
*Master of Education in
Counseling*

HANDBOOK
for
**COUNSELING
FIELDWORK**

**Internship in
Counseling**
(EDUC 7317)

Fall 2022 *(August 29, 2022)*

Internship Overview

The *Internship in Counseling* (EDUC 7317) is designed to provide the advanced graduate student in the Counseling Program with a clinically supervised independent fieldwork experience to facilitate further development as a professional counselor in specific work settings. Like the practicum, the internship 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.

Internship Purpose

The purpose of this fieldwork experience is to provide advanced counseling students with supervised practice in counseling in school, institution, and/or agency settings. Intern counselors are clinically supervised by university faculty members and site-based counseling supervisors.

Note: The intern counselor must continue to maintain the student liability insurance obtained prior to beginning the initial practicum experience. (*Interns who are maintaining the same student liability insurance obtained during the Practicum in Counseling are not required to resubmit the insurance verification.*)

Internship Prerequisites

Students must successfully complete (i.e., a grade of B or better) all requirements of the *Practicum in Counseling* (EDUC 7316), and have the approval of the university instructor, before they can begin accruing experiential hours toward the *Internship in Counseling* (EDUC 7317). Students are allowed to enroll in *Internship in Counseling* (EDUC 7317) and *Practicum in Counseling* (EDUC 7316) simultaneously so that once the requirements of the *Practicum in Counseling* (EDUC 7316) are satisfied, the student can then seamlessly continue accruing hours toward the *Internship in Counseling* (EDUC 7317).

Internship Structure

Like the *Practicum in Counseling* (EDUC 7316), the *Internship in Counseling* (EDUC 7317) is not a traditional graduate course. The intern's primary responsibility is to further enhance the practice of counseling in a school, agency, and/or institutional setting. To successfully complete the three-semester credit hour *Internship in Counseling* (EDUC 7317), each intern must complete a minimum total of 600 clock hours of counseling

experience, with a minimum of 240 direct-contact clock hours (face-to-face counseling). Students must enroll in *Internship in Counseling* (EDUC 7317) each semester until they successfully satisfy all requirements of the fieldwork experiences. When all requirements have been met, the intern will be granted a final letter grade which signifies completion of the fieldwork experiences in the Counseling Program. The intern is responsible for maintaining regular weekly contact with the university instructor via weekly group supervision meetings on Zoom, TEAMS, Collaborate Ultra, online blog, telephone, email, or in-person meetings. The intern counselor is required to maintain a weekly blog (an informal and personal journal of the internship experiences) on the Blackboard site for the *Internship in Counseling* (EDUC 7317). Once all requirements have been completed, and the ***Internship Portfolio*** is submitted to the university instructor via uploading to the clinical shared drive, the intern will be awarded a final letter grade. Interns who are not able to complete all specified requirements by the end of the semester will be awarded a grade of “PR” (In-Progress) for that semester of *Internship in Counseling* (EDUC 7317), and they will re-enroll in *Internship in Counseling* (EDUC 7317) in subsequent semesters until successfully satisfying all requirements. Students are allowed to pace the fieldwork experiences in appropriate balance with other career and life demands.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successfully completing the requirements of the *Internship in Counseling* (EDUC 7317) the student will be able to:

1. Identify and explain the skills necessary for providing effective counseling and psychotherapy. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Internship Counselor Blog, the Intern Counselor Evaluation Form, the Internship Experience Record, the Comprehensive Counseling Experiences and Recordkeeping, Comprehensive Personal Review and Self-Evaluation, instructor observation of video recorded counseling sessions, and instructor observation of Intern Counselor's interactions and responses during Clinical Supervision.*
2. Initiate and conduct effective counseling relationships. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Internship Counselor Blog, the Intern Counselor Evaluation Form, the Internship Experience Record, the Comprehensive Counseling Experiences and Recordkeeping, instructor observation of video recorded counseling sessions, and instructor observation of Intern Counselor's interactions and responses during Clinical Supervision.*
3. Establish and maintain therapeutic alliances with clients through effective listening, empathy, reflection of feeling, and other counseling skills. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Internship Counselor Blog, the Intern Counselor Evaluation Form, the Comprehensive Counseling Experiences and Recordkeeping, instructor observation of video recorded counseling sessions, and instructor observation of Intern Counselor's interactions and responses during Clinical Supervision.*
4. Select and implement appropriate interventions based on an evolving clinical hypothesis. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Internship Counselor Blog, the Intern Counselor Evaluation Form, the Comprehensive Counseling Experiences and Recordkeeping, instructor observation of video recorded counseling sessions, and instructor observation of Intern Counselor's interactions and responses during Clinical Supervision.*
5. Identify and describe the criteria necessary for selecting clients for group counseling. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Internship Counselor Blog, the Internship Experience Record, and instructor observation of Intern Counselor's interactions and responses during Clinical Supervision.*
6. Conduct effective group counseling with appropriate group counseling intervention skills. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Internship Counselor Blog, the Internship Experience Record, and instructor observation of Intern Counselor's interactions and responses during Clinical Supervision.*

7. Measure and assess client appropriateness in group counseling situations. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Internship Counselor Blog, the Internship Experience Record, and instructor observation of Intern Counselor's interactions and responses during Clinical Supervision.*
8. Conduct assessments of client problem areas and needs. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Internship Counselor Blog, the Intern Counselor Evaluation Form, the Internship Experience Record, the Comprehensive Counseling Experiences and Recordkeeping, and instructor observation of Intern Counselor's interactions and responses during Clinical Supervision.*
9. Design and implement counseling treatment plans based on clinical assessments. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Internship Counselor Blog, the Intern Counselor Evaluation Form, the Comprehensive Counseling Experiences and Recordkeeping, instructor observation of video recorded counseling sessions, and instructor observation of Intern Counselor's interactions and responses during Clinical Supervision.*
10. Assess and respond to clients in crisis. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Internship Counselor Blog, the Intern Counselor Evaluation Form, the Internship Experience Record, Comprehensive Personal Review and Self-Evaluation, instructor observation of video recorded counseling sessions, and instructor observation of Intern Counselor's interactions and responses during Clinical Supervision.*
11. Employ the appropriate skills required for providing professional consultation. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Internship Counselor Blog, the Intern Counselor Evaluation Form, the Internship Experience Record, and instructor observation of Intern Counselor's interactions and responses during Clinical Supervision.*
12. Develop and maintain effective working relationships with clinical supervisees. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Internship Counselor Blog, the Internship Experience Record, the Student-Counselor Evaluation of Clinical Supervisor Form, Comprehensive Personal Review and Self-Evaluation, and instructor observation of Intern Counselor's interactions and responses during Clinical Supervision.*
13. Instruct and model appropriate counseling skills to supervisees. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Internship Counselor Blog, the Internship Experience Record, the Student-Counselor Evaluation of Clinical Supervisor Form, Comprehensive Personal Review and Self-Evaluation, and instructor observation of Intern Counselor's interactions and responses during Clinical Supervision.*
14. Relate research findings and theories to the practice of counseling. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Internship Counselor Blog, the Intern Counselor Evaluation Form, the Comprehensive Counseling Experiences and Recordkeeping, Comprehensive Personal Review and Self-Evaluation, the Student-Counselor Evaluation of Clinical Supervisor Form, instructor observation of video recorded counseling sessions, and instructor observation of Intern Counselor's interactions and responses during Clinical Supervision.*

15. Discuss and describe an evolving integrated personal approach to counseling. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Internship Counselor Blog, the Intern Counselor Evaluation Form, the Comprehensive Counseling Experiences and Recordkeeping, Comprehensive Personal Review and Self-Evaluation, the Student-Counselor Evaluation of Clinical Supervisor Form, instructor observation of video recorded counseling sessions, and instructor observation of Intern Counselor's interactions and responses during Clinical Supervision.*
16. Model a commitment to continued learning in the field of counseling. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Internship Counselor Blog, the Intern Counselor Evaluation Form, the Internship Experience Record, Comprehensive Personal Review and Self-Evaluation, and instructor observation of Intern Counselor's interactions and responses during Clinical Supervision.*
17. Articulate a professional identity that incorporates an awareness of self and an understanding of and respect for diversity. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Internship Counselor Blog, the Intern Counselor Evaluation Form, Comprehensive Personal Review and Self-Evaluation, instructor observation of video recorded counseling sessions, and instructor observation of Intern Counselor's interactions and responses during Clinical Supervision.*
18. Demonstrate awareness of one's own cultural self while employing culturally competent skills for counseling diverse populations. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Internship Counselor Blog, the Intern Counselor Evaluation Form, the Comprehensive Counseling Experiences and Recordkeeping, Comprehensive Personal Review and Self-Evaluation, instructor observation of video recorded counseling sessions, and instructor observation of Intern Counselor's interactions and responses during Clinical Supervision.*
19. Establish and maintain a social-justice oriented approach to counseling. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Internship Counselor Blog, the Intern Counselor Evaluation Form, Comprehensive Personal Review and Self-Evaluation, and instructor observation of Intern Counselor's interactions and responses during Clinical Supervision.*
20. Determine and apply the knowledge, sensitivity and clinical skills needed to work with diverse populations. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Internship Counselor Blog, the Intern Counselor Evaluation Form, the Comprehensive Counseling Experiences and Recordkeeping, Comprehensive Personal Review and Self-Evaluation, instructor observation of video recorded counseling sessions, and instructor observation of Intern Counselor's interactions and responses during Clinical Supervision.*
21. Identify and implement ethical standards and decision-making in clinical settings. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Internship Counselor Blog, the Intern Counselor Evaluation Form, the Comprehensive Counseling Experiences and Recordkeeping, Comprehensive Personal Review and Self-Evaluation, instructor observation of video recorded*

counseling sessions, and instructor observation of Intern Counselor's interactions and responses during Clinical Supervision.

Internship Requirements

A student's final grade in the *Internship in Counseling* (EDUC 7317) will be based on the successful completion of the following:

1. Select an internship site and site supervisor, and complete the **Internship Placement Form**, and return to the instructor prior to logging contact hours. Interns may choose to work at more than one site. Complete the **Internship Placement Form** for each site and supervisor, email to the instructor, and upload to the clinical folder on the shared drive prior to logging contact hours toward the Internship requirements. The university instructor (Field Supervisor) will verify the site supervisor's qualifications before supervision commences. The instructor (Field Supervisor) will make initial contact with site supervisors, provide contact information, and review the targeted skill development areas. §228.35(f); [19 TAC §228.35(h)]; [19 TAC §228.35(g) and (h)]; 19 TAC §228.2(12), §228.2 (24), §228.2(31), and §228.2(16).
2. Site supervisors will acknowledge, as evidenced by signed **Code of Ethics Form**, and prepare intern counselors according to the *ACA Code of Ethics*.
3. Maintain the professional liability insurance you obtained prior to beginning the *Practicum in Counseling* (EDUC 7316).
4. Edit and revise the **Professional Disclosure Statement** that you created for the *Practicum in Counseling*. Your current version must indicate your role as an intern. Completed **Professional Disclosure Statement** must be uploaded to the clinical folder on the shared drive.
5. Successfully complete a minimum of 600 clock hours of internship experience, which includes a minimum of 240 clock hours of direct contact. A minimum of 20 hours of direct contact in a volunteer (unpaid) capacity is required as part of the 600 clock-hour total for those interns who are participating in a paid internship experience or accruing counseling hours at their place of employment.
6. Maintain a regular journal of your internship experiences online in the form of an **Internship Counselor Blog** on the Blackboard system. Interns will use the same Blackboard site as practicum counselors. 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 internship encounters. You are required to interact with fellow interns 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.
7. Maintain the **Weekly Internship Log** of counseling-related experiences and complete an end-of-the-experience **Summary of Internship Hours** (when you have completed all requirements); the weekly logs and summary are due, as part of your final portfolio,

to the instructor, when you have completed the required clock hours. If you do not complete the *Internship in Counseling* (EDUC 7317) requirements at the end of a given semester, you are not required to submit anything to the instructor.

8. All interns will receive grades of PR – indicating “*in progress*” – until they have completed all required fieldwork hours and documentation. Interns who receive a PR will be required to enroll in the *Internship in Counseling* (EDUC 7317) each semester until they complete the fieldwork and documentation requirements. Students who are continuing the same internship experience from a previous semester are not required to resubmit documentation.
9. Establish and maintain three (3) continuous-contact counseling relationships (at least eight 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. Similar to the practicum requirements, interns 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 internship is being conducted may require additional documentation and/or record-keeping to be maintained on each client.
10. Maintain contact with the instructor (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 instructor. This is an individualized requirement based on the intern’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 final portfolio. The final **Self-Evaluation** is a narrative of two to three pages in length that critically examines and discusses the internship experience, personal strengths and weaknesses, acquired knowledge and skills, and goals for continued professional growth.
13. Include site supervisor’s internship documentation letter in the *Internship Portfolio*. The intern’s final grade is partially based on the feedback from the site supervisor. Any unprofessional or unethical behavior on the part of the intern will result in the student’s immediate removal from the internship; the student will receive a final grade of F; and the student will be denied enrollment in any future fieldwork courses at Rio Grande College.
14. Include a completed **Internship Site Evaluation** in the final *Internship Portfolio*.
15. Finalize and submit to the instructor the complete *Internship Portfolio* when all requirements of the internship have been met. It is due on or before the first day of the university-specified final examination period. The *Internship Portfolio* can simply be an

expansion of the *Practicum Portfolio* that was submitted at the completion of the practicum requirements. Therefore, upon successful completion of all fieldwork requirements the counseling student will have one complete document that verifies completion of both the practicum and the internship. *(If you have not completed all requirements by the end of the semester or summer session, you do not need to submit any forms or documents. You will receive a final grade of PR on your transcript.)*

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).

Internship Counselor Blog

Within Blackboard, under the content area entitled **Internship Counselor Blog**, you have the ability to create an individual journal blog. When you open this subheading click on "Create Blog Entry", this will allow you to create your personal blog for the internship. 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 fieldwork 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 internship 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 **Internship 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 **Internship 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. Interns 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 internship plans for this semester, your personal and professional goals, and your expectations for the internship. Additionally, in your initial blog entries describe and discuss your internship 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.

Mindfulness and Counseling

Mindful counselors are able to interact more effectively with their personal and professional environments; they are able to respond rather than react to life's unexpected happenings; they are more effective communicators professionally and personally; and they are more creative and effective agents of client-desired change. A routine personal mindfulness practices provides the counseling graduate student with the knowledge and skills to:

- Slow down or stop the cascade of automatic and habitual reactions.
- See oneself and others more clearly.
- Listen deeply and understand situations just as they are.
- Be open to creativity beyond conditioning.
- Respond effectively to complex and/or emotionally charged situations.
- Act competently and ethically.
- Achieve balance and resilience in personal and professional lives.

Professional Counseling Identity and Behavior

In registering for classes in the Counseling Program at 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 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 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

Distance Education Statement

Due to the personal health conditions and remaining restrictions associated with the COVID-10 pandemic, the experiential learning and skill development of *Techniques of Counseling I* (EDUC 6321) will take place on Blackboard, Collaborate Ultra, Zoom and Google platforms. Required readings, assignments, 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 course. The policy on Distance Education at Sul Ross State University 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 directly to the Instructors, which require secure login information to verify students' identities and to protect students' information. Students enrolled in distance education courses at SRSU 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. The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook.

Accessibility and Safe Learning Environment

The Counseling Program of 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 SRSU 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 SRSU 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 1973. Students with disabilities are provided assistance in gaining opportunities for full participation in programs, services and activities. It is university policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. RGC students seeking accessibility services should contact Ms. Paulette Harris, Executive Assistant to the Vice President and Dean, at 830-279-3023 or email pharris@sulross.edu. Ms. Harris's office is at 2623 Garner Field Road, Uvalde, TX 78801 (this is the mailing address, too).

Verbal and Physical Harassment

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.

Site Supervisors for School Counseling Fieldwork Experiences

Qualified site supervisors must have the following:

- At least three years of experience as an accomplished educator as shown by student learning
- Current certification in counseling.
- If the site supervisor does not have certification, he or she must hold at least a master's degree counseling or field related to the certification class and must comply with the same number, content, and type of continuing professional education requirements for the certification class for which supervision is being provided.
- Supervisor cannot be employed by the Sul Ross State University.

Site-based individual clinical supervision should be conducted at least one hour per week or one hour of clinical supervision for every ten hours of client contact. Procedures and methods for conducting clinical supervision are entirely at the discretion of the site supervisor. The site supervisor must sign the weekly experience logs and submit the *Counselor Evaluation Checklist*. A student's final grade is partially based on the feedback from the site supervisor. Any unprofessional or unethical behavior on the part of the counselor-trainee will result in the student's immediate removal from the fieldwork experience and the student will receive a final grade of F. The fieldwork experience is supervised by a trained by the faculty field supervisor who will be noted as the instructor of record. This experienced educator has completed an approved TEA training with regard to observational protocol. In addition to required observations, the field supervisor provides ongoing guidance support throughout the semester TAC 228.35(e)(8) and 228.35(h).