely supervised by (*name of site supervisor*), (*title of supervisor*) of the (*name of practicum site*) (*site supervisor contact number*), and Dr. Todd T. Russell, Professor of the Counseling Program at Sul Ross State University Sul Ross State University Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College (210-253-0884).

## Personal Responsibility

In compliance with Texas state law, the university administration requests that licensed concealed handgun holders leave their weapons at home or in their vehicle during all counseling sessions.

## Client Informed Consent Statement

I agree to participate in counseling with a Practicum Counselor. I understand that I will participate in counseling sessions that may be discussed confidentially with clinical supervisors. I understand that the practicum counselor will be supervised by (*name of site supervisor*) and Dr. Todd T. Russell.

Client's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Practicum Counselor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Ethical Practice Statement

Carefully review the Code of Ethics and the Standards of Practice of the American Counseling Association (refer to Appendix A) and sign the Ethical Practice Statement. Return this signed form to the instructor prior to beginning any field-based experiences.

*All Counselor -trainees are required to read the **Code of Ethics** and the **Standards of Practice** of the American Counseling Association and then sign and submit to the University Instructor this **Ethical Practice Statement** prior to engaging in any direct counseling experiences.*

## Ethical Practice Agreement

I have read and subscribe to the professional Ethical Standards of the American Counseling Association. I understand that it is my obligation to protect the privacy of the clients about whom I have confidential information, and to not reveal confidential materials (information, case notes, video tapes, audio tapes) to unauthorized persons, except where state law requires, without the written consent of the client. I am aware that I am prohibited from discussing my clients with anyone except my supervisors, professors, and professional colleagues.

I have read the Ethical Standards of the American Counseling Association and I agree to abide by these standards and the confidentiality rules stated above. I understand that violation of this agreement, or any unprofessional behavior, may subject me to civil penalties, as well as exclusion from further practicum experiences in the Counseling Program of Sul Ross State University.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: Preferred Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_