



COUNSELING PROGRAM

Professional Practice Handbook 2023 – 2024

All MA in School Counseling and MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling students are expected to read, follow, and stay current with the policies and procedures of the Graduate School and Adult Learning (GSAL) which are included in the Graduate Catalog, as well as the information included in the Student Handbook, this handbook, and any other Counseling Programs manuals and publications.

Northwestern College (NWC) reserves the right to change any policies, procedures, and provisions at any time without prior or other notice to any person or entity. Changes will be shared through the College's communication channels.

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The Counseling Program Professional Practice Handbook

Northwestern College's (NWC) Counseling Program Professional Practice Handbook was written to answer basic questions about the Counseling Program's Professional Practice Experience (Practicum/Internship), and to communicate a set of standards that can be easily read and followed in fulfillment of the CACREP standards. All Counseling Program Practicum/Internship students are expected to read, understand, and adhere to the information provided in this handbook.

Throughout the academic year, this handbook is revised with updated academic, accreditation, and licensure-related information. Students, faculty members, and Professional Practice Sites are expected to adhere to the most recent edition of the handbook.

The introduction to Section 3 of the CACREP Standards (2016) states that Professional Practice "...includes practicum and internship, [and] provides for the application of theory and the development of counseling skills under supervision. These experiences will provide opportunities for students to counsel clients who represent the ethnic and demographic diversity of their community."

Gatekeeping Expectations and Standards

The Code of Ethics of the American Counseling Association (2014) defines *gatekeeping* as "the initial and ongoing academic, skill, and dispositional assessment of students' competency for Professional Practice, including remediation and termination as appropriate" (p. 20). As such, the School Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling programs, their faculty and staff, and the Practicum and Internship sites and site supervisors all play an important role in assessing students' skills and dispositions toward ensuring that NWC only graduates counselors who are appropriate for the counseling profession. This gatekeeping responsibility is guided by a number of different professional standards within the Counseling profession, and entails:

- Being aware of student/supervisee limitations that might impede performance. The ACA Code of Ethics states, "through initial and ongoing evaluation, supervisors are aware of supervisee limitations that might impede performance. Supervisors assist supervisees in securing remedial assistance when needed. They recommend dismissal from training programs, applied counseling settings, and state or voluntary professional credentialing processes when those supervisees are unable to demonstrate that they can provide competent professional services to a range of diverse clients. Supervisors seek consultation and document their decisions to dismiss or refer supervisees for assistance. They ensure that supervisees are aware of options available to them to address such decisions" (ACA Code F.6.b, 2014).
- Systematically assessing each student's educational progress throughout the program. The accreditation standards of the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) state, "the counselor education program faculty systematically assesses each student's progress throughout the program by examining student learning in relation to a combination of knowledge and skills. The assessment process includes the following: (1) identification of key performance indicators of student learning in each of the eight core areas and in each student's respective specialty area(s), (2) measurement of student learning conducted via multiple measures and over multiple points in time, and (3) review or analysis of data" (4.F; CACREP, 2016).

- Systematically assessing each student's dispositional development throughout the program. The CACREP standards state, "the counselor education program faculty systematically assesses each student's professional dispositions throughout the program. The assessment process includes the following: (1) identification of key professional dispositions, (2) measurement of student professional dispositions over multiple points in time, and (3) review or analysis of data" (4.G; CACREP, 2016).
- Appraise the interpersonal and intrapersonal competence of students who provide services to clients.
- Evaluate students' competency to manage relationships (e.g., client, collegial, professional, supervisory, teaching, etc.) in a professional and appropriate manner.
- Take seriously the gatekeeping responsibility, even when it potentially means recommending a student not continue moving through the program when that student displays cognitive, emotional, psychological, dispositional, interpersonal, or ethical issues that may interfere with the student's ability to professionally and ethically interact with peers, clients, employers, or the public at large.

Student Competency Review from the Counseling Program Student Handbook

Gatekeeping and Student Evaluation are covered in the NWC Counseling Program Student Handbook. Competency reviews related to the gatekeeping and student evaluation processes are based on the evaluation and assessment of a student's academic performance, skills acquisition and performance, development and demonstration of professional counseling dispositions, and the student's interactions with faculty, staff, clients, site supervisors, and peers. Students are assessed on an ongoing basis throughout their progression through their program at NWC. Formal reviews are conducted following students' first semester, prior to students beginning their Practicum experience, and in students' final semester of their program. Students must pass each formal review in order to continue progressing through their program.

In instances where it is determined through the student evaluation processes that students are not ready to proceed into their Professional Practice Experience, they may be referred to the Student Support and Remediation Committee (SSRC) for support or for possible remediation. If students are placed on remediation they may not proceed into their Professional Practice Experience until they have written approval from the SSRC.

Failure to uphold professional values and ethical standards of the counseling profession, state statutes related to the counseling profession, NWC's Counseling Program student policies, or NWC's Graduate School and Adult Learning (GSAL) policies may result in a student's removal from the Professional Practice Experience, possible remediation, and/or removal from NWC's Counseling Program.

Removal from the Professional Practice Experience will result in the student failing the Practicum or Internship class. The direct and indirect hours gained during the Professional Practice Experience for that semester will not count toward the student's 100-hour Practicum requirement or the student's 600-hour Internship requirement. Refer to the *Gatekeeping and Student Evaluation* and *Student Retention and Remediation* sections of the Student Handbook for more information.

Professional Practice Experience

The 2016 Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) Standards define the *Professional Practice Experience* as “Professional Practice, which includes practicum and internship, provides for the application of theory and the development of counseling skills under supervision. These experiences will provide opportunities for students to counsel clients who represent the ethnic and demographic diversity of their community.” The NWC Counseling Program Professional Practice Experience is designed to provide students a closely-supervised opportunity to apply theory and skills in their initial development as a school counselor or clinical mental health counselor working with actual clients. Students will apply the ethical standards and multicultural competencies of the counseling profession and grow in their ability to conceptualize and treat human problems.

Clinical Mental Health Counseling students typically begin their Practicum experience in the fourth semester of their program. School Counseling students typically begin their Practicum experience in the sixth semester of their program. Students begin their Internship experiences once they have successfully completed Practicum. There are required prerequisite courses for both Practicum and Internship.

Professional Practice Supervision

NWC’s Professional Practice Experience is designed to be a closely-supervised experience for students in the School Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling programs. Both programs adhere to the CACREP standards regarding the amount and frequency of supervision provided to students obtaining their Professional Practice Experience. The CACREP standards mandate that students receive concurrent individual or triadic supervision and group supervision throughout the Professional Practice Experience. It is imperative that students log these hours separately and accurately in the Tevera system (see the Tevera section in this handbook) as students are required to obtain the required amounts of both types of supervision.

Supervisor Qualifications

Site supervisors must be appropriately qualified to serve in that capacity. Per the CACREP standards, site supervisors must have:

- A minimum of a master’s degree, preferably in counseling, or a related profession
- Relevant certifications and/or licenses
- A minimum of two years of pertinent professional experience in the specialty area in which the student is enrolled
- Knowledge of the program’s expectations, requirements, and evaluation procedures for students, and
- Relevant training in counseling supervision

NWC’s Counseling Program offers Professional Practice Sites and those who would serve as site supervisors at the Professional Practice Sites relevant training, orientation, consultation, and professional development opportunities pursuant to CACREP 3.Q.

Site Supervision

CACREP standards 3.H and 3.L mandate that students must average one hour per week of individual or triadic supervision throughout the semester. Supervision hours must be equally distributed throughout

the entire semester. Students in NWC's Counseling programs obtain their individual or triadic supervision from their site supervisors.

Triadic supervision is supervision that consists of one supervisor and two students in a given supervision session. Individual supervision is supervision that consists of one supervisor and one student in a given supervision session. Students should establish a collaborative supervisory relationship with their site supervisors that adheres to Section F of the ACA Code of Ethics (2014) and standard 3.N of the CACREP Standards (2016). If students serve at multiple sites for their Professional Practice Experience, they must obtain a minimum of biweekly supervision with each supervisor at each site.

Group Supervision

CACREP standards 3.I and 3.M mandate that students must average 1.5 hours per week of group supervision throughout the semester. Group supervision hours must be equally distributed throughout the entire semester. Group supervision is provided by a NWC counselor education program faculty member on a weekly basis through the scheduled Practicum or Internship synchronous class time via Zoom.

Tevera

Tevera is an online system utilized by NWC's Counseling programs for multiple uses:

- Students will track their Professional Practice hours through Tevera.
- Students can use the system to facilitate finding a Professional Practice Site.
- The program uses Tevera to facilitate completion of Professional Practice paperwork between program staff, Professional Practice Sites, and students.
- Students will post their Professional Practice videos (as well as practice and role play videos earlier in the program), and faculty/supervisors will use the system to review the videos and provide feedback as annotations.
- The program utilizes Tevera to access the Counselor Competencies Scale – Revised (CCS-R) which is used throughout the program to assess student skills and dispositions.
- Because the one-time student fee for Tevera secures students lifetime access to the system, students can track their post-graduate supervised hours toward licensure in their state in the Tevera system.

Students, faculty, and site supervisors will all utilize the Tevera system. Professional Practice Experience student hours will be reviewed and approved by each students' individual site supervisor within the Tevera system. At the end of each semester, all hours must be approved by the site supervisor. Students should save a copy of all approved hours reports for their own permanent records as individual state regulators may request them as part of the licensure process.

Students in need of assistance with the Tevera system should contact the Clinical Coordinator.

Practicum – CMHC/SCO 610

Practicum is a student's first experience of working with actual clients in NWC's Counseling program. Students are provided information on Practicum processes early in their program to provide ample time for preparation and for seeking a Practicum site. All students are ultimately responsible for identifying

and acquiring their own Practicum site. Practicum sites must be approved, however, by the Counseling Program's Clinical Coordinator.

Prerequisites for Practicum

The following courses are prerequisites for CMHC/SCO 610 – Practicum:

- COUN 505 – Professional Orientation
- COUN 515 – Ethics
- COUN 520 – Social & Cultural Foundations
- COUN 525 – Human Growth & Development
- COUN 550 – Theories & Skills of Counseling I
- COUN 551 – Theories & Skills of Counseling II
- COUN 555 – Crisis, Trauma, & Suicide
- COUN 605 – Skills II

Individual Counseling Sessions

Students in the School Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling programs are required to complete five (5) individual counseling sessions prior to the start of Practicum. This requirement is based on the belief that 1) in order to be an effective counselor, a person must have explored the life experiences and family history that have helped to shape the person's core beliefs and perspectives, and 2) experiencing counseling as a client can be one effective step in preparing for the program's Professional Practice Experience.

- The sessions should be completed in the semester prior to when the student plans to enroll in CMHC/SCO 610 – Practicum. However, students may begin their five counseling sessions after the start of the semester prior to that. For example, a CMHC student who is on track to begin their Practicum in the summer term may begin their five counseling sessions after the start of the prior fall semester. They should complete their five counseling sessions no later than the spring semester prior to the start of Practicum that summer. A School Counseling student who is on track to begin their Practicum in the spring semester may begin their five counseling sessions after the start of the prior summer term. They should complete their five counseling sessions no later than the fall semester prior to the start of Practicum that spring.
- The content of the sessions is confidential. However, verification of attendance by the counselor is required (see the Individual Counseling Verification Form in Tevera).
- Each of the five sessions must be a minimum of one week apart. Each session must be at least a full 50-minute therapeutic hour.
- The provider of the sessions should be a Licensed Counselor licensed in the state in which the student lives and be in good standing with their licensure board. If a Licensed Counselor cannot be located, you must seek approval for the provider you've selected from the Clinical Coordinator. Providers with provisional licenses or counselor candidates do not meet this requirement.
- If a student has engaged in counseling in the past, the student may be able to obtain new sessions with the counselor they have used in the past, but they must obtain five (5) new sessions within the timeframe of this program requirement and have the counselor sign the Individual Counseling Verification Form.
- All five sessions should be completed with the same counselor. If after the first meeting the student determines that the counselor is not a good match, the student is encouraged to change counselors and obtain five sessions with a counselor who is a better fit.

- The five counseling sessions are valid for one year as long as the student is enrolled in courses. If a student steps out of the program or delays coursework, the student may be asked to complete five new counseling sessions prior to returning to Practicum.
- The student is responsible for the expense of the counseling sessions.
- There are no exceptions for having completed this requirement before submitting Part 1 of the Professional Practice Application Process.

Mandatory Professional Practice Orientation

All students must attend the mandatory Professional Practice Orientation which is held two semesters prior to the start of Practicum for students in both counseling programs. For Clinical Mental Health Counseling students, this will typically be held early in the fall semester. For School Counseling students, this will typically be held early in the summer semester. Information on the orientation will be disseminated to students via email and information will also be available in the Counseling Program Blackboard Learning Community. The Professional Practice Orientation will provide students with critical information on the Professional Practice Experience, requirements that must be met related to the Professional Practice Experience, deadlines, and tips/best practices for searching for a Practicum/Internship site. If for any reason a student cannot attend the mandatory Professional Practice Orientation, the student must communicate their conflict in advance to the Counseling Programs Clinical Coordinator and proactively make other arrangements with the Clinical Coordinator for an alternate method of orientation.

After students have attended the mandatory Professional Practice Orientation, they may begin looking for a Professional Practice Site. Students may investigate sites in their area and may also consult the Tevera system for sites that have been used by students in prior NWC Counseling program cohorts. All sites must be approved by the Counseling Program Clinical Coordinator prior to initiating a contract with the site. Students should contact the Clinical Coordinator with questions throughout the process of securing a site.

Professional Practice Application Process

The Professional Practice Application Process consists of two parts. All documents for each part must be submitted via Tevera. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Part 1: due two months from the start of Practicum

- Proof of Student Professional Practice Liability Insurance
- Individual Counseling Verification Form
- Professional Practice Site Summary

The Clinical Coordinator will notify you once Part 1 has been approved. Once you have received approval from the Clinical Coordinator, you may proceed with Part 2 of your Professional Practice Application.

Part 2: due three weeks from the start of Practicum

- Professional Practice Site Contract
- Copy of site supervisor's résumé/CV
- Copy of site supervisor's license

The Clinical Coordinator will notify you once Part 2 of your Professional Practice Application has been approved.

Adding a Professional Practice Site

Students may add an additional site at any time. The process for adding an additional Professional Practice Site consists of two parts. All documents must be submitted via Tevera. Clearly indicate on your documents that you are adding an additional Professional Practice Site. Incomplete or missing documents will not be processed and will have to be resubmitted.

Part 1:

- Professional Practice Site Summary

The Clinical Coordinator will notify you one Part 1 of your Professional Practice Application has been approved. Once you have received approval from the Clinical Coordinator, you may proceed with Part 2 of your Professional Practice Application.

Part 2:

- Professional Practice Site Contract
- Copy of site supervisor's résumé/CV
- Copy of site supervisor's license

You will receive notification once Part 2 of your Professional Practice Application has been approved by the Clinical Coordinator. You may not begin seeing clients at the new site until Part 2 of your Professional Practice Application has been approved by the Clinical Coordinator. If you serve at multiple sites for your Professional Practice Experience, you must obtain a minimum of biweekly supervision with each supervisor at each site.

Adding or Changing Site Supervisors

If you are adding a site supervisor, or changing site supervisors at your current site, please follow the procedures for Part 2 above and submit the information for the new site supervisor to the Clinical Coordinator.

Early Termination of a Professional Practice Contract

The NWC Counseling Program takes early termination of a Professional Practice Contract very seriously and as such, students should not consider this step lightly. If a student needs to break a contract for any reason, the student must immediately contact the Program Director or Clinical Coordinator to begin the formal process.

Practicum Policies and Requirements

Practicum is a planned, field-based clinical experience where students provide services to actual clients in a closely supervised setting that helps facilitate their initial development as counselors. Students must complete a minimum of 100 hours over the course of a full academic semester (usually 14 or 16 weeks). Policies and requirements of the Practicum experience include the following:

- **Direct Hours:** Practicum students are required to obtain a minimum of 40 direct service hours with actual clients that contribute to the development of counseling skills in order to

successfully complete the Practicum experience. CACREP defines *direct service* as the supervised use of counseling, consultation, or related professional skills with actual clients (can be individuals, couples, families, or groups) for the purpose of fostering social, cognitive, behavioral, and/or affective change. These activities must involve interaction with others and may include assessment, counseling, psycho-educational activities, and consultation.

- Students cannot begin counseling clients at their site until they have attended their first Practicum class.
 - Students can count up to 25 direct hours of milieu counseling (a form of counseling that involves the use of therapeutic inpatient or residential communities). Additional milieu hours can count as indirect hours.
 - Teletherapy can be counted as direct hours. Students are responsible for following their state's mental health statutes regarding teletherapy.
 - Students are required to complete a minimum of 10 hours of leading or co-leading a counseling group during the Professional Practice Experience.
 - Students are required to complete a minimum of 100 hours of non-group hours (individual, couples, family, etc.) during the Professional Practice Experience.
- **Indirect Hours:** The remainder of the 100 hours (approximately 60 hours) can include activities like observing others providing counseling or related services, record keeping and documentation, administrative duties, and clinical and/or administrative supervision (CACREP Glossary).
 - Indirect hours (i.e. site tour, orientation) may begin and hours may be logged beginning the Monday of the first week of class, before the actual first-class session.
 - Students may count their hours preparing their case conceptualization as indirect hours.
 - Other examples of indirect hours could include: staff meetings, counseling-related trainings (Motivational Interviewing, Working with Suicidal Clients, etc.), preparing for sessions (clinical preparation), and additional research directly related to a current client.
- **Site Supervision:** Individual (one supervisee and one supervisor) or triadic (two supervisees and one supervisor) supervision counts as indirect hours toward your Practicum requirement. Students are required to average one hour of individual or triadic supervision per week over the entire Practicum semester. Supervision hours must be equally distributed throughout the entire semester. Students may not enter into a supervisory relationship with a mental health professional who has provided counseling services to them in the past.
- **Group Supervision:** Group supervision counts as indirect hours toward your Practicum requirement. CACREP requires students in their Professional Practice Experience to engage in synchronous class sessions whether enrolled in online or in-person classes; these synchronous class sessions count as the required group supervision toward students' Professional Practice Experience requirements. Students must average 1.5 hours of group supervision per week over the entire Practicum semester. Group supervision hours must be equally distributed throughout the entire semester.
- **Hours accumulated over and above the mandatory 100 Practicum hours cannot be carried over into Internship.**
- **Students must secure a site and have an approved Professional Practice Contract on file with the Clinical Coordinator to be enrolled in Practicum.**

- **Students must continue to provide clinical services at the Professional Practice Site for the duration of the semester to pass the course.**
- **Any hours earned in a failed course will be lost.**
- **Delaying Practicum:**
 - Students who must delay their entry into Practicum should notify their Enrollment Counselor and the Counseling Program Clinical Coordinator as soon as possible.
 - Students who have already completed COUN 605 – Skills II will be required to re-take the course.

Internship – CMHC/SCO 615; 620; 625

Following successful completion of CMHC/SCO 610 – Practicum with a B (3.0 grade points) or better, School Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling students move into their Internship experience. Students typically begin their Internship experience immediately following their Practicum experience. The Internship experience is designed to continue students' development as clinical mental health counselors or as school counselors through closely supervised experiences at approved Professional Practice Sites.

The Internship experience is comprised of CMHC/SCO 615 – Internship I, and CMHC/SCO 620 – Internship II. Students are required to complete a minimum of two semesters of Internship, totaling 6 credit hours. When needed, students can spread their Internship experience over additional semesters and take CMHC/SCO 625 – Internship III to complete the Internship experience.

Prerequisites for Internship

The following courses are prerequisites for CMHC/SCO 615 – Internship I:

- COUN 505 – Professional Orientation
- COUN 515 – Ethics
- COUN 520 – Social & Cultural Foundations
- COUN 525 – Human Growth & Development
- COUN 550 – Theories & Skills of Counseling I
- COUN 551 – Theories & Skills of Counseling II
- COUN 555 – Crisis, Trauma, & Suicide
- COUN 605 – Skills II
- CMHC/SCO 610 – Practicum

Internship Policies and Requirements

The Internship component of the Professional Practice Experience consists of a minimum of 600 hours of closely-supervised field experience that must be completed over a minimum of two (2) full academic semesters (usually 14 – 16 weeks). Policies and requirements of the Internship experience include the following:

- **Direct Hours:** Internship students are required to obtain a minimum of 240 direct service hours (40% of the 600 total hours) with actual clients that contribute to the development of counseling skills in order to successfully complete the Practicum experience. CACREP defines *direct service* as the supervised use of counseling, consultation, or related professional skills with actual clients (can be individuals, couples, families, or groups) for the purpose of fostering

social, cognitive, behavioral, and/or affective change. These activities must involve interaction with others and may include assessment, counseling, psycho-educational activities, and consultation.

- Equal distribution of direct and indirect hours toward the required minimums across the two semesters of Internship is a recommended guideline.
 - Students can count up to 25 direct hours of milieu counseling (a form of counseling that involves the use of therapeutic inpatient or residential communities). Additional milieu hours can count as indirect hours.
 - Teletherapy can be counted as direct hours. Students are responsible for following their state's mental health statutes regarding teletherapy.
 - Students may count up to 25 hours of teaching as direct hours.
 - Students are required to complete a minimum of 10 hours of leading or co-leading a counseling group during the Professional Practice Experience.
 - Students are required to complete a minimum of 100 hours of non-group hours (individual, couples, family, etc.) during the Professional Practice Experience.
- **Indirect Hours:** The remainder of the 600 hours (approximately 360 hours or less) can include activities like observing others providing counseling or related services, record keeping and documentation, administrative duties, and clinical and/or administrative supervision (CACREP Glossary).
 - Students may count their studying for exams like the CPCE, NCE and Praxis, for a maximum of 36 hours as indirect hours.
 - Students may count their hours preparing their case conceptualization as indirect hours.
 - Students may count actual hours spent at a training or in conference break-out sessions as indirect hours.
 - Other examples of indirect hours could include: staff meetings, counseling-related trainings (Motivational Interviewing, Working with Suicidal Clients, etc.), preparing for sessions (clinical preparation), and additional research directly related to a current client.
- **Site Supervision:** Individual (one supervisee and one supervisor) or triadic (two supervisees and one supervisor) supervision counts as indirect hours toward your Internship requirement. Students are required to average one hour of individual or triadic supervision per week over all applicable Internship semesters. Supervision hours must be equally distributed throughout the Internship semesters. Students may not enter into a supervisory relationship with a mental health professional who has provided counseling services to them in the past.
- **Group Supervision:** Group supervision counts as indirect hours toward your Internship requirement. CACREP requires students in their Professional Practice Experience to engage in synchronous class sessions whether enrolled in online or in-person classes; these synchronous class sessions count as the required group supervision toward students' Professional Practice Experience requirements. Students must average 1.5 hours of group supervision per week over all applicable Internship semesters. Group supervision hours must be equally distributed throughout the Internship semesters.
- **Students must secure a site and have an approved Professional Practice Contract on file with the Clinical Coordinator to be enrolled in CMHC/SCO 615, CMHC/SCO 620, or CMHC/SCO 625.**

- **Students must continue to provide clinical services at the Professional Practice Site for the duration of the semester to pass the course. Any hours earned in a failed course will be lost.**
- **Delaying Internship:**
 - Students who must delay their entry into Internship should notify their Enrollment Counselor and the Counseling Program Clinical Coordinator as soon as possible.
 - Students who must withdraw from an Internship course due to failure to submit required paperwork or other circumstances will have to take the class in a later semester, which may result in a delayed graduation date and which may affect the student's financial aid status. Students in this situation should consult with their Enrollment Counselor as quickly as possible.

State Licensure

Licensure requirements vary for professional counselors (LPCs) and professional school counselors (PSCs) and they vary by the state. Students are responsible for being aware of the licensure requirements for their specialty area and for the state in which they intend to practice.

- Because licensure of counselors is handled at the state level, the exact title of this license can also vary by the state. The American Counseling Association (ACA) attempts to track licensure requirements by state and to maintain the accuracy of this information. However, the ultimate guide to licensure requirements will be the licensing body in the state in which a student intends to practice. You can find the ACA's information at: <https://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/licensure-requirements>. The National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) provides information on each state's licensure board, where students can also obtain specific information on the licensure requirements in their state. You can find the NBCC's website at: <http://www.nbcc.org/directory>
- The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) attempts to track licensure requirements by state and to maintain the accuracy of this information. However, the ultimate guide to licensure requirements will be the licensing body in the state in which a student intends to practice. You can find the ASCA's information at: <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/About-School-Counseling/State-Requirements-Programs/State-Licensure-Requirements>

Additional Professional Practice Policies

Obtaining a Second Professional Practice Site

Students are occasionally interested in obtaining a second Professional Practice site, for the purpose of accruing hours more quickly toward meeting the Professional Practice requirements. Students also occasionally explore obtaining a second Professional Practice Site in order to diversify the experience they gain over the course of their Professional Practice Experience, for example, if one site specializes in treating adults and the student also wants experience working with children.

Obtaining a second Professional Practice Site is allowed. When adding a second site, the student is still responsible to uphold the first contract agreement. See the sections in this handbook entitled *Adding a Professional Practice Site* for more information on the specific process for obtaining a second site.

Paid Site Supervision

Students are required to receive weekly individual or triadic supervision at their Professional Practice Site from a site supervisor who has been approved by the NWC Counseling Program as part of the

student's Professional Practice Experience. It is common practice that this site supervision be provided at no cost to the student during the Professional Practice Experience.

If a student desires placement at a site that does not have or provide licensed supervision or which otherwise requires the student to pay for supervision, this would be considered an exception to NWC's Professional Practice policy. Authorization for placement at this type of site is required by NWC's Clinical Coordinator.

Distribution of Professional Practice Hours

A student's earned direct and indirect hours in Practicum and Internship are expected to be evenly distributed across the semesters of the student's Professional Practice Experience. In the event that a student earns all of her or his hours in advance of the end of the academic semester or the end of the student's contract with her or his site, the student is still expected to continue to provide clinical services at the site for the duration of the agreed upon contract.

Neurofeedback Hours

Neurofeedback is a form of biofeedback in which clients respond to a display of their own brainwaves or other electrical activity generated from their nervous system. This service may only be counted as indirect hours for the purposes of a student's Professional Practice Experience. Typically, neurofeedback is provided in tandem with talk therapy, which occurs either before or after the neurofeedback service. The counseling time can be counted as direct hours. For example, if a counselor meets with a client for a total of one hour, and 30 minutes of that time is spent doing talk therapy and 30 minutes of the time is spent doing neurofeedback, the student would log the time as 30 minutes direct and 30 minutes indirect.

All clinical documentation and disclosures for neurofeedback services must follow the mental health practices and industry standards of the state in which the student is conducting his or her Professional Practice Experience.

Providing Services Over Breaks

Students may only accrue hours toward their Professional Practice requirements during the academic semesters. If students are required by their site(s) and/or decide to continue working at their site during holiday and academic breaks, they need to discuss this *in advance* with their site supervisor, their NWC faculty supervisor, and the NWC Clinical Coordinator. Students should also take note that they are required to be covered by liability insurance *at all times* that they are providing services and not all student liability insurance policies provide coverage during holiday and academic breaks.

Incomplete Grade Policy

Students who experience unexpected life circumstances may request an incomplete by following the Incomplete Grade Policy located in the Graduate Catalog. If an incomplete is given in Practicum, Internship I, Internship II, or Internship III, students are required to maintain weekly individual site supervision and faculty supervision while they work to complete the course. Students who are awarded an incomplete in Practicum, Internship I, or Internship II may be ineligible to move forward into the next course in their progression as completion of the prior course is a prerequisite for moving forward in the Professional Practice Experience. Questions about the impact of an Incomplete in the Professional Practice Experience should be directed to the Enrollment Counselor and the Clinical Coordinator.

Earning a Failing Grade

A student may earn a failing grade in a Professional Practice course if/when:

- The student misses more than six hours of scheduled synchronous class meeting time of CMHC/SCO 610 – Practicum, CMHC/SCO 615 – Internship I, CMHC/SCO 620 – Internship II, or CMHC/SCO 625 – Internship III per semester.
- The student fails to have all of the required Professional Practice forms signed by all the required parties and submitted appropriately in the Tevera and/or Blackboard systems by the required deadline for each form. Deadlines for forms are clearly communicated in Tevera and/or Blackboard. Extenuating circumstances will be considered.
- The student submits an inadequate, incomplete, or unacceptable case conceptualization paper and/or presentation in a Professional Practice course as determined by the faculty supervisor.
- The student exhibits unprofessional/unethical conduct at the Professional Practice Site or in the classroom and/or fails to comply with directions and consultation given by either the site supervisor or the faculty supervisor. All disciplinary/behavioral issues will be documented on a Professional Concern Form (PCF) and reported to the Student Support and Remediation Committee (SSRC) as part of the NWC Counseling Program's Formal Remediation Process (see the Student Handbook for additional information).
- The student fails to comply with site or agency policies and procedures, or breaks agreements made with the site (i.e. unexcused absences, breaking the terms of the Professional Practice contract, etc.).
- The Professional Practice faculty supervisor determines that the student's current emotional, mental, or physical state compromises the integrity of the Professional Practice Experience or potentially places the student or others in harm's way or in an unduly vulnerable position. All such cases will be brought to the attention of the Counseling Program Director and the Dean of the Graduate School and Adult Learning (see the Student Handbook for additional information).
- Program faculty, staff, and/or site supervisors have a concern regarding a student's competency as discussed in the *Gatekeeping and Student Evaluation* section of the Student Handbook.
- The student loses their Professional Practice Site at any point. This may cause the student to become ineligible to finish the course and may result in a failing grade for the course.

Evaluation

Evaluation of a student's Professional Practice Experience is based on several different criteria, including the following.

Assignments Completed by Student:

- Approved Hours Summary Logged in Tevera
- Written Case Conceptualization(s)
- Case Conceptualization Presentation(s)
- Recordings of Counseling Sessions or Live Observation Forms
- Completed and Signed CCS-R Evaluations
- Student Evaluation of the Site Supervisor (from Tevera)
- Student Evaluation of the Professional Practice Site (from Tevera)

Evaluations Completed by the Faculty Supervisor:

- The student's attendance and participation in Practicum and Internship synchronous classes
- The student's written summaries, reports, logs, reflections, and journal assignments
- The student's written and verbal presentation of case conceptualizations
- The faculty member's communications with the student's site supervisor

Evaluations Completed by the Site Supervisor:

- Completed and signed CCS-R submitted at mid-term and end of each Professional Practice semester
- Communications with the student's faculty supervisor

Professional Practice Student Rights, Roles, and Responsibilities

Student Rights

1. The student has a right to have NWC's Counseling Program Professional Practice Experience policies and procedures fully explained to them.
2. The student has a right to know the criteria for evaluation in the Professional Practice courses and to receive progress evaluations from their faculty supervisor on a regular, systematic basis.
3. The student has a right to know the expectations of their faculty supervisor/Professional Practice course instructor.
4. The student has a right to know the expectations of their site supervisor and to expect regular supervision and feedback from their site supervisor and from the professional counseling staff of the student's Professional Practice Site.
5. The student has a right to know the emergency procedures of their Professional Practice Site.
6. The student has a right to know the paperwork requirements and expectations of their Professional Practice Site.
7. The student has a right to ask questions regarding the counseling process and the correct handling of cases.

Student Roles & Responsibilities

1. The student is responsible for knowing and adhering to the information contained in this Professional Practice Handbook, the NWC Counseling Program Student Handbook, and the NWC Graduate Catalog.
2. The student is responsible for securing their own Professional Practice Site in accordance with the policies and procedures delineated in this Professional Practice Handbook.
3. The student is responsible for knowing the education and licensure requirements of the state in which they intend to pursue licensure.
4. The student is responsible for submission of all required site and site supervisor information to NWC's Clinical Coordinator.
5. The student is responsible for meeting with their site supervisor for individual or triadic supervision averaging at least one hour of supervision per week equally distributed across each Professional Practice semester.

6. The student is responsible for notifying the Clinical Coordinator, faculty supervisor, and site supervisor of any changes of physical address, phone number, or email address, as well as any schedule changes that would affect the student's on-site contact hours.
7. The student is responsible for coming to the synchronous Professional Practice classes prepared, and attending per the requirements delineated in this Professional Practice Handbook, the NWC Counseling Program Student Handbook, and the NWC Graduate Catalog.
8. The student is responsible for communicating proactively with the faculty supervisor and/or the site supervisor regarding any conflicts or situations that may result in the student missing or being late to class or to scheduled hours at the Professional Practice Site.
9. The student is responsible for submitting (and keeping copies of) all evaluations and required paperwork to the faculty supervisor through submission in the Tevera and/or the Blackboard systems.
10. The student is responsible for keeping copies of their Professional Practice logs, evaluation forms, course syllabi, and other documentation that may be required for future state licensure and license portability.
11. The student is responsible, upon securing and contracting with a Professional Practice Site, for asking the site supervisor about the format, guidelines, and procedures for client documentation and record keeping. The student is responsible for abiding by all required policies and procedures at the Professional Practice Site.
12. The student is responsible for providing the client with a quality counseling experience.
13. The student is responsible for dealing with clients with promptness and integrity. In the event of illness or emergency, the student must notify the site supervisor and clients of any change in appointment(s).
14. The student is responsible for informing the faculty member and site supervisor of any problems with cases, client emergencies, and/or cases warranting supervision.
15. The student is responsible for seeking supervision on cases where the student questions her or his own ability to be effective.
16. The student is responsible for seeking additional supervision if/when needed.
17. The student is responsible for following any directives given by the faculty supervisor or site supervisor regarding interventions with a client. Students with questions about the ethical nature of directives should consult with their faculty supervisor, the Counseling Program Director, or the Dean of the Graduate School and Adult Learning.
18. The student is responsible for video/audio recording the assigned number of sessions per semester for review and presentation to the faculty supervisor and peers. These recordings must be secured and handled to protect the client's confidentiality.
19. When recordings of any kind are not allowed due to HIPAA or other site restrictions, the site supervisor must provide live supervision and complete a Live Observation Form to be submitted by the student in place of a video or audio recording.
20. The student is responsible for protecting the identity of clients and fellow students during course discussions including in synchronous and threaded Blackboard discussions.
21. The student is responsible for obtaining a signed release for recording from the client and for placing the signed release in the client's file.
22. The student is responsible for following the site's informed consent and mandatory disclosure procedures with clients, and ensuring that the following are included:

- a. That the client understands that the student is a Practicum/Internship student and not a licensed professional
 - b. That the client understands there will be a limited number of sessions due to the nature of the academic semester
 - c. That the client understands recording procedures, supervision, and any other pertinent conditions under which the student is working.
23. The student is responsible for being aware of legal and ethical issues (e.g. confidentiality and privilege, duty to protect, malpractice, negligence, etc.), and for adhering to the [Code of Ethics of the American Counseling Association](#) and applicable state laws and rules.

Professional Practice Faculty Member Rights, Roles, and Responsibilities

Faculty Member Rights

1. The faculty member has the right to establish expectations and requirements for students within the parameters and guidelines set by the NWC Counseling Program.
2. The faculty member has the right to expect a student's regular and punctual attendance in Professional Practice synchronous classes.
3. The faculty member has the right to request and enforce the expectations of student online participation in synchronous Zoom courses pursuant to the Attendance Policy in the NWC Counseling Program Student Handbook and the communicated expectations of the faculty member within the course.
4. The faculty member has the right to evaluate student performance based on the communicated criteria of the Professional Practice course in which the student is enrolled.
5. The faculty member has the right to warn students whose behavior is not consistent with the [Code of Ethics of the American Counseling Association](#) and/or applicable state laws and rules, and/or the policies and procedures set forth by NWC and/or the Counseling Program.
6. The faculty member has the right to determine the assignment and/or reassignment of client cases in collaboration with a student's site supervisor, based on interaction with the site supervisor, the student's skill and developmental level, and the client's presenting problem.

Faculty Member Roles & Responsibilities

1. The faculty member is responsible for clearly communicating expectations, requirements, and grading criteria.
2. The faculty member is responsible for providing timely feedback to Professional Practice students regarding their skill development and course grade during the semester per NWC standards.
3. The faculty member is responsible for informing the Professional Practice student, at the earliest possible time, if the student's work is not satisfactory, and to detail specific behavioral expectations that could lead to improvement. Professional Concern Forms (PCFs) and Remediation Growth Plans will be completed per the Counseling Program's established policies and procedures when appropriate and necessary.
4. The faculty member is responsible for serving as the primary point of contact between NWC and the student's Professional Practice Site and will be available to communicate with the student's site supervisor as needed.

5. The faculty member is responsible for contacting each student's site supervisor every two weeks via phone or email, every semester.
6. The faculty member is responsible for discussing student and site supervisor evaluations with the student.

Professional Practice Site Supervisor Requirements and Responsibilities

Site Supervisor Requirements

The Professional Practice Site Supervisor must meet the following requirements, per the CACREP accreditation standards and the requirements of the NWC Counseling Program:

1. A minimum of a master's degree, preferably in counseling, or a related profession, and licensure as a professional counselor or school counselor, or a related profession in the jurisdiction where services are conducted.
2. A minimum of two years of pertinent professional experience in the specialty area in which the student is enrolled (School Counseling, Clinical Mental Health Counseling, or a related profession).
3. Relevant training and experience in counselor supervision and any additional training and experience required by the jurisdiction where services are conducted in order to provide supervision independent of additional supervision.
4. Knowledge of the NWC Counseling Program's expectations, requirements, and evaluation procedures for Professional Practice students.
5. Completion of NWC Counseling Program's site supervisor orientation/training requirements.
6. Provide a minimum of one hour of weekly individual or triadic supervision to each NWC student serving at the site.
7. Communicate with the student's faculty member every two weeks throughout the semester and more if needed.
8. Maintain a current résumé and copy of the supervisor's state license on file with the NWC Clinical Coordinator.

Site Supervisor Responsibilities

1. The site supervisor is responsible for meeting with the student in the first week to review the site's programs, policies, and protocols, and the student's and supervisor's expectations.
2. The site supervisor is responsible for providing opportunities for the student to engage in a variety of counseling activities under supervision, and to evaluate the student's performance.
3. The site supervisor is responsible for providing settings for the student to conduct individual and group counseling sessions with appropriate levels of privacy and sufficient space for necessary equipment.
4. The site supervisor is responsible for providing any necessary and appropriate technology that assists with the student's learning.
5. The site supervisor is responsible for providing a minimum of one hour per week of individual (one student and one supervisor) or triadic (two students and one supervisor) supervision which involves at least some examination of student work using audio/video recording or live observation.

6. When recordings of any kind are not allowed due to HIPAA or other site restrictions or preferences, the site supervisor must provide live supervision and complete a NWC Counseling Program Live Observation Form which is available in the Tevera system.
7. The site supervisor is responsible for completing a mid-semester and end-of-semester Counseling Competencies Scale-Revised (CCS-R) evaluation form and for reviewing the evaluations with the student.

Professional Practice Liability Insurance

Students enrolled in their Professional Practice Experience are required to obtain professional liability insurance for counselors for the duration of their Professional Practice placements. A copy of the Liability Insurance Face Page must be submitted via Tevera in Part 1 of the Professional Practice Application Process. Students must maintain the liability insurance coverage throughout their Professional Practice Experience. Students are responsible uploading a copy of the updated policy in Tevera each time the policy is renewed.

Students without liability insurance coverage cannot meet with clients until coverage is obtained or renewed verified by the Clinical Coordinator. Professional Practice hours accumulated during a lapse in coverage will not be counted toward a student's Practicum or Internship requirements.

NWC encourages counseling students to explore obtaining free or reduced-cost liability coverage through membership in ACA or ASCA.

Important Forms

Important forms for the Counseling programs can typically be found on the Counseling Program Blackboard Learning Community or in the Tevera system (for Professional Practice forms).

- **Counselor Competencies Scale-Revised (CCS-R):** The CCS-R is the means by which a student's site supervisor, faculty supervisor, and other faculty members will evaluate a student's counseling skills and dispositions at different times throughout the program. The CCS-R is housed within the Tevera system. When site supervisors complete the CCS-R on a student within the Professional Practice Experience at midterm and end-of-semester, they should review their evaluation with the student. Occasionally, students may be asked to print a CCS-R from the Tevera system and upload it into a Blackboard course shell.
- **Student Evaluation of Site Supervisor:** This evaluation of the site supervisor is completed by the student within the Tevera system at the end of each Professional Practice semester. Occasionally, students may be asked to print this evaluation from the Tevera system and upload it into a Blackboard course shell.
- **Student Evaluation of the Professional Practice Site:** This evaluation of the Professional Practice Site is completed by the student within the Tevera system at the end of each Professional Practice semester. Occasionally, students may be asked to print this evaluation from the Tevera system and upload it into a Blackboard course shell.
- **Client Consent Form (NWC or Agency Form):** This consent must be signed by every client prior to the student providing any type of service. Keep the signed consent in the client file at the Professional Practice Site for client records.

- **Audio/Video Recording Client Consent Form** (NWC or Agency Form): This consent must be signed by every client prior to the student video or audio recording a counseling session. Keep the signed consent in the client file at the Professional Practice Site for client records.
- **Live Observation Form:** In situations where video or audio recording is not allowed at a site, a student's site supervisor can sit in on a counseling session and complete the Live Observation Form. The form is signed by the site supervisor and the student will submit it in either Tevera or Blackboard, per the assignment instructions.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will I be assigned a Practicum site or do I find my own? Students are responsible for finding their own Professional Practice Sites, although ultimately, all sites must be approved by the Clinical Coordinator. All NWC students log their Professional Practice Site information in the Tevera system, so reviewing sites that have been used by students in previous cohorts is one place to start looking. The Clinical Coordinator is another resource for assisting students who are in the brainstorming process of thinking about potential sites. Students are encouraged to investigate potential sites on their own and submit a site summary form in their Professional Practice application paperwork. Site summary forms must be completed for both new and existing sites.

Can I use my current employment site as my Practicum site? Yes, however certain ethical standards must be met. Contact the Clinical Coordinator for approval and to understand the specific requirements. Also note that having your site supervisor be the same person as your employment supervisor may represent a problematic dual relationship. Students should strongly consider finding a different person at their employment site to serve as their site supervisor and at times, this may be required.

When should I start looking for a Practicum site? It's never too early to start thinking about and looking for potential Practicum sites! However, you should not make a formal outreach to a potential Practicum site until after you have attended the Professional Practice Orientation for your cohort. Pay close attention to the timelines and deadlines included in this handbook.

What if I fail to meet the application deadline for my Practicum site? The application deadline for Practicum is of great importance. Students should make looking for a Practicum site one of their top priorities after they have completed their Professional Practice Orientation. **If a student is not able to secure a site by the deadline, the student will not be able to take Practicum and will have to take the class in a later semester.** This will likely result in the student having to push back their graduation date by at least one year.

Can I begin my Practicum or Internship class without having a site secured? No, students MUST have a site secured and an approved Professional Practice Contract on file in order to begin their Practicum or Internship class.

When can I begin accruing hours? Students may begin accruing Indirect Hours on the first day of the Practicum academic semester. Students may not begin accruing Direct Hours until they have attended their first synchronous Practicum class of the semester.

What if I need more than one semester to finish the required 100 Practicum hours? A student with extenuating circumstances who does not complete the required 100 Practicum hours in one semester can request an Incomplete for the course. Students should consult with their Enrollment Counselor and

the Clinical Coordinator regarding this situation. Students who receive an Incomplete in one of the Professional Practice courses may not be able to continue forward in their course progression because completion of the prior course is a prerequisite for moving forward in the Professional Practice Experience.

What if I get more than 100 Practicum hours? Can I carry the extra hours over to Internship? CACREP clearly states that excess Practicum hours cannot be carried over to Internship. Students can continue to gain Practicum experience and log hours in preparation for the Internship experience.

What do I need to do if I'm staying at the same site with the same supervisor for Internship? Nothing, unless your contract's end date needs to be updated.

What if I need more than two semesters to finish the required 600 Internship hours? Students who do not complete the required 600 Internship hours in two semesters can register for Internship III and use the third full semester of Internship to complete the Professional Practice Experience. Consult with your Enrollment Counselor and the Clinical Coordinator if you feel you are going to be in this situation.

Can I do Internship in one semester? No, the NWC Professional Practice Experience is designed as a Practicum semester followed by two consecutive Internship semesters (and a third Internship semester if needed). Students who accrue 600 hours in their Internship I semester are still required to complete Internship II and abide by the contract they signed with their Professional Practice Site. They will simply gain more experience in their Professional Practice Experience than some other students do.

What are the group counseling/group leadership requirements for the Professional Practice Experience? NWC students are required to log a minimum of 10 hours leading or co-leading a counseling or psychoeducational group at their Professional Practice Site. These 10 hours can take place in any of the Professional Practice semesters, including Practicum. If students are at a site where group work is not possible, it is the student's responsibility to locate and add a supplemental site where they can lead/co-lead groups, under supervision.

What are the individual counseling requirements for the Professional Practice Experience? Some students may find themselves at a Professional Practice Site where the direct hours are predominantly group work and group counseling. In order to ensure students have a well-rounded Internship experience, NWC students are required to log a minimum of 40 hours of direct client contact in individual counseling. If students are at a site where individual counseling is not possible, it is the student's responsibility to locate and add a supplemental site where they can conduct individual counseling, under supervision.

How will I fit in my Professional Practice hours when I'm a full-time teacher? All of the students in NWC's Counseling program are adult learners and most of the students are working full time or multiple part time jobs, so completing the Professional Practice Experience represents a challenge for everyone.

For students in the School Counseling program, some of the answer to this question might depend on what type of endorsement the student is seeking. Per IAC 282-13.28(26) – Elementary Professional School Counselor and IAC 282-13.28(27) – Secondary Professional School Counselor, subparagraph (12), Teaching and counseling practicum, the candidate will complete a preservice supervised practicum of a minimum of 100 hours, and at least 40 of these hours must be direct service. Candidates will complete a supervised internship for a minimum of 600 hours, and at least 240 of these hours must be direct

service. For candidates seeking both the K-8 and 5-12 professional school counselor endorsements, a minimum of 100 hours of the practicum or internship experiences listed above must be completed at each of the desired endorsement levels. If the student is only seeking one of these endorsements, they can do their experience all in one setting, for example, in an elementary school. If the candidate is seeking BOTH endorsements, they have to do at least 100 hours of their experience in BOTH settings, which makes the experience a little harder to obtain.

School Counseling students who are employed full time as teachers may need to get creative in accruing the Professional Practice hours. Having the support of your principal and administration may be key. If you're working as an elementary teacher, you can gain some of your elementary hours by working alongside the elementary school counselor at your school. If you're seeking both endorsements and also need to gain experience in a middle or high school, to gain the hours in the secondary setting the student might sometimes have to take days off to spend time in the other school setting. The student may be able to volunteer in another school setting during the teacher's spring break. If the student's school has a Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) program the student may be able to develop partnerships with other teachers where the student could teach some of their colleagues' SEL curriculum which could count toward some of the student's hours.

For many students (School Counseling or Clinical Mental Health Counseling), the biggest challenge related to Professional Practice Experience hours is obtaining the direct hours. Some day-to-day tasks of a teacher may count toward the indirect hours requirement for a School Counseling student, but obtaining the direct hours may be more challenging. Students may be able to spend time after school where they set up some individual or group hours with kids in coordination with the school counselor that will also help you meet the direct hours requirements. Students should also consult with their administration. Administrations may be willing to support students in this endeavor and create opportunities to allow students to spend time working with the school counselor in ways that will help the student meet their Professional Practice Experience requirements.