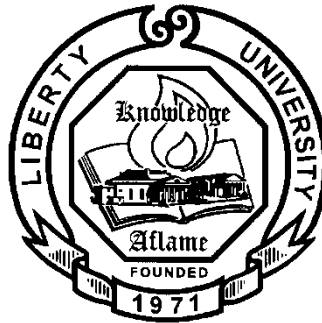


# LIBERTY UNIVERSITY



## MASTER OF ARTS

### Clinical Mental Health Counseling (Residential)

## HANDBOOK

School of Behavioral Sciences  
Department of Counselor Education  
and Family Studies

2020-2021

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## Authority of the Handbook

The policies and procedures described in this handbook supersede those described in previous handbooks and replace all other communications on issues addressed herein. Particular policies and procedures are Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies specific. The policies and procedures apply to current and newly accepted students. Students who are currently taking Master's courses in Clinical Mental Health Counseling must adhere to these guidelines with the exception of any changes in the academic program.

### Disclosure Statement

**The 60-hour Clinical Mental Health Counseling degree is designed to lead to professional licensure as outlined by the Virginia Board of Counseling. All state boards have unique licensure requirements. Therefore, before enrolling in a licensure program at Liberty University, students should consult the rules and regulations regarding Professional Counseling for the particular state that they intend to seek licensure after graduation. To obtain your state's web address, view [State Licensure Boards](#).**

Enrollment in the MA licensure programs does not guarantee a degree from Liberty or qualification for professional licensure. Students are responsible for meeting all academic and professional requirements for graduation. Further information regarding these academic and professional requirements is outlined in this handbook. Students enrolled in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program are responsible for knowing the material outlined in this handbook. Further, if a student intends to practice in a state other than Virginia after graduation, **it is the sole responsibility of the student, not the program, to obtain information regarding prerequisites for licensure as outlined by their state board of counseling.**

**For issues regarding the program, contact your assigned faculty advisor. Then, if needed, contact the Director, Dr. Nicole DiLella at [nmdilella@liberty.edu](mailto:nmdilella@liberty.edu). For Practicum & Internship, please contact the respective offices [cmhcpracticum@liberty.edu](mailto:cmhcpracticum@liberty.edu) or [cmhcinternship@liberty.edu](mailto:cmhcinternship@liberty.edu). If appealing a decision made by the practicum/internship office, please contact Dr. Steve Johnson at [sgjohnson2@liberty.edu](mailto:sgjohnson2@liberty.edu).**

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## **From the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program Director**

On behalf of the faculty of the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies (CEFS), I would like to welcome you to the M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program. The faculty are honored that you have chosen to pursue your studies here at Liberty University!

This *2021-2021 M. A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling Handbook* serves as a guide to help you better understand the program, courses, requirements, policies and procedures, and student rights and responsibilities as of Fall 2021. The faculty consider the handbook to be “required reading” for all M.A. Clinical Mental Health Counseling students, and it should be read in its entirety. Although you are assigned an advisor when you start the program, it is ultimately your responsibility to know the information contained in this handbook. Your academic advisor will assist you in registration and course information. You will also have a faculty advisor who will answer program-related questions and be assigned when you begin the program. Review this handbook periodically, and if questions arise, contact your advisor. You can find the contact information for each faculty member listed in this handbook. Because program policies and requirements may change from one year to the next, it is essential that you always refer to the most current handbook as you plan your graduate program, enroll in classes, and arrange for field placements and graduation.

Although there is a lot of information contained in this handbook, it may not provide answers to all of your questions. In addition to talking with your advisor and other faculty members, you may access the Liberty University [Graduate Catalog](#). This handbook is not intended to be a comprehensive listing of all Liberty University policies. For information about current University and departmental policies, please refer to the *2021-2021 Graduate Catalog*.

We are glad you have chosen Liberty University! You are about to engage in the exciting process of becoming a professional counselor. As you will see in the following pages of this handbook, the process and experiences offered at Liberty University are planned to ensure a comprehensive personal and professional educational experience. As a faculty, we feel honored to accompany you on your journey. Please contact us if we can offer additional information.

We look forward to serving you.

Nicole DiLella, Ph.D., LPC, LCPC, NCC, ACS  
*Director, M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program*



# LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

## General Information

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### 1.1 Campus

Liberty University is a religiously-oriented, private, coeducational, comprehensive liberal arts institution. Founded in 1971, Liberty now offers over 700 unique programs of study. Liberty's more than 7,000-acre campus boasts 380 buildings that consist of over 6.6 million square feet of technologically advanced academic, residential and recreational space, including over 200 classrooms. Additionally, our student body is highly diverse with individuals from all 50 states and more than 80 nations.

Liberty University is nestled in the foothills of the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains and located on the south bank of the historic James River, in a region rich in history, culture, and outdoor recreational opportunities. For more information on the history, mission, and doctrine of Liberty University visit our website at: <http://www.liberty.edu/aboutliberty>.

### 1.2 Liberty University Mission and Purpose

Maintaining the vision of the founder, Dr. Jerry Falwell, Liberty University develops Christ-centered men and women with the values, knowledge, and skills essential to impact the world. Through its residential and online programs, the University educates men and women who will make important contributions to their workplaces and communities, follow their chosen vocations as callings to glorify God, and fulfill the Great Commission.

Liberty University will:

1. Emphasize excellence in teaching and learning.
2. Foster university-level competencies in communication, critical thinking, information literacy, and mathematics in all undergraduate programs.
3. Ensure competency in scholarship, research, and professional communication in all graduate programs.
4. Promote the synthesis of academic knowledge and Christian worldview in order that there might be a maturing of spiritual, intellectual, social, and physical value-driven behavior.
5. Enable students to engage in a major field of study in a career-focused discipline built on a solid foundation in the liberal arts.
6. Promote an understanding of the Western tradition and the diverse elements of American cultural history, especially the importance of the individual in maintaining democratic and free market processes.
7. Contribute to a knowledge and understanding of other cultures and of international events.
8. Encourage a commitment to the Christian life, one of personal integrity, sensitivity to the needs of others, social responsibility, and active communication of the Christian faith, and, as it is lived out, a life that leads people to Jesus Christ as the Lord of the universe and their own personal Savior.

### 1.3 Accreditation

Liberty University is approved by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, and is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award associate, bachelor, master, and doctoral degrees. Liberty is also a member of the Association of Christian Schools International.



The M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program is accredited by the **Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP)**. CAPREP is a specialized accreditation body recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) to accredit masters and doctoral degree programs in counseling and its specialties. For further information on this accreditation, consult the agency website at [www.cacrep.org](http://www.cacrep.org).

Liberty University admits students of any race, color, and national and ethnic origin, and accords them all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, sexual orientation, or disability in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, or athletic and other school-administered programs.

# The Graduate Counseling Program

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## Overview

The Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies (CEFS) is a department of the School of Behavioral Sciences. The Graduate Counseling program, launched in 1981, is committed to providing quality professional training of clinical mental health counselors from a faith-based perspective. Our training in theory and the practice of counseling is designed to prepare students to work as licensed counselors with diverse populations. The M.A. program provides foundational studies that equip students for licensure as professional counselors; careers in community mental health agencies, educational institutions, private practice, government, business, and industrial settings; and doctoral studies.

## Mission

The mission of the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies is to produce ethically and spiritually aware mental health counselors who possess the knowledge, values, skills, and personal disposition to promote the mental health and holistic wellness of clients across diverse populations. The CEFS purposes to accomplish this mission by the professional development of the mental health counseling student across the following domains:

- 1) Attainment of scholastic competency in all coursework,
- 2) Acquisition of, and ability to, apply counseling skills with a diverse population to a standard acceptable by licensed professional counselors,
- 3) Demonstration of emotional and mental stability and maturity in interaction with others including the ability to maintain healthy boundaries, communicate appropriately, successfully manage personal anxiety or uncomfortable feelings, work collaboratively with others and resolve interpersonal conflict
- 4) Adherence to the Professional Identity and Standards outlined by the American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics and Liberty Graduate Student Code of Honor, and
- 5) Demonstration of the ability to integrate faith and spirituality into counseling where appropriate in an ethically competent manner

## Purpose

Consistent with the University's mission to develop "Christ-centered men and women with the values, knowledge, and skills essential to impact the world," the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies seeks to educate the whole person within a framework of grace and truth, which are core values exemplified in the life of Christ and necessary for professional service; developing the knowledge, values, skills, and personal disposition necessary for effective professional service. Our mission is achieved, in significant measure, through offering rigorous academic programs, dynamic interaction with mentors, faculty, and carefully structured practicum and internships.

## Commitment to Diversity

Liberty University is a school founded upon fundamental Christian values like grace, truth, and love for all persons. As believers in Christ, we must demonstrate our commitment to loving others (cf. Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-28).

We approach counseling as a profession that fosters holistic human growth and development in the cognitive, emotional, behavioral, relational, and spiritual domains of life. Our counseling approach also supports the worth, dignity, potential and uniqueness of others who are made in the image of God. This means for us that all persons possess dignity and worth because they are unique subjects of Divine Creation. Our vision is focused on nurturing an academic community of diverse people and ideas and assuring that diversity enhances academic excellence and individual growth.

Our faculty and students are comprised of persons that represent various national, ethnic, spiritual, and denominational backgrounds. Learning to be respectful and appreciate other cultures will add to each student's experience at Liberty. For that reason, we are committed to nurturing and training a diverse student body in an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation of differences.

The CEFS provides an academic community for students, faculty, and staff to teach and learn from the experiences of others and to submit personal values and assumptions for reflection and critical examination. Student learning, professional and personal growth occur in a climate that encourages a deepened appreciation of differences. Therefore, we do not discriminate in our educational and counselor training programs on the bases of: race, color, creed, religion, gender, age, national/ethnic origin, sexual orientation, and physical or mental disability.

While recognizing the importance of all dimensions of diversity as mentioned above, the CEFS adheres to the following initiatives:

- To increase, through recruitment and retention measures, the diverse representation of students, faculty, and staff;
- Promote full implementation of professional standards of practice and multicultural counseling competencies across the curriculum and in specialized courses;
- To include issues of diversity throughout the instructional programs and professional development activities;
- To develop graduate assistantships opportunities to serve diverse student groups;
- To provide departmental opportunities for students and faculty to engage in the exchange of ideas and information related to diversity; and
- To maintain ongoing educational opportunities and equality of access to our academic community.
- To equip students to ethically utilize spirituality as a force for healing when and where appropriate.

# Admission Policies

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## 1.1 Admission and Licensure

The 60 hour Clinical Mental Health Counseling degree is designed to lead to professional licensure as outlined by the Virginia Board of Counseling. Before enrolling in the licensure program at Liberty University, students intending to practice in a state other than Virginia after graduation should consult the rules and regulations regarding licensure as a professional counselor for their particular state. More specifically, these students should be aware of the following before enrolling in Liberty University's Clinical Mental Health Counseling program:

- State regulations regarding licensure restrictions if an applicant has a previous felony conviction.
- State regulations on the type and number of academic courses and practicum/internship hours.
- State accreditation requirements for educational institutions.
- To obtain your state's web address, see: <http://www.aascb.org/aws/AASCB/pt/sp/stateboards>.

## 1.2 Admission Requirements

Admission to the Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program at Liberty University is a selective process. Each applicant is carefully evaluated for his or her potential as a professional counselor, compatibility with our program's goals and mission, and ability to contribute to the counseling profession. In the application review process, each candidate's academic, professional and personal experiences, motivation, ethics, and dispositions are considered in relation to the potential for successful graduate study.

Admission requirements to Clinical Mental Health Counseling program are as follows:

### Undergraduate Prerequisites

- An earned baccalaureate degree or its equivalent from an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
- An undergraduate cumulative GPA of at least 2.7 (on a 4.0 scale).
  - Applicants who have earned a master's degree or at least 12 graduate credits from an accredited institution may be assessed based on the masters-level degree work. NOTE – once accepted into the program, a 3.0 graduate GPA is needed to maintain good academic standing in the program.
- 3 semester hours of undergraduate coursework in statistics. Applicants who have not successfully completed this courses are admitted with the provision that they must complete the undergraduate coursework within the first two semesters of study.

### Additional Documents

- Describe in 200-250 words:
  - Why you desire to become a counselor and indicate the type of counselor certification you plan to seek after graduation.
  - An occasion in which you have interacted with an individual or a group of individuals from another culture. Identify the cultural differences which were present and how you demonstrated respect for those differences.
  - Describe how you form effective interpersonal relationships with others in individual and group settings.

- Contact information for 2 recommenders from professional sources (i.e., not family/friends) able to address the applicant's character, maturity, and ability to become a counselor.
- Agreement to the Professional Counseling Mission Statement and Commitment to Diversity Statement: <https://www.liberty.edu/online/behavioral-sciences/masters/professional-counseling/admission-requirements/>
- Submission of college transcripts.

### **Background Check**

- During the first semester in the program, students complete a Criminal Background Check as a course requirement in COUC 500. Students will not be dismissed from the program solely based on the results of the background check. However, students must be aware that they may be prohibited from completing fieldwork by their field placement site if a background investigation reveals certain criminal offenses, arrests, and/or convictions. A student who does not pass a criminal background check also may not be able to obtain licensure as a professional counselor. The Department of CEFS is not responsible for a student's inability to complete the program, obtain licensure, or certification due to a failure to pass a criminal background check.

## **1.3 Application Checklist & Procedures**

All requirements and procedures stated in the Admissions and Academic Information sections of the Liberty University Catalog will apply unless stated to exclude M.A. program. The instructions and forms that are needed are available online at <http://www.liberty.edu/admissions/index.cfm?PID=145>.

### **Official Transcripts**

Applicants must submit an official transcript indicating successful completion of a baccalaureate degree, or individual courses, from an accredited institution. An "official" transcript is one that is received directly from the educational institutions attended, or is sent to us (by any party) within the original, sealed, university envelope. Official transcripts should be sent to the Office of Graduate Admissions. Former Liberty University students must personally request transcripts from the University Registrar. Students who are applying prior to degree conferral can submit an unofficial transcript for an admissions decision and enrollment into courses. However, students must have completed their degree before they can matriculate into the program. An official transcript must be submitted to the university by the end of the first semester.

### **Self-Certification Form** (If in the process of completing a bachelor's degree).

If you are sending in a preliminary transcript for acceptance, you must be in your final semester and planning to start your Master's degree after the last date of class for your Bachelor's degree. In order to be considered for full acceptance, you must fill out a bachelor's self-certification form. This form is available on-line at <http://www.liberty.edu/media/1158/SelfCertificationForm.pdf>.

### **TOEFL Test Scores: The Test of English as a Foreign Language™ TOEFL®**

TOEFL® is required for foreign students or students for whom English is a second language (minimum score of 600; 250 if computer-based; 80 Internet-based). An official TOEFL score report must be submitted to the University before an admission decision can be made. A score of 80 is required for the internet-based test for all graduate degree programs. In addition, the Office of Graduate Admissions may require students whose native official language is not English to submit TOEFL scores, if such documentation is deemed necessary. Enrollment in certain courses may be determined by the TOEFL

score in conjunction with other diagnostic assessments administered after the student matriculates on campus. Information regarding the TOEFL may be obtained online at [www.toefl.org](http://www.toefl.org).

### **Faculty Review and Admission Decisions**

Applicants must submit each of the documents listed above to the Office of Graduate Admission before being considered for acceptance to the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program. Admission decisions are not made until all documentation has been received and evaluated by the faculty.

The office of Graduate Admissions and the CEFS faculty reserve the right to use professional judgment when conducting admission reviews and may request additional documentation to evaluate a candidate's record. In addition, if certain documentation does not meet admission standards, the CEFS faculty reserves the right to use professional judgment with regard to admissions offers.

### **1.4 Notification of Admission to the Program**

Admission decisions normally are made within a 24 – 48 hours following the receipt of all of the student's documentation. Official notification of admission, and of any conditions attached to that admission, is sent by letter to the applicant by the Office of Graduate Admissions. Correspondence or notification from other sources does not constitute official notice of admission. The term for which the applicant is admitted is stated in the official admission letter from the Office of Graduate Admissions.

### **1.5 Matriculation Requirements**

Students must meet all admission requirements to matriculate into the program, including completion of their undergraduate degree with a 2.7. Therefore, students accepted into the program prior to degree conferral must complete their undergraduate degree before they can matriculate into the program (See 3.3 Self-Certification Form). We do not matriculate students under dual enrollment.

### **1.6 Special Student (Non-Degree) Status**

The Department grants special admissions only under exceptional circumstances. The following must be met to be enrolled as a non-degree seeking student:

1. A student must be currently enrolled in or a graduate of a master's level clinical mental health, marriage & family counseling, or a closely-related program at a regionally accredited university in order to take COUC courses as a special student.
2. Special students will not be allowed in the COUC 505, 512, 667, 698, or 699 courses. However, we will review cases for individuals who have graduated and are practicing clinicians who need additional coursework for licensure.

# Academic Policies

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## 2.1 Program Intent

The Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies (CEFS) Masters of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling provides students with an integration of academic coursework and applied learning experiences through practica and internships. Students are expected to master coursework considered essential to the master's level professional preparation of licensed clinical mental health counselors. Though students are encouraged to evaluate their own specific needs and to take advantage of available resources for personal and professional development, several learning outcomes are applicable to all students. Students will be able to:

1. Apply the ethical and professional principles, standards, and expectations that are integral to a professional counselor's role and identity.
2. Apply the social and cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills required to work with diverse populations at all developmental stages across the lifespan in a culturally sensitive and ethical manner.
3. Assess the individual and group counseling skills necessary to establish and build a therapeutic relationship and will form a preliminary theoretical framework when counseling individuals at all developmental stages across the lifespan.
4. Use developmentally appropriate assessment relevant to the client's academic/education, career, personal, and social development and identify ethical, social, and cultural factors related to assessment.
5. Evaluate research and apply it to their counseling practice in accordance with best practices, and identify social and cultural implications for interpreting and reporting results.
6. Integrate faith and spirituality into counseling where appropriate in an ethically competent manner
7. Synthesize counseling theories into a comprehensive bio-psychosocial-spiritual theoretical approach that informs assessment, diagnosis, and treatment planning for diverse individual, group, and family client(s) with a broad array of presenting problems and mental disorders.

## 2.2 M.A. Programs

In addition to the residential [Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling](#) (60 hour) program, the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies offers three additional 60-hour M.A. licensure programs. For descriptions of the residential [Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Counseling](#), [Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling](#) (LUO) or the [Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy](#) (LUO) programs, see the handbook for the specific program. Please note that both the residential and online Clinical Mental Health Counseling and the residential Marriage and Family Counseling programs are CACREP accredited.

### Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (60-hour program)

This 60-hour CMHC program is designed to meet the licensure requirements for the Commonwealth of Virginia. For other states, it may provide electives that may be used to meet the requirements of the individual states. **Students who intend to practice in a state other than Virginia after graduation are responsible for obtaining the current licensure requirements of that state before enrolling in a degree program.** You may use elective coursework to meet any state licensure requirements that differ from Liberty's MA Clinical Mental Health Counseling degree requirements.



The *Clinical Mental Health Counseling* degree provides students with a thorough background in areas of integration of faith and practice; individual and group counseling theories and skills; clinical practice; ethical, professional, and legal issues in counseling; social and cultural factors in counseling; human development across the lifespan; work, leisure, and career development theories and interventions; appraisal and assessment issues in counseling; and the application of research methodology and statistics to understand mental health issues. This program provides appropriate education for students seeking career opportunities in mental health agencies, private practices, faith based counseling centers, and a variety of other public and private facilities.

### 2.3 Course Requirements

A student must maintain a minimum of a 3.0 GPA to remain in the program. While all course grades are averaged into the GPA, course credit toward degree completion is not granted for a grade of D or F. A student may petition the registrar's office for permission to retake a course in which he or she received a grade of C or below. ([See section 2.15 for more information](#))

### 2.4 Transfer of Credits

Students may transfer 30 hours for the 60-hour Clinical Mental Health Counseling degree, leaving a minimum of 30 hours to be earned through LU. For a transferred course to replace a Liberty University course, the following requirements must be met:

1. The institution at which the course(s) were completed is a regionally or nationally accredited institution approved through the Department of Education.
2. The course(s) were taken in another Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling or another closely related graduate field.
3. The course(s) were completed within the previous 10 years. The content must be comparable to the current best practice standards for that course.
4. The student earned a grade of B or better in the course(s).
5. The course(s) overlap one of Liberty's courses by at least 80%.
6. The course credit must be at least 3 semester hours or five quarter hours.

Courses with a grade of "CR" or "P" will only be considered if the grade equals a B or higher. **Courses from a completed bachelor's or master's degree are non-transferable.** Credit is not awarded for life experience or continuing education. The following courses are non-transferable: COUC 500, 501, 505, 506, 512, 667, 698, and 699.

It is the responsibility of each applicant to supply transcripts along with a request to have the credit applied to the degree program. Students may be requested to submit the course syllabus for any course work being considered for transfer along with a rationale of why the student believes the course meets the program's requirements. The office of transcript evaluations will process the information.

### 2.5 Dual Degrees

Students seeking to obtain a second degree through Liberty may do so. The number of credits that can be applied toward the second degree may not exceed the maximum amount of transfer credit allowed for that degree. If two degrees share required courses exceeding the maximum allowable transfer credit for the second degree, the student must take additional courses as substitutes for the shared courses. Due to the extent of overlap between required courses in the CEFS Department programs, dual degrees will not be awarded within the department.

## 2.6 Independent Studies & Directed Studies

Students who need specific course work unique to their state and not offered through our program are encouraged to seek these classes in their specific state. The departmental policy is that independent studies and directed studies are not offered for these circumstances.

## 2.7 Program of Study

The following chart list the courses students will take and the order and times they should enroll in the courses. Students are notified that this curriculum guide is a planning document. It is not a substitute for regular consultation with their faculty advisor. This guide is subject to change. Use this guide for course planning and for discussions with your faculty/academic advisor when you set up your course of study.

### M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling: Residential (60 hours)

COURSE #	COURSE NAME	HOURS
COUC 500	Orientation to Counselor Professional Identity and Function	3
COUC 501	Ethical and Legal Issues in Counseling	3
COUC 502	Human Growth & Development	3
COUC 504	Multicultural Counseling	3
COUC 505	Counseling Techniques & the Helping Relationship	3
COUC 506	Integration of Spirituality & Counseling	3
COUC 510	Theories of Counseling	3
COUC 512	Group Counseling	3
COUC 515	Research & Program Evaluation	3
COUC 521	Assessment Techniques in Counseling	3
COUC 522	Career Development & Counseling	3
COUC 546	Psychopathology	3
COUC 601	Theories of Family Systems	3
COUC 604	Crisis Counseling	3
COUC 667	Clinical Diagnosis & Treatment Planning	3
COUC 670	Comprehensive Exam – CPCE	0
COUC 671	Comprehensive Exam – Integration	0
COUC 691	Substance Abuse: Diagnosis, Treatment & Prevention	3
COUC 698	Counseling Practicum	3
COUC 699	Counseling Internship	3
COUC 699	Counseling Internship (may request third semester)	3
Elective	(500, 600, 700 or Seminar)	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>60 hours</b>

## 2.8 Recommended Course Sequence

Please note that the following plan is subject to change as we attempt to improve the curriculum and our scheduling sequence.

### Course Sequencing for MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (60 Hour)

Semester	Courses	Semester	Courses	Semester	Courses
1 <sup>st</sup> Semester	COUC 500 COUC 501 COUC 502	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester	COUC 504 COUC 505 COUC 510	3 <sup>rd</sup> Semester	COUC 512 COUC 515 COUC 546
4 <sup>th</sup> Semester	COUC 521 COUC 522 COUC 667	5 <sup>th</sup> Semester	COUC 604 COUC 506 COUC 698	6 <sup>th</sup> Semester	COUC 601 COUC 691 COUC 699 COUC 670/671
7 <sup>th</sup> Semester	COUC 699 Elective				

## 2.9 Course Prerequisites

The following are the courses that require prerequisite work. This should guide you in selecting the order of your courses.

Course Number	Prerequisites or *Co-requisites
COUC 500	
COUC 501	
COUC 502	
COUC 504	COUC 500, 501
COUC 505	COUC 500, 501, 502
COUC 506	COUC 500, 501
COUC 510	COUC 500, 501 <b>Note: All undergraduate prerequisites must be taken before student can progress past this point</b>
COUC 512	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510
COUC 515	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, MATH 201 (or PSYC 355)
COUC 521	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510
COUC 522	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510
COUC 546	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510
COUC 601	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510
COUC 604	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546
COUC 667	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546
COUC 670/671	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546, 667/602
COUC 691	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 646
COUC 698	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, *522, 546, *667/602
COUC 699	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546, 667/602, 698
COUC 711	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546
<b>COUC Electives</b>	
COUC 602	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 546, 601
COUC 603	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 546, 601, *602/667
COUC 610	COUC 500, 501, 502, 505, 510
COUC 620	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 546, 601, *602/667
<b>Advanced Electives</b>	Only the following Ph.D. level classes can be taken as M.A. electives (Intensives)
COUC 712	By instructor permission only
COUC 720	By instructor permission only
COUC 725	By instructor permission only

COUC 800	By instructor permission only
COUC 805	By instructor permission only
COUC 806	By instructor permission only
COUC 850	By instructor permission only
<b>Independent Study Courses</b>	The courses listed below are <u>taught only as an independent study course</u> . Student must submit an appeal to the program director to take IS courses
COUC 625/630	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 601

**2.10 Faculty/Academic Advising**

Liberty’s **residential students** in the MA Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program are assigned when you enroll in your first course. Your residential faculty advisor will contact you by email.

Dr. Jeanne Brooks	<a href="mailto:jdbrooks6@liberty.edu">jdbrooks6@liberty.edu</a>
Dr. Nicole DiLella	<a href="mailto:nmdilella@liberty.edu">nmdilella@liberty.edu</a>
Dr. Victor Hinson	<a href="mailto:vdhinson@liberty.edu">vdhinson@liberty.edu</a>
Dr. David Jenkins	<a href="mailto:djenkins@liberty.edu">djenkins@liberty.edu</a>
Dr. John Thomas	<a href="mailto:jcthomas2@liberty.edu">jcthomas2@liberty.edu</a>

***It is always the responsibility of the student to be aware of University policies and regulations and state licensing requirements affecting his or her program. Advisors cannot advise on matters pertaining to the regulations of state licensure boards.***

**2.11 Comprehensive Examination**

All Clinical Mental Health Counseling students must satisfactorily pass the comprehensive examination as a requirement for graduation. The purpose of this exam is to test both the student’s knowledge of the core courses and general knowledge of counseling. This exam also prepares students for state licensure by providing them with an examination that mirrors the content and format of the National Counselor Exam (NCE), a multiple-choice, timed exam used for licensure by many state licensure boards.

The Comprehensive examination is offered the third Saturday of February, July, and October. It is also offered at the end of the COUC 667 Intensives that are offered throughout the year. Students must register with the Comprehensive Examination Coordinator at [CounselingCompExam@liberty.edu](mailto:CounselingCompExam@liberty.edu) at least four weeks prior to the date of the examination. The most current information is located online on the CEFS website at <https://www.liberty.edu/behavioral-sciences/counselor-ed/cpce-counselor-prep-comp-exam/>

The Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies utilizes two separate exams to fulfill the comprehensive examination requirement. To test students’ knowledge of the eight core curricular areas, students will take the 160 item Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination® (CPCE®), published by the Center for Credentialing and Education, an affiliate of the National Board for Certified Counselors, (NBCC®). Students will also take the 20-item *CEFS Integration Examination* to test their knowledge of integrating faith and spirituality into counseling in an ethically competent manner.

The CPCE® covers the eight core competencies (20 items per area) of the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP®), as defined by their Standards for Preparation:

**Human Growth and Development** – studies that provide an understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels (COUC 502).

**Social and Cultural Foundations** – studies that provide an understanding of issues and trends in a multicultural and diverse society (COUC 504).

**Helping Relationships** – studies that provide an understanding of counseling and consultation processes (COUC 505, COUC 510).

**Group Work** – studies that provide an understanding of group development, dynamics, theories, methods, skills, and other group work approaches (COUC 512).

**Career and Lifestyle Development** – studies that provide an understanding of career development and related life factors (COUC 522).

**Appraisal** – studies that provide an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation (COUC 521).

**Research and Program Evaluation** – studies that provide an understanding of types of research methods, basic statistics, and ethical and legal considerations in research (COUC 515).

**Professional Orientation and Ethics** – studies that provide an understanding of all aspects of professional functioning including history, roles, organizational structures, ethics, standards, and credentialing (COUC 500, COUC 501).

In addition to eight core CACREP® competencies covered by the CPCE®, each Liberty University Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling student will be required to demonstrate competency in a ninth core area:

**Integration** – studies that provide an understanding of the integration of faith and spirituality into counseling where appropriate in an ethically competent manner (CMHC 506).

Students must complete at least 39 hours of graduate coursework, including the core areas (COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 506, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522) and COUC 667/602, and must have an overall GPA of 3.0 before attempting to take the comprehensive examination. Once these requirements are met, students will email the Comprehensive Examination Coordinator at [CounselingCompExam@liberty.edu](mailto:CounselingCompExam@liberty.edu) when they are ready to sign up for the exams.

Students must be aware that it takes about four hours to complete the CPCE® portion of the comprehensive examination. The CEFS Integration Examination portion of the comprehensive will be taken online using Blackboard. . To take the comprehensive examination, students will be registered for COUC 670 (CPCE®) and/or COUC 671 (Integration) courses. There will be a class fee charged to their student account. The fee covers the CPCE® examination, grading, and postage. Current fee amounts are found on the examination website at <https://www.liberty.edu/behavioral-sciences/counselor-ed/cpce-counselor-prep-comp-exam/>.

Students are allowed three attempts to pass both sections of the comprehensive exam. Students who have failed the CPCE® twice are required to complete a CPCE® Third Attempt Plan (CTAP) form and prepare for an additional minimum of one semester before registering for their final attempt. If after

three tries a student has not been able to pass the comprehensive examination, the student will not qualify for a master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. At that point, students may choose to apply to the Human Services Counseling program for possible conferral of the MA in Human Services Counseling degree.

The best way to prepare for the comprehensive examination is to develop a study schedule (such as three months) that allows you to spend some time preparing in each of the different areas of study. Divide your study time so that you spend roughly equivalent time preparing for each area. Study consistently. Do something relaxing and get a good night's rest the night before the examination.

Please allow two weeks for the exam results. Once these exams are processed, a notice will be sent to you immediately notifying you of the results.

There is no official study guide for the CPCE®. Since the CPCE® and the National Counselor Examination for Licensure and Certification (NCE®) are based on the same eight knowledge areas; *any study materials* developed for the NCE® should be useful for the CPCE®. A good source to start with is a book called *Encyclopedia of Counseling* by H. Rosenthal.

As you prepare for the Integration Examination, please refer to the following sources:

McMinn, M. R. (2011). *Psychology, theology, and spirituality in Christian counseling*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers. ISBN: 0-8423-5252-X.

Entwistle, D. N. (2010). *Integrative approaches to psychology and Christianity* (2nd ed.). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock. ISBN 978-1-55635-944-6.

These books were required for your CMHC 506 course. A study guide to prepare for the integration exam is at [http://www.liberty.edu/media/1118/INTEGRATION\\_EXAM\\_STUDY\\_GUIDE\\_A.pdf](http://www.liberty.edu/media/1118/INTEGRATION_EXAM_STUDY_GUIDE_A.pdf).

## 2.12 Practicum and Internship

### 1. Practicum

- a. **Prerequisites:** *To be adequately prepared for this course, the student must have completed the following courses in counseling: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 506, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, and 546. COUC 667 may be taken concurrently with COUC 698. Students must be in good standing with the University (3.0 GPA or above; no more than 2 C's) in order to be approved.*  
*\*\* Prerequisite courses are non-negotiable and must be completed prior to taking COUC 698.*
- b. **Purpose:** The primary focus of the Practicum experience is to introduce students to the counseling environment and the development of counseling related skills, ethics, and professionalism based on clinical activities and exposure to the counseling field.

The Practicum involves participation in a planned clinical experience in an approved agency or other setting under an approved supervisor. During the Practicum experience, students are actively engaged in the field of Clinical Mental Health Counseling. They contribute to the cooperating agency by direct contact with clients and assisting its staff in carrying out many of the daily clinical activities of that agency. The purpose of the counseling Practicum is to provide a preliminary supervised, field-based, work experience for students.

### 2. Internship

- a. **Prerequisites:** *To be adequately prepared for this course, the student must have completed the following graduate-level credit hours in counseling: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 506, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546, 667, and 698. Students must be in good standing with the University (3.0 GPA or above; no more than 2 C's) in order to be approved. \*\* Prerequisite courses are non-negotiable and must be completed prior to taking COUC 699.*
- b. **Purpose:** The primary focus of the Internship experience is the application and continued development of counseling skills. During the internship experience, the student learns to integrate and synthesize theories and techniques learned in the classroom and apply them in a clinical setting. Additionally, students develop personal qualities, characteristics, and behaviors of a professional counselor, and transition from “trainee” to “professional practitioner.”

Since most, if not all, coursework has been completed by the time of the internship experience, students contribute to the cooperating site by assisting staff in carrying out many clinical activities. In order for students to successfully pass the internship course, the student must demonstrate the ability to:

- Establish rapport and effective working relationships with client(s).
- Conduct a psychosocial history that includes client background information, behavioral observations, current functioning, quality of relationships, and resources and challenges.
- Develop client case conceptualizations that lead to accurate diagnosis using the DSM.
- Develop treatment plans that will motivate clients through the use of evidence-based strategies for clients' identified problem(s).
- Present case studies in scheduled supervision sessions.
- Maintain an effective counseling process and relationship until the client(s)' problem(s) have been resolved.
- Utilize feedback, direction, and constructive criticism from supervision and consultation in order to enhance professionalism in counseling.

- Document clinical work in a way that meets the standards of the counseling site, insurance companies, and the state in which the student is working.
- Work cooperatively and effectively within an agency setting and initiate appropriate professional relationships with mental health professionals outside that agency as needed.

*\*In order to begin practicum or internship, the student's site and supervisor must be approved by the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies Practicum or Internship staff, under the direction of the Director of Clinical Training. Because students cannot register for the Practicum or Internship until the approval process has been completed, all documents must be submitted by the posted application deadline on the COUC 698: Practicum or COUC 699: Internship websites. Once the site and supervisor have been approved, the student will receive approval from the Practicum or Internship Department to register for the course.*

If, during the practicum or internship, a student fails to successfully demonstrate any of the skills, professional behaviors, and/or dispositions required of a counselor-trainee, the student will be notified by his or her supervisor. The supervisor will also notify the student's faculty supervisor. The faculty member will write an incident report for review by the Director of Clinical Training. The faculty supervisor and clinical director will determine the nature and reason for the lack of mastery of skills, behaviors, and/or dispositions. Depending on the level and severity of the deficit, the remediation process may be implemented (see sections 4.5 and 4.6). Students may be removed from the site or placed on hold in the program in order to fulfill remediation procedures aimed to address and resolve the deficits. These remediation procedures can include such things as requiring the student to retake certain courses and/or seek personal counseling, etc. If, after remediation, the student is unable to correct the deficits, the remediation team will meet to decide the best course of action for the student up to and including removal from the program. The final decision will rest with the leadership team (Clinical and Program Directors, Department Chair, and Dean).

**Preparation:** Because of university and state requirements for placing students in practicum and internship courses, it is essential that students begin preparing for their practicum and internship early in their programs. Students are encouraged to read the Practicum Manual and Internship Manuals which can be found on the Practicum and Internship links located on the Master's Degree program website: <https://www.liberty.edu/behavioral-sciences/counselor-ed/masters/> Please carefully review the Practicum and Internship Field Manuals for additional information.

**State Licensure Requirements: Students are advised to become familiar with state(s) licensure requirements where they will be seeking future licensure.** Students intending to seek licensure in a state other than Virginia after graduation will need to meet their requirements in his/her fieldwork experience for whichever is greater: Liberty University or the state the student resides (e.g., Florida requires 1000 hours of fieldwork experience). Students are expected to be familiar with their state's fieldwork course and supervisory requirements. More information about state licensure board regulations can be found at <http://www.nbcc.org/directory/Default.aspx>.

- 3. Complete background checks.** Be aware that state boards review an applicant's criminal history to determine if he/she is eligible to hold a license. If you have a criminal history, you will need to contact your state board of counseling to determine if you are eligible for a counseling license in that state. Due to these varying licensure requirements, our programs require you, as a counselor in training, to complete background checks. Clearance of the background checks will be required for application to the practicum and internship.



4. **Finding a site:** Students are responsible to find their practicum/internship site and their site-supervisor. Students are advised to allow a ***minimum*** of three to four months for the process. The practicum and internship webpages provide some suggestions for potential clinical sites.
5. **Getting Approval:** Students will submit an online application through the SharePoint submission portal by using a link posted on the Practicum <http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=29795> and Internship website: <http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=29796>. Students will attach their approval documents to the online application. The online application with attached approval documents must be submitted by the application deadline that is displayed on the practicum/internship webpage. Blank copies of the approval documents are available for download on the practicum/internship webpage. Registration for the COUC 698 practicum and the COUC 699 internship courses occurs three times each year: approximately mid-term during the fall, spring, and summer semesters.
6. **Registration:** Once a student's online application and attached approval documents have been reviewed, and their site and supervisor have been approved by the Director of Clinical Training's staff, the practicum/internship office will automatically enroll the student in COUC 698 or 699.
7. **Complete the Financial Check-in.**
8. **International/Practicum Internship Policy for approval of sites and supervisors abroad:**

The Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies is aware of many challenges that students living abroad face regarding the completion of the practicum and/or internship requirements. Therefore, the Practicum/Internship Office has created the following policy in order to help our students living abroad succeed in completing their practicum/internship experience. In addition to the standard application process, students looking to complete an international practicum/internship must also meet the following criteria:

**Students seeking licensure in the United States:**

- o **Site must be sponsored by an American Organization**
- o **Site must follow the general guidelines established by the counseling profession in the U.S.** (e.g., ACA, AAMFT Codes of Ethics, state board regulations, etc.).
  - Informed consent
  - Treatment plans
  - Recordkeeping
- o **Supervisor must be licensed in the United States**

Supervisor must hold a valid state license in counseling, marriage and family therapy, or clinical social work and have a master's degree in Counseling, Psychology, or Social Work and/or hold a PhD or EdD in Counseling, Psychology, or a closely related field from a regionally accredited university. Students who are seeking licensure in the United States are responsible for knowing and understanding the requirements of the state board in the state in which they wish to become licensed.

**Students not seeking licensure in the United States:**

- o **Students must provide Practicum/Internship Office with a written statement of their intent to not pursue licensure in the United States.**

The site and supervisor approval will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Practicum/Internship office.

## **2.13 Break in Enrollment**

*Liberty Residential* students who discontinue course work for a semester period (fall or spring semester) will break enrollment. However, lack of enrollment in the summer semester is not considered discontinuation. For example, if students do not enroll in the spring semester of 2021, then they have to re-apply to Liberty University for the fall semester of 2021.

## **2.14 Statute of Limitations**

The time limit for completing the Master degree from the enrollment date of the first course taken is ten years. Any Clinical Mental Health Counseling courses taken at Liberty over ten years old must be repeated in order for a student to graduate with the Clinical Mental Health Counseling degree.

## **2.15 Course Repeat Policy**

In order to graduate from the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program, a student must maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. A course grade of “D” or “F” cannot be used to fulfill the requirements of the program. A maximum of two courses (6 hours) with a grade of “C” can count toward graduation if the student maintains a GPA of 3.0. Students who receive a grade less than B- may repeat a course and replace the initial grade; however, students can only replace a maximum of three courses (9 credits). Both grades will appear on their transcripts, but the replaced grade will not count towards their GPA. The grades of any courses repeated beyond the nine credits will apply to their GPA. There is a maximum of three course repeats. **Students should be aware that some state licensure boards do not accept any course work with a grade below B-.**

## **2.16 Administrative Dismissal**

Students will be eligible for Administrative Dismissal from the Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling if any of the following are true: 1) It will be mathematically impossible for them to raise their cumulative Graduate GPA to 3.00 with their remaining required courses; 2) They do not have a cumulative Graduate GPA of at least 3.00 at Gate 2 (Completion of Early Core) or Gate 3 (Practicum); 3) They have two (2) grades of C+/C/C- applying to their degree and they have applied the repeat policy for the maximum allowed nine (9) hours, and they earn two (2) or more additional grades of C+ or lower; or 4) They earn two (2) grades of D+ or lower.

## **2.17 Attendance & Interruption of Study**

The university defines attendance for residential students as physically attending a class where there is an opportunity for direct interaction between the instructor and students; submitting an academic assignment; taking an exam, an interactive tutorial, or computer-assisted instruction; attending a study group that is assigned by the school; participating in an online discussion about academic matters and initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course. Regular and punctual attendance in all classes is expected of all students.

At times, students will miss classes. These absences are handled per the Department of Counselor Education & Family Studies' policy and outlined in the course syllabus:

One hundred percent attendance is expected in graduate counseling courses. It is understandable however that unavoidable circumstances do occasionally arise. Students, therefore, are allowed two absences per class without notification or excuse per semester. An absence is defined as missing all or part of a class period.

Any absences beyond this will reduce participation points, potential in class assignment credit, as well as warrant notification of the student's advisor and potentially review by the director of the program. Absences beyond two per semester may significantly reduce a student's grade and GPA.

**Failure by Non-Attendance (FN):** If a student stops attending and/or participating in a class for a period of 21 days. After a period of 21 full days without attendance, course submissions, or communication from a student, the student will be assigned an FN.

\* Some topics that would constitute academic related questions:

- Questions about test answers
- Questions regarding the topic of papers or content covered in tests or quizzes
- Questions requiring further clarification on a discussion board topic, etc.

\*Some topics that would **not** constitute academic related questions:

- Emails planning on submitting assignments
- Emails asking for additional time to submit assignments
- Emails asking how or where to purchase course materials

## **2.18 American Psychological Association Format**

The Graduate Counseling Program requires students to use the most current version of the APA writing style guide for all submitted coursework. The most recent edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association is required for every student. It is imperative that all graduate students become familiar with and use this writing format.

## **2.19 Graduation**

All degree completion requirements must be fulfilled before the university will confer the MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling degree. Students who wish to participate in the yearly Spring Commencement program must file an Application for Graduation in accordance with the calendar deadlines listed on ASIST and posted by the Registrar on the Graduation Requirements webpage. Students are advised to submit their applications well in advance of the deadline date.

## Financial Policies

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### 3.1 Tuition and Fees

Information about tuition and fees for the Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling courses can be found at the following website:

<http://www.liberty.edu/academics/graduate/index.cfm?PID=17993>

### 3.2 Financial Aid

For questions and information regarding financial aid see the following website:

<http://www.liberty.edu/financeadmin/financialaid/index.cfm?PID=294>.

## Student Expectations

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### 4.1 Professional Organizations

A significant arena in which counselors can make an impact within the field is through involvement with professional organizations. Students are encouraged to join the American Counseling Association (ACA) and ACA associated divisions. In addition, students may join the American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC). These organizations have national, regional, state, and local divisions that allow students higher levels of involvement in more specific areas of interest. Most professional organizations and divisions offer reduced membership rates to students. They also typically have the following benefits: access to professional publications (journals, newsletters); reduced registration fees for professional activities sponsored by the organization (conferences, seminars, workshops); eligibility for member services (resources, ethics consultation, liability insurance); involvement in activities and issues directly or indirectly pertinent to the profession (legislation and professional credentialing including licensure, certification); and affiliation with other professionals having similar interests and areas of expertise.

### 4.2 Academic Honesty & Plagiarism

As a Christian institution, Liberty University holds its students to high standards of ethics. One significant area of integrity in academics is honesty. Students are expected to submit only their own work. Further, students are expected to neither give nor receive assistance of any kind that is not specifically permitted on graded assignments or examination. For specific policy information, see the Graduate Student Code of Honor found at the Graduate Student Affairs website: <http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=19155>.

### 4.3 Academic Appeal Policy

To appeal a grade or a decision regarding academic honesty, follow the policy & procedure outlined at the graduate student affairs website: <http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=19155>.

### 4.4 Counseling Faculty-Student Interaction

The faculty are responsible to interact with counseling students in a supervisory capacity/role. As such, faculty may provide students professional principles, guidance, and recommendations related to any aspect of the counseling profession. The faculty are responsible to avoid dual relationships with students such as entering a client-counselor relationship. Thus, faculty do not provide personal counseling

addressing students' personal problems. If a faculty member perceives that a student is in need of personal or professional counseling, then that faculty member will recommend that the student pursue either pastoral or professional assistance from a counselor in their community.

In the event of a student's disclosure, either verbally or in writing, of either threat of serious or foreseeable harm to self or others, abuse or neglect of a minor, elderly, or disabled person, or current involvement in criminal activity, the faculty, staff, administrator or supervisor, will take immediate action. This action may include, but is not limited to, immediate notification of appropriate state law enforcement or social services personnel, emergency contacts, and notification of the program director or department chair. The incident and action taken will become part of the student's permanent record.

#### **4.5 Professional Development & Remediation**

**Ethical Conduct:** All students in the MA Clinical Mental Health Counseling program are responsible to behave in an ethical manner throughout their training, as well as in clinical and professional settings. Violations of the ACA Code of Ethics, the Graduate Student Honor Code, or the Liberty Way; and/or failure to take steps to rectify violations, are considered extremely serious and may result in termination from the program.

Although students are expected to adhere to the ACA Code of Ethics, the Graduate Student Honor Code, and the Liberty Way as a guide to their behavior throughout their program, reading it is just the beginning of understanding professional ethics. Being an ethical counselor-in-training involves understanding the underlying principles and values associated with professional Code of Ethics. These are built upon a strong commitment to biblical principles, developing a set of beliefs that guide one's everyday practice, being able to discern potential as well as realized ethical problematic situations, and having the character to stand by these principles when faced with challenging situations. This is an essential component of your professional development.

**Professional Development:** To successfully complete the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program at Liberty University and be eligible for graduation, a student must be able demonstrate proficiency in five areas:

1. Attainment of scholastic competency in all coursework as evaluated through the assessment of CMHC standards, the comprehensive examination (see section 2.10 of handbook) given at the completion of core curriculum, and by maintaining an overall GPA of 3.0.
2. Acquisition of, and ability to, apply counseling skills with a diverse population and to a standard acceptable by licensed professional counselors. This ability is evaluated by faculty using the Counseling Competency Scale (CCS) in the skills courses (CMHC 505, 512, 667/602) and by the student's approved site and faculty supervisor using the CCS during practicum/internship.
3. Demonstration of emotional and mental stability and maturity in interaction with others, including the ability to maintain healthy boundaries, communicate appropriately, successfully manage personal anxiety or uncomfortable feelings, work collaboratively with others, and resolve interpersonal conflict. This proficiency is evaluated throughout the program in all interactions with faculty, staff, administrators, supervisors, adjuncts, and fellow students; including both verbal and written communications.
4. Adherence to the Professional Identity and Standards as outlined by the American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics and the Liberty Graduate Student Code of Honor. This proficiency is

evaluated across the program in all interactions with faculty, staff, administrators, supervisors, adjuncts, and fellow students; including both verbal and written communications.

5. Demonstration of the ability to integrate faith and spirituality into counseling where appropriate in an ethically competent manner

The counseling faculty will develop and evaluate students on the above areas of proficiency on an ongoing and consistent manner in all settings in which faculty and students interact. This interaction can include formal and informal settings such as classroom, online communication, advising, and personal conversations. To align with CACREP standards, all students will be evaluated through a rubric, listing the standards and expectations for various assignments in individual courses. This information will be compiled for each student and provide documentation to meet their CACREP requirements for graduation.

## **Student Support**

Our department is committed to helping students be successful in their academic and professional endeavors. The student support and development committee serves to assist in this process. This committee will support students in their professional development and serve as a secondary mentor in this process. The SSD committee will connect the student with appropriate referrals and resources as needed. A referral to this committee will be made, if a student is noted to have deficiencies in any of the following areas:

- Counseling Skill Development
- Academic Integrity
- Student Support and Care (prayer, encouragement, etc)
- Student Professional/Dispositional Development

This committee exists to come alongside students and assist in student development.

## **Administrative Review**

In keeping with the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics (ACA, 2014), Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2016), and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) requirements, faculty in counselor education programs are required to assess the knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions of students in their programs and take action if issues arise that could compromise the well-being of present or future clients. The following summarizes the School of Behavioral Sciences procedures for assessing these competencies.

## **Behavioral Concerns at Practicum and Internship Sites**

If, during the Practicum or Internship, a student fails to successfully demonstrate the required skills, professional behaviors, or personal or professional dispositions in this course and/or receives failing evaluations, is dismissed from the site, or is found practicing at a site without having received approval by the department for the site, the site supervisor will notify the student's professor. The professor will write an incident report and send it to the Program Director and the department's Internship Office. The Program Director, the Director of Clinical Training, and the Leadership Team will examine the nature and reason for the skills deficit, professional behaviors, or dispositions and/or site dismissal and recommend a course of action, which could include Administrative Review for Behavioral Intervention and/or referral to Remediation and/or the Office of Community Life. Administrative Review is appropriate when a student's behavior is so concerning and/or non-professional that prompt protective action is required (see below section, "Administrative Review for Behavioral Intervention").

**Note:** The steps within this section are specifically designed to address the unique aspects of practicum and internships, and certain steps in this section may overlap with those of other processes. For instance, the practicum or internship professor’s submission of an incident report to the Program Director and Internship Office and their examination of the incident report will satisfy the early and secondary stages of the remediation process (i.e., remediation stages 1-3). Also note that remediation can be engaged at any step, as the School of Behavioral Sciences deems appropriate.

If a failing evaluation or dismissal from the site involves a violation of the University’s Honor Code, the professor will fill out an Honor Code Violation form, which will be investigated by the Program Director and the Office of Community Life. At any point in this process, the student may receive a grade of “F” based on the skills deficit, professional behaviors, or personal or professional dispositions, dismissal from their site, and/or failure to follow approval policies. The student will be placed on hold in the program pending the outcome of any ongoing process(es) (e.g., Administrative Review, the remediation process, the disciplinary process, and/or grade appeals process).

For violations that do not result in dismissal from the program, the remediation process can include requiring the student to retake certain courses, seek personal counseling, etc. If, after remediation, the student is unable to correct the deficits, the Remediation Committee will meet to decide the best course of action for the student, up to and including an “F” for the course and dismissal from the program. The final decision regarding whether the student is eligible to retake the Internship and disposition of the hours accrued during the Internship are at the discretion of the Leadership Team and based on a thorough evaluation of the incident.

**Note:** When necessary, the Department may immediately remove a student from the site upon notification of concerning behavior by the supervisor. During the remediation process, the student has an opportunity to appeal interim actions following Administrative Review, grades, honor code violations, and dismissals in accordance with the procedures outlined for the applicable process(es). See, for example, Appeals Policy (Section 6.3) and the appeal sections below for information on the appeal process. Please consult the Practicum Field Manual and Internship Field Manual for additional information.

### **Administrative Review for Behavioral Intervention**

There may be times when School of Behavioral Sciences faculty determines that a student’s behavior is so concerning and/or non-professional, regardless of whether the student is making satisfactory academic progress, that prompt protective action is required. This is especially true when students are interacting with clients in a clinical setting. In such situations, the program director will place the student on Administrative Review. As part of Administrative Review, the program director will review all of the available and relevant evidence to determine an appropriate interim action to address the concerning behavior, which may include an interim suspension of the student from courses, internships, or clinical placements. The program director may, in his or her discretion, also apply a registration hold to prevent the student from registering for courses, internships, or clinical placements (and potentially, therefore, from progressing in the program) until the behavior at issue has been resolved. The interim action should be narrowly tailored to address the concerning behavior such that it places as few restrictions as possible on the student and only as determined necessary to address the concerning behavior. Interim actions should also balance the School of Behavioral Sciences’ gatekeeping function of protecting others with promoting the student’s best interest. Administrative Review is protective, not disciplinary, in nature. Interim actions will remain in place until the program director (in consultation with the student and faculty) determines both that the concerning behavior has been resolved and that any pending

processes to address the student’s behavior are complete (e.g., the remediation process or a disciplinary matter in the Office of Community Life or the Office of Equity and Compliance).

Within 48 hours of the program director’s decision to initiate the Administrative Review, the program director will notify the student in writing, which may include email, of (1) the initiation of the Administrative Review, (2) the interim action(s) imposed, and (3) the reason(s) for the Administrative Review. The program director will also notify the Registrar’s Office of the interim action(s), including any registration hold. The student will have an opportunity to review all of the evidence that formed the basis for the interim action(s) and to respond (including the opportunity to present any relevant evidence) to the program director. Once the program director has an opportunity to review all of the available and relevant evidence, the program director will either reverse the interim action(s) or keep the interim action(s) in place pending the outcome of any other processes (e.g., remediation). The program director may refer the student to the Office of Community Life and/or the Remediation Committee. If the student’s behavior cannot be remedied to a point such that the student is qualified to continue in the program, the student may ultimately be dismissed from the program. Should the student decide to appeal the interim action(s) imposed by the program director, the student must follow the appeal procedures below.

**Appeal of Interim Action(s) Following Administrative Review**

Students who disagree with the interim action(s) imposed by the program director following Administrative Review have an opportunity to appeal. Students must submit the appeal in writing to the Dean of the School of Behavioral Sciences within seven (7) days of receiving the notice of the program director’s decision. The appeal should clearly state the reason(s) the student believes the interim action(s) should be reversed. Once received, the Dean of the School of Behavioral Sciences (or designee) will review all available and relevant evidence and, if determined necessary, speak with the student, the program director, and/or any other person with relevant information. The Dean of the School of Behavioral Sciences (or designee) will endeavor to make a determination within ten (10) days of receiving the appeal. The determination to uphold or reverse the interim action(s) will be sent to the student in writing, and the Dean of the School of Behavioral Sciences (or designee)’s determination concerning the interim action(s) will be final, pending the outcome of any other processes.

**Appeal of Interim Action(s) Following Administrative Review**

Students who disagree with the interim action(s) imposed by the program director following Administrative Review have an opportunity to appeal. Students must submit the appeal in writing to the Deans of the School of Behavioral Sciences within seven (7) days of receiving the notice of the program director’s decision. The appeal should clearly state the reason(s) the student believes the interim action(s) should be reversed. Once received, the Deans of the School of Behavioral Sciences (or designee) will review all available and relevant evidence and, if determined necessary, speak with the student, the program director, and/or any other person with relevant information. The Deans of the School of Behavioral Sciences (or designee) will endeavor to make a determination within ten (10) days of receiving the appeal. The determination to uphold or reverse the interim action(s) will be sent to the student in writing, and the Deans of the School of Behavioral Sciences (or designee)’s determination concerning the interim action(s) will be final, pending the outcome of any other processes.

**4.6 Remediation**

If during the course of a student’s studies, a faculty, staff, administrator or supervisor believes a student lacks required skills, professional behaviors and dispositions to progress in the program, that



person will begin remediation procedures aimed to provide the student with information and actions to correct the impairment/deficiency. The purpose of the remediation plan is to assist the student in correcting any deficits in counseling knowledge and skills, as well as problematic personal, interpersonal, or ethical behaviors so the student may successfully continue in the program. As such, remedial instruction or interventions are closely linked to the students' developmental growth, recognizing the relationship between the alleviation of deficiencies and the development of new competencies.

We conceptualize remediation in terms of a response continuum based upon the type and severity of students' limitations, with the need to distinguish between deficient, lacks competence, and impaired:

- *Deficient*: Requires skill-based and/or academic approach
- *Lacks competence*: Requires additional ethical practice-based / conceptual approach
- *Impaired*: Requires additional intervention-based and/or therapeutic approach

The problematic behavior continuum can also be considered along the lines of Academic, Clinical, and Personal, with Academic being more related to deficiencies and Personal more related to impairments. Clinical limitations may likely have both Academic and Personal involvement. Additionally, the program response can be considered along a continuum of education, formal remediation, and termination.

**Deficient** describes those behaviors, attitudes, or characteristics that need to be the focus of attention and change, but are not considered excessive or inappropriate. Rather, they may be important components of the student's learning experience. At this level, remediation likely involves instruction and feedback to address the deficit.

**Lacks Competence** describes a deficit in developmentally appropriate clinical competencies that are needed for ethical practice. These would include areas such as performance of counseling skills and/or professional behaviors, attitudes, or characteristics, response to supervision, and/or ability application of ethics into practice. These behaviors are considered to be excessive or inappropriate, requiring remedial action beyond the course instructor or supervisor.

**Impairment** describes those behaviors that result in a significant negative impact on professional functioning. Impairment is demonstrated by one or more of the following behaviors: (a) an inability and/or unwillingness to acquire and integrate professional standards into their repertoire of professional behavior; (b) an inability to acquire professional skills to reach an acceptable level of competency; (c) an inability to control personal stress, psychological dysfunction and/or excessive emotional reactions that interfere with professional functioning.

The Type and Severity of Limitation are considered when determining the need, if any, for remediation.

**Students Determined to be Deficient:**

- Inadequate knowledge base commensurate with status in the program
- Inadequate, but improving counseling skills
- Rudimentary ethical processing
- Simplistic, narrow, or disjointed case conceptualization
- Insufficient interpersonal skills and awareness, but willingness to develop

**Students Determined to Lack Competence:**

Lack of awareness of ethical principles and obligations  
Failure in responsibilities to site and/or supervisor  
Unwillingness/inability to be effective in basic counseling techniques  
Unwillingness/inability to complete appropriate documentation  
Failure to function as an effective member of the treatment team

**Students Determined to be Impaired (not inclusive):**

**Four Themes:**

- I. Interpersonal and Personal Problems
  1. Inappropriate interpersonal skills
  2. Lacks self-control (anger, impulse control) in relationships
  3. Inappropriate boundaries
  4. Misleads or exploits others
  5. Lacks awareness of the impact they have on others
  6. Unwilling to receive feedback in supervision
  7. Does not take responsibility for deficiencies and/or problems
- II. Professional Competence
  1. Lacks foundational counseling skills
  2. Inappropriate affect in response to clients
  3. Does not recognize limitations of expertise and competence
  4. Does not apply ethical and/or legal standards to practice
  5. Lacks awareness of how their beliefs and values influence practice
  6. Does not demonstrate a respect for individual differences and culture
- III. Professional Behaviors
  1. Deficits in punctuality, professional appearance, attendance, dependability
  2. Does not complete appropriate paperwork and documentation
  3. Does not adhere to the department's or their clinical site's policies
- IV. Professional and Personal Integrity and Maturity
  1. Makes false, misleading or deceptive statements
  2. Displayed academic dishonesty
  3. Problems with alcohol/drug use or illegal activities
  4. Inappropriate sexual behavior
  5. Refused to consider personal counseling when recommended

Once the Type and Severity of Limitation are determined, there are several avenues that may be pursued when determining the need, if any, for remediation. Faculty are encouraged to consult with the program director, faculty remediation committee members, and other faculty when deciding the level of severity and which stage to engage the remediation process. Please note that the remediation process is not always linear or sequential. Faculty reserve the right to initiate remediation at whatever stage they deem appropriate for the student.

**Early Remediation Process (Stages 1 and 2)**

Faculty or advisor meets with the student  
Determine an action plan for addressing deficits  
Follow-up

**Secondary Review Remediation Process (Stage 3)**

- Notification of meeting with the director
- Assessment of problematic behavior
- Review and development of a plan
- Acceptance or appeal

**Formal Remediation Process (Stages 4-6)**

- Notification
- Assessment of Problematic Behavior
- Development of a Plan
- Acceptance or Appeal
- Provision if Unsuccessful

**Possible Committee Recommendations for a Remediation Plan**

- Personal counseling
- Increased supervision
- Reduced practicum or internship
- Leave of absence
- Formal reprimand
- Formal probation
- Counseling out of the program
- Dismissal from the program

**Immediate Interventions**

In the event of a student’s disclosure, either verbally, or in writing, of either threat of serious or foreseeable harm to self or others, abuse or neglect of a minor, elderly or disabled person, or current involvement in criminal activity, the faculty, staff, administrator or supervisor, will take immediate action. This action may include, but is not limited to, immediate notification of Liberty University Police Department, appropriate state law enforcement, social services personnel, emergency contacts, and notification of the appropriate program chair or Deans. The incident and action taken will become part of the student’s permanent record.

**Remediation Process for the M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program**

**Note:** The remediation plan is designed to protect the student’s rights under University policies and a fair process. In addition, we stress the importance of *engaging the student* in the remediation process. These principles are infused throughout the School of Behavioral Sciences program’s response continuum. Once a remediation plan is initiated, student response to remediation efforts is considered when deciding student status in the program. All phases of this remediation process will become a part of the student’s record. The description of the stages below does not necessarily reflect a sequential process. Rather, the faculty reserve the right to initiate remediation at any Stage 1, 2, 3, or 4-6, based on their assessment of the level of deficit and/or impairment.

**Stage 1: Notification by Advisor.** When a determination is made by a faculty member that problematic behavior of an academic, clinical, or personal nature exists, and could not be resolved on an informal basis, the faculty member discusses this with the student and her or his advisor. If student problematic behavior is brought to the attention of the department through other means (e.g., from another student, a report from university staff, evaluation from a supervisor, etc.), the student’s advisor will notify the student and discuss the concerns.

The student and her or his advisor will meet to discuss the problem and collaboratively outline a **remedial action plan** to address the concerns. This interactive process should allow the student ample opportunity to react to the information presented regarding the problem area. If the problem is resolved, no further action is needed. The advisor will document the meeting, the remedial action plan, and outcome into the student's personal record. The advisor will follow up with the faculty to ensure that the agreed-to remedial action plan was completed and the behavioral issue was successfully resolved.

If the problem is not resolved at this stage because the student does not engage in the process, disagrees with the validity of the concerns, or does not agree with the remedial action plan, the advisor will notify the program director of the outcome of the meeting. A meeting will then be scheduled with the student's advisor, the program director, the student, and the concerned faculty member as appropriate. This meeting will be considered a Phase 3 remediation.

**Stage 2: Primary Assessment of Problematic Behavior:** If the behaviors addressed by the program faculty and the advisor persist, the advisor will again meet with the student and outline, verbally and in writing, the continued nature and extent of problematic behavior. Informal (e.g., interview with student and faculty) and formal (e.g., instruments) may be utilized as a part of the assessment process. This includes feedback from the student concerning the outcome of any remedial actions taken by the student in response to the concerns raised during the notification session. When it is apparent that the student is engaged in the process but has not met the goal of the initial remedial action, a collaborative approach involving student engagement will be used to evaluate and refine the **remedial action plan**. If the problem is successfully resolved, no further formal action is needed. The advisor will document the meeting; outline the agreed adaptations to the remedial action plan; and the outcome. The advisor will follow up with faculty and the program director to ensure that the behavioral issues were successfully resolved and all agreed-to remedial mandates were implemented.

**Stage 3: Secondary Assessment of Problematic Behavior:** If the faculty advisor or core faculty determines that the student's behaviors are at a level that requires a formal remediation process (Stage 4) or the student rejects or appeals a **remedial action plan**, a meeting will be held with the student, his or her advisor, the program director, and referring faculty member (if appropriate). The meeting date will be set to allow the student the opportunity to provide additional evidence to the group for consideration at the meeting. The purpose of the meeting will be to either 1) collaboratively re-assess the problem behavior and develop a **remedial action plan** or 2) determine that the problem needs to be addressed by the program core faculty through a remediation plan. The program director will document the meeting and outcome. The program director will report the meeting outcome to the faculty Remediation Committee.

**Stage 4: Referral to the Remediation Committee:**

In cases when the outcome of the meeting of the student, advisor(s) and program director results in a decision that the situation should be brought to the Remediation Committee, a meeting of the committee will be scheduled. The student will be informed in advance of the time of this meeting and will have an opportunity to provide additional information or evidence in writing to the committee for consideration at the meeting. Once all information has been presented, the Remediation Committee will decide the level and scope of remediation required to assist the student and develop a formal Remediation Plan.

**Stage 5: Development of a Remediation Plan:** The Remediation Committee will review the presented information, examine the *remedial action plan* developed by the student and advisor, evaluate the progress made towards remediating problem behaviors, and develop a formal Remediation Plan. The purpose of the remediation plan is to assist the student in correcting any deficits in counseling skills or personal, interpersonal, or ethical problems so that the student may successfully continue in the program. The elements of the plan will be congruent with the extent of the correction needed. Remediation Plans can include such actions as repeating particular courses, obtaining personal counseling, completing additional assignments, reviewing the ethics code, transferring to a non-licensure program, or academic dismissal from the CEFS or Liberty University.

The program director and/or other designated persons will inform the student of the decision both orally and in writing. The student will have five working days to respond in writing (and orally, if desired) to the recommendation. The committee will review the student's response to the action decided and will make a final decision regarding the disposition of the case. Should the student file no response to the action, the decision of the committee will be considered as final. The program director and the student's advisor will notify the student in writing and orally of the outcome of the meeting.

**Stage 6: Acceptance or Appeal:** The student will be given the opportunity to accept the plan of correction or to appeal it. If accepted, the student will follow the plan as developed and regularly report progress to her or his advisor. If not fully resolved, additions, amendments, or extensions to the plan may be implemented. If the problematic behavior is corrected, no further action is needed. Four options are available to faculty when reevaluating the student: (1) continuation in the program, (2) continued probation and remediation, (3) counsel the student out of the program, and (4) dismissal from the program.

**Provision if Unsuccessful:** If the Remediation Committee determines that remediation is unsuccessful or that the student refuses to comply with the Remediation Plan, the Remediation Committee may recommend to the program director that the student be dismissed from the program.

**Final Determination Following Recommendation of Dismissal:** Based on the Remediation Committee's recommendation of dismissal, the program director will either dismiss the student from the program or allow the student to remain in the program until the concerning behavior has been fully addressed to the satisfaction of both the program director and the Remediation Committee. If the student is dismissed from the program, the program director will provide a notice of dismissal to the student in writing. If any interim action(s) were put into place following Administrative Review (e.g., interim suspension or registration hold), those interim action(s) will remain in place. If the program director allows the student to remain in the program, the student must continue to work with the Remediation Committee to address its concerns. Any interim action(s) from Administrative Review will remain in effect, and accordingly, the student should be aware that, if he or she does not re-enroll in courses within a certain period of time, he or she may break enrollment and need to re-apply to the program. In those situations, admission is not guaranteed. The student may appeal to the program director's final determination of dismissal. Should the student decide to appeal his or her dismissal, he or she must follow the appeal procedures outlined below.

**Appeal of Dismissal:** Students who disagree with the program director's final determination have an opportunity to appeal. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the Dean of the School of Behavioral Sciences within seven (7) days of notification of receiving the notice of the program director's decision. The appeal should clearly state the reason(s) the student believes the final determination

should be overturned. Once received, the Dean of the School of Behavioral Sciences (or designee) will review all relevant evidence and, if necessary, speak with the student, the program director, and any others who have relevant information (e.g., members of the Remediation Committee). The Dean of the School of Behavioral Sciences (or designee) will endeavor to make a determination within ten (10) days of receiving the appeal. The determination to uphold or overturn the final determination will be sent to the student in writing, and the Dean of the School of Behavioral Sciences (or designee)'s determination concerning the interim action(s) will be final, pending the outcome of any separate processes. If the Dean of the School of Behavioral Sciences (or designee) overturns a dismissal, the student will have the option either to remain in the program and continue work with the Remediation Committee to fully address its concerns, or to withdraw from the program.

#### **4.7 Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment, like harassment on the basis of color, race, religion, or national origin is recognized as a violation of Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. Such behavior does not befit a committed Christian. Accordingly, Liberty University will not tolerate sexual harassment and intimidation of its employees. See [https://www.liberty.edu/media/1226/Liberty\\_University\\_Title\\_IX\\_Policy\\_031418.pdf](https://www.liberty.edu/media/1226/Liberty_University_Title_IX_Policy_031418.pdf).

#### **4.8 Sexual Violence Consultation & Counseling Policy**

Liberty University is committed to providing a safe place for learning. As such, Liberty adheres to the Title IX directive of not tolerating any form of sex -based discrimination, which can include: acts of sexual violence, sexual misconduct and disrespect for one another including non-consensual sexual intercourse, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, childhood sexual abuse, and stalking. Additionally, Liberty University is committed to supporting and coming alongside students who may be victims of sexual discrimination and/or violence, currently, or in the past. Under Title IX, faculty are obligated to disclose to the university's Title IX office any student disclosure, either verbally or in writing, of current or past experience of sex-based discrimination, physical violence and/or sexual violence.

**Thus, if a student discloses to a faculty member, verbally or in writing, that he/she has experienced sex-based discrimination, physical violence and/ or sexual violence, presently or in the past, then the faculty member will make a referral to the Title IX office.** This process is in place so that the university can help ensure that students are offered both the support and resources needed to help them succeed in their educational endeavors. An employee from the Title IX Office will reach out to the student and offer support, resources, and information. Though faculty are required to report incidents of sex-based discrimination and/or violence to the Title IX office, students are not required to accept any offers of support, resources, or information.

#### **4.9 Personal Counseling**

Students are strongly encouraged to seek group and individual counseling for themselves as a part of the educational experience. As counselor-trainees who are in the process of developing the skills, professional behaviors, and dispositions needed to become a licensed clinical mental health counselor, it is imperative that we deal with our own personal issues that may interfere with our ability to work with clients in competent and ethical ways. Moreover, experiences as a client will help the counselor better understand the client's experience in counseling.

#### **4.10 Faculty Endorsement**

Upon graduation, faculty members may endorse students for certification and licensure. Upon request, the faculty may write letters of recommendation for employment in the student's specified area of specialization or for advanced studies (e.g., Doctoral programs). Endorsement only occurs when faculty believe the student is qualified to perform the duties associated with credentialing or employment.

In addition to credentialing and employment, faculty members endorse students for practicum and internship. Endorsement occurs only when students have successfully completed the prerequisite courses and if faculty members believe students are qualified to perform the duties associated with the practicum or internship. In compliance with the ACA Code of Ethics, regardless of academic qualifications, faculty do not endorse students whom they believe to be impaired in any way that would interfere with the performance of the duties associated with the endorsement.

#### **4.11 Student Record Keeping**

Copies of all class syllabi and course schedules should be kept by students for future use. Students should also keep copies of all clinical and supervision hours accrued in practicum and internship classes. Examination boards for counseling licensure, insurance companies, and other organizations may require proof of course content and/or clinical work by evidence of the course syllabus, course schedule, or official clinical hours spreadsheets. Do not discard old syllabi and other academic records but save them (electronic, print, or both) in a secure location. It is difficult, and sometime impossible, for faculty or program administration to locate old syllabi. Keeping copies of your course syllabi, schedules, and clinical hours is the student's responsibility.

# General Information

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## 5.1 Course Delivery Formats

Students enrolled in the residential program primarily complete their degree using the traditional 16-week semester classroom format on the Liberty University campus. Residential students may choose to meet some program requirements through residential intensives and online courses.

The Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies offers courses in multiple-delivery formats:

### **Format 1: Traditional Residential**

Clinical Mental Health Counseling courses are offered in the traditional 16 week semester classroom format during the fall and spring semesters on the Liberty University campus. Courses are delivered as one class session per week for a minimum of 2.5 hours per class. These residential experiences occur in a variety of formats, including lecture-based and experiential learning.

### **Format 2: One-week Residential Intensive**

Students in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling may take elective courses in the intensive format only during the summer. Intensive courses involve attending five eight-hour class days at our campus in Lynchburg. In addition to class time, students are expected to complete additional work online both pre and post intensive over the duration of this 16-week course. Students must read the required texts and complete all pre-class assignments prior to the beginning of class. Intensive classes are in session from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Monday – Friday with an hour for lunch. Grades are posted according to end of semester deadline dates as determined by the registrar’s office.

### **Format 3: Online Format Using Canvas® Learning management system**

M.A. Counseling courses are also available via distance learning. The University has adopted *Canvas*®, an online software platform, as its primary online instructional delivery method. Students have interaction with other students taking the same course, utilize links to online resources, view supplemental streaming video clips, and receive direct feedback from their professors using this innovative means of delivery.

## 5.2 Graduate Assistantships

The Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies has a limited number of Graduate Assistantships (GA) positions to award on an annual basis. These assistantships are intended to support the instructional and administrative needs of the graduate programs. Some of the responsibilities include assisting faculty and completing administrative duties associated with management of the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies. To apply to a GSA position, students must contact the Graduate School.

## 5.3 Computer Needs

Each student at Liberty University is expected to demonstrate computer literacy prior to admission to the program. Each course in the M.A. Clinical Mental Health Counseling program requires the student to use computer programs, which function in the process of course completion. In order to successfully accomplish the requirements, students **must** have access to a computer that has the capacity to:



- Read and write in Microsoft Office® software (Microsoft Office® is available to Liberty University students for a small charge through the Liberty University Helpdesk or CCD)
- Access online sites including the Liberty University website
- Send and receive email via Liberty Webmail. ***The student is required to use Liberty Webmail in all correspondence with the University.***
- Operate SPSS software for computer data analysis
- Submit required classroom assignments through Blackboard

For information on recommended hardware, software, operating systems, and student discounts on computers, see the Liberty Information Technology website at: <https://www.liberty.edu/it/>.

## 5.4 Email Account & Communication

Upon admission, each student is assigned a computer account and an email address on Liberty University's system. **Correspondence from the campus, including the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies Office, will be delivered via this email address. Students are strongly urged to check their Liberty University email accounts daily for communication from the university and counseling faculty.**

Students are expected to communicate in a professional manner at all times whenever emailing classmates, professors, or any employee of Liberty University. Because there is no accompanying tone of voice, facial expressions or body language, email communication is more easily misinterpreted than face-to-face. Your emails should be courteous and well thought out to avoid knee-jerk responses that will be interpreted as "flaming" or sarcasm. Communicate complaints directly to the individual involved. Do not send a blanket email to everyone in the class or to administrative personnel until you have communicated your concerns directly to the person involved and allowed them time to respond. Do not post a message to the class on Blackboard that is more appropriate for an individual. Avoid offensive language of any kind. Because students are responsible to behave in an ethical manner throughout the course of the program, continual unprofessional, discourteous communication cannot be tolerated and may result in remediation procedures up to and including dismissal from the program.

## 5.5 Dress Code

When on campus, students are expected to comply with the dress code outlined in the *Graduate School Code of Honor* found at the Graduate Student Affairs website: <http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=19155>.

# Appendices

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- A. M.A. Course Descriptions**
- B. Academic Planning Sheets**
- C. Teaching Faculty**
- D. Student Agreement Forms**

## M.A. COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

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**COUC 500 *Orientation to Counselor Professional identity and Function (3 hours)*:** This course introduces students to concepts regarding the professional functioning of licensed professional counselors, including history, roles, professional organizations, standards, and credentialing. Current issues in the practice of counseling and marriage and family therapy in a variety of professional settings are explored. Students are also introduced to program policies, graduate level writing and APA style.

**COUC 501 *Ethical and Legal Issues in Counseling (3 hours)*:** This course introduces students to concepts regarding ethical and legal issues encountered by licensed professional counselors and marriage and family therapists, including ethical principles, professional codes of ethics, identifying and resolving ethical dilemmas, ethical decision-making models, and legalities of the profession. Current issues in therapeutic practice in a variety of professional settings are explored.

**COUC 502 *Human Growth and Development (3 hours)*:** This course explores individuals throughout the lifespan in the areas of cognitive, personality, physical, and social development specifically through the examination of various theories. Understanding development crises, specific interventions, and optimal wellness are key content areas within this course. Additionally, this course provides a framework for understanding the impact of various situational, environmental, and sociocultural factors on individuals and their families and communities.

**COUC 504 *Multicultural Counseling (3 hours)*:** Prerequisite: COUC 500, 501. This course focuses on the multiple dimensions related to competent multicultural counseling. Major ethnic groups are studied along with the counseling, social justice, and advocacy approaches appropriate to each. In a similar fashion, the overarching cultural context of relationships, including factors such as age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religious & spiritual values, mental and physical characteristics, education, family values, socioeconomic status, and within group as well as between group cultural differences are examined. Theories of multicultural counseling, identity development, pluralistic trends, and systems-oriented intervention strategies (couple, family, group, and community) are considered. Counselor cultural self-awareness and the role of counseling in eliminating biases, prejudice, oppression, and discrimination are emphasized.

**COUC 505 *Counseling Techniques & the Helping Relationship (3 hours)*:** Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502. This course provides training in essential interview and counseling skills with an orientation towards wellness and prevention. Students will learn how personal characteristics and behaviors that influence the helping process as well as how counseling theory, including family systems, influences case conceptualization and interventions. Students will learn basic counseling skills for crisis intervention and suicide prevention and the role of the counselor in consultation.

**COUC 506 *Integration of Spirituality and Counseling (3 hours)*:** Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501. Students critically examine how a Christian worldview and a client's spirituality impact the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment planning process in counseling. Ethical, diagnostic, and assessment issues relevant to the use of Christian spiritual interventions with appropriately religious individuals, couples, & families are considered, along with current research related to spirituality and counseling.

**COUC 510 *Theories of Counseling (3 hours)*:** Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501. This course provides in-depth exploration of selected theories of counseling and psychotherapy, including empirically supported treatment modalities. Through this course, students learn about the nature and process of therapy, and begin to learn how to conceptualize client presentations and select appropriate interventions while considering issues of diversity. Students are encouraged to begin to define their own theoretical approach to their work with individuals, couples, and families.

**COUC 512 *Group Counseling (3 hours)*:** Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510. This course provides in-depth training in group counseling methods including group counselor orientations and behaviors, group theories, principles of group dynamics, group process components, developmental stages of groups, group members' roles and behaviors, therapeutic factors of group work, and program design and evaluation. Group counseling skills, appropriate selection criteria and methods, as well as leadership approaches, characteristics, and styles are studied. Ethical and legal considerations of group counseling are also explored. An experiential component is required in this course where students participate in small groups as members and/or leaders for a minimum of 10 clock hours.

**COUC 515 *Research and Program Evaluation (3 hours)*:** Prerequisite: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510 and MATH 201 or PSYC 355. Students learn the importance of scientific inquiry in the fields of clinical mental health counseling and marriage and family therapy. Emphasis is on research methods (designs, statistical analysis, needs assessment, and program evaluation) and locating, interpreting, and evaluating research and program evaluation articles that inform evidence-based practice. Ethical and cultural relevance as well as ethically appropriate integration is also addressed.

**COUC 521 *Assessment Techniques in Counseling (3 hours)*:** Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510. This course is designed to provide an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation in a multicultural society. Comprehension and application of basic concepts of standardized and nonstandardized testing and other assessment techniques, including norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment, environmental assessment, performance assessment, inventory methods, psychological testing, and behavioral observations are examined. Social and cultural factors related to the assessment and evaluation of individuals, groups, and specific populations are discussed. Identification of applicable ethical strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment and evaluation instruments and techniques in counseling are evaluated.

**COUC 522 *Career Development and Counseling (3 hours)*:** Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510. This course provides students an understanding of career development and related life factors. Students study career development theory and decision-making models, procedures for planning and conducting effective job searches, assessment instruments and techniques relevant to career planning and decision-making, and the use of career information. Emphasis is placed on understanding the interrelationships between career development and career decision-making and such factors as faith, values, family, socio-economic status, leisure, individual interests and abilities, and other life roles.

#### **Clinical Mental Health Specialty Courses:**

**COUC 546 *Psychopathology (3 hours)*:** Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510. This course studies psychological disorders and normalcy across the lifespan. Students are prepared to responsibly and competently assess, diagnose, conceptualize, and counsel clients as defined by the Diagnostic Statistical Manual classification system. Concepts and constructs, assessment processes, etiology, cultural factors, differential diagnosis, decision-making, and evidence-based therapeutic approaches are

emphasized. Clinical and scientific research is integrated through the course with a biblical worldview so that students will have a robust biopsychosocialspiritual lens to understand and treat mental disorders.

**COUC 601 *Theories of Family Systems (3 hours)*:** Prerequisites: CMHC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510. This course considers the dynamics of marriage and family relationships from a systems perspective. The emphasis is on understanding family and other systems theories, the structure and function of marriage, various aspects of the marital relationship and family systems, and models of family and systemic interventions. Considerations from an historical perspective are presented along with current developments within marriage and family systemic models. Students will engage in critical thinking regarding the application and integration of spirituality within marriage and family counseling.

**COUC 604 *Crisis Counseling (3 hours)*:** Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546. This course provides students with foundational knowledge of the impact of crises, disasters, and other trauma-causing events on people as well as the principles of crisis intervention for people during crises, disasters, and other trauma-causing events. The appropriate use of diagnosis during crisis, disaster, or other trauma causing events and the differentiation between diagnosis and developmentally appropriate reactions during crises, disasters, and other trauma-causing events will be examined. Students will learn specific crisis intervention practices, including procedures for assessing and managing suicide risk, suicide prevention models, and the use of psychological first aid strategies. The counselors' roles & responsibilities as members of an interdisciplinary emergency management response team during a crisis, disaster or other trauma-causing event and the operation of emergency management systems will be studied.

**COUC 667 *Clinical Diagnosis and Treatment Planning (3 hours)*:** Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546. Students become knowledgeable of the principles and practice of clinical diagnosis and the development of treatment plans using the current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual. Emphasis is also placed on mental status, substance use, and risk assessment. Consideration is given to ethical, dimensional, relational, multicultural, and systemic issues important in diagnosis and treatment planning.

**COUC 670 *Comprehensive Exam – CPCE (0 hours)*:** Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 506, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 667. The Comprehensive Exam-CPCE (Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam) must be successfully completed prior to degree conferral. Exam fee will be billed to the student's account due to outside institution administrative fee.

**COUC 671 *Comprehensive Exam – Integration (0 hours)*:** Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 506, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 667. The Comprehensive Exam-Integration must be successfully completed prior to degree conferral. There is no charge for the Integration exam.

**COUC 691 *Substance Abuse: Diagnosis, Treatment, and Prevention (3 hours)*:** Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546. This course is designed to introduce the student to current theories and etiology of addictions and addictive behaviors, including strategies for prevention, intervention, and treatment. The identification of standard screening and assessment instruments for substance use disorders and process addictions are practiced, as well as screening for aggression, and danger to self and/or others, as well as co-occurring mental disorders are reviewed. The course also describes appropriate counseling strategies when working with clients with addiction and co-occurring disorders in a multicultural society.

**COUC 698 Counseling Practicum (3 hours):** Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546, co-requisite 667 or 602. This course involves highly supervised experience of professional counseling at an approved clinical site in the counseling community. This supervision includes both individual and group supervision. Students are required to complete a total of 100 hours of counseling and related services, 40 of which are direct client contact hours. Written and oral presentations accompanied by audio and video recordings are a basic part of the group supervisory process. Additionally, the class will focus on the development of counseling related skills, ethics, and professionalism based on observation and exposure to the counseling field.

**COUC 699 Counseling Internship (3 hours)** Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546, 667, 698. This course requires successful completion of the practicum as one of its prerequisites and involves an intensely supervised experience in the student's designated program area at an approved site. Students are required to complete a total of 600 clock hours of counseling and related services, 240 of which are direct client contact hours. While gaining direct service experience with clients, students regularly meet with an approved onsite supervisor. Student counseling performance is evaluated throughout the internship. Written and oral presentations accompanied by audio and video recordings form the basis of the group supervisory process. The dynamics of the counseling relationship, diagnosis, treatment, and legal/ethical issues are primary areas of focus.

#### **Marriage and Family Therapy Specialty Courses:**

**COUC 602 Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment Planning in Marriage and Family Counseling (3 hours):** Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 601, 546. This course is an experiential exploration of selected, major treatment approaches utilized in marital and family counseling. The development of practical skills and techniques constitutes the primary focus. The intent is to make practical application of systemic theories presented in COUC 601. Students will have significant engagements in assessment, diagnosis, and treatment planning through role-play of clinical practice with various marriage and family counseling methods. Additionally, the impact of addiction, crisis, disasters, and other trauma-causing events on diagnosis and treatment planning in marriage and family counseling will be addressed. Students will learn to apply systemic interventions as treatment for various mental health problems that occur with individuals, couples, and families.

**COUC 603 Advanced Couple and Marital Counseling (3 hours):** Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546. This course introduces students to evidence-based protocols for couple and marital counseling. Advanced skill work in formalized assessment and couples counseling techniques highlight the elements of this course. Students will develop effective couple and marital case conceptualizations and apply effective treatment interventions to various problems couples may experience. This course also incorporates a focus on pre-marital assessment and counseling.

**COUC 610 Human Sexuality (3 hours):** Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510. An analysis of the physiological, psychological, cultural, and religious aspects of a wide range of topics in the area of human sexuality. Emphasis is on the development of an understanding and appreciation of the role of sexuality in individuals, couples, and families throughout the various phases of the life cycle.

**COUC 620 Counseling Children, Adolescents, and Their Families (3 hours):** Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546. This course examines the developmental and psychological needs and problems of children, and the transitions of adolescence emphasizing family,

social, spiritual/moral, and physical issues. Counseling theories and practices for working with children, adolescents, and their families are explored. Crisis interventions with children, adolescents, and their families will be addressed.

### **M.A. Counseling Elective and Advanced Elective Courses**

**COUC 507 *Theology and Spirituality in Counseling* (3 hours):** An examination of the content, comprehensiveness, and validity of several counseling theories that have been developed by prominent Christian counselors.

**COUC 605 *Community and Agency Counseling* (3 hours):** Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546. This course provides an overview of the theory and practice of counseling in human services agencies and other community settings. Emphasis is given to principles and practices of community outreach, intervention, education, consultation, and client advocacy in multicultural settings.

**COUC 611 *Counseling Children and Their Families* (3 hours):** Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546. The developmental and psychological needs and problems of children are examined through the analysis of personality types and family structure. Counseling techniques (e.g. play therapy) for children are also examined.

**COUC 630 *Gerontology and Counseling* (3 hours):** COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546. This course acquaints the counselor with the issues and problems unique to the elderly in American society. Topics such as suffering, societal attitude, and family structures are examined.

**COUC 687 *Counseling Women* (3 hours):** Prerequisite: CMHC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546. This course examines the most common problems women bring to counseling, including developmental and situational crises. It explores biblical perspectives and the most effective treatments for these situations.

#### **Advanced Electives:**

**COUC 712 *Psychopharmacology* (3 hours):** COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546. This course is a study of neurology, brain-behavioral relationships, diseases, injuries, and psychopharmacology. The effects of psychotropic drugs on individuals are examined

**COUC 713 *Community Systems Counseling: Programs and Practice* (3 hours):** Prerequisite: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546. Principles of service delivery in community agencies is reviewed, including roles and functions of counselors, trends in community systems, problems, and special populations.

**COUC 716 *Consultation and Counseling* (3 hours)** Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546. Consultation strategies in working with individuals and groups are surveyed. Topics, problems and research are taken from counseling, adult education, community service agencies, and instructional technology.

# LIBERTY

UNIVERSITY.

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

**Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (M.A.)**  
2020-2021 Degree Completion Plan

<b><u>EARLY CORE COURSES (21 hours)</u></b>	<b><u>Hrs</u></b>	<b><u>Sem</u></b>	<b><u>Grade</u></b>
COUC 500 Orientation to Counselor Profession Identity & Function	3	_____	_____
COUC 501 Ethical & Legal Issues in Counseling	3	_____	_____
COUC 502 Human Growth & Development	3	_____	_____
COUC 504 Multicultural Counseling	3	_____	_____
COUC 505 Counseling Techniques & the Helping Relationship <sup>1</sup>	3	_____	_____
COUC 506 Integration of Spirituality & Counseling	3	_____	_____
COUC 510 Theories of Counseling	3	_____	_____
<b><u>ADVANCED CORE COURSES (18 hours)</u></b>			
COUC 512 Group Counseling <sup>1</sup>	3	_____	_____
COUC 515 Research & Program Evaluation <sup>2</sup>	3	_____	_____
COUC 521 Assessment Techniques in Counseling	3	_____	_____
COUC 522 Career Development & Counseling	3	_____	_____
COUC 546 Psychopathology	3	_____	_____
COUC 601 Theories of Family Systems	3	_____	_____
<b><u>SPECIALIZATION COURSES (18 hours)</u></b>			
COUC 604 Crisis Counseling	3	_____	_____
COUC 667 Clinical Diagnosis & Treatment Planning	3	_____	_____
CEFS 670 Comprehensive Exam-CPCE <sup>3</sup>	Pass	_____	_____
CEFS 671 Comprehensive Exam-Integration <sup>3</sup>	Pass	_____	_____
COUC 691 Substance Abuse: Diagnosis, Treatment & Prevention	3	_____	_____
COUC 698 Counseling Practicum	3	_____	_____
COUC 699 Counseling Internship <sup>4</sup>	3	_____	_____
COUC 699 Counseling Internship <sup>4</sup>	3	_____	_____
<b><u>ELECTIVE COURSES (3 hours)</u></b>			
<i>Choose one 500-700 level elective from the following:</i>			
<i>CEFS, COUC, CRIS, LIFC &amp; SUBS</i>			
	3	_____	_____
<hr/>			
<b>TOTAL HOURS</b>		<b>60</b>	

**Graduation Requirements**  
 Complete 60 hours  
 A maximum of 50% of the program hours may be transferred if approved and allowable, including credit from an earned degree from Liberty University on the same academic level 3.0 GPA  
 No more than 2 grades of C may be applied to the degree (includes grades of C+ & C-)  
 No grade of D or below may be applied to the degree (includes grades of D+ & D-)  
 Successful completion of Comprehensive Exam  
 Liberty University course work that is more than 10 years old may not be applied towards this degree. Students are required to repeat the course if it has exceeded the age limit.  
 Degree must be completed within 7 years  
 Submission of Degree Completion Application must be completed within the last semester of a student's anticipated graduation date

**Offered in Resident and Online Format**

**Notes**  
*All applicable prerequisites must be met.*  
<sup>1</sup>Course offered in Intensive Format  
<sup>2</sup>Students must successfully complete three hours of undergraduate coursework in statistics. Those who did not complete this course during their undergraduate program may fulfill this prerequisite requirement during the first two semesters of the program.  
<sup>3</sup>Counseling Comprehensive Exam prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 506, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546, 667  
<sup>4</sup>COUC 699 must be taken a minimum of two times, and may be taken a third time  
*Suggested Course Sequence on Second Page*



<b><u>SUGGESTED COURSE SEQUENCE</u></b>			
<b>First Semester</b>		<b>Second Semester</b>	
COUC 500	3	COUC 504	3
COUC 501	3	COUC 505	3
COUC 502	<u>3</u>	COUC 510	<u>3</u>
Total	9	Total	9
<b>Third Semester</b>		<b>Fourth Semester</b>	
COUC 546	3	COUC 515	3
COUC 512	3	COUC 522	3
COUC 521	<u>3</u>	COUC 667	<u>3</u>
Total	9	Total	9
<b>Fifth Semester</b>		<b>Sixth Semester</b>	
COUC 604	3	COUC 601	3
COUC 506	3	COUC 691	3
COUC 698	<u>3</u>	COUC 699 <sup>2</sup>	3
Total	9	COUC 670 <sup>1</sup>	0
		COUC 671 <sup>1</sup>	<u>0</u>
		Total	9
<b>Seventh Semester</b>			
COUC 699 <sup>2</sup>	3		
Elective <sup>3,4</sup>	<u>3</u>		
Total	6		
<b>Notes</b>			
<sup>1</sup> Counseling Comprehensive Exam prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 506, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546 and 667 <sup>2</sup> COUC 699 must be taken a minimum of two times, and may be repeated a third time <sup>3</sup> Choose one 500-700 level courses from the following: CEFS, COUC, CRIS, LIFC, or SUBS <sup>4</sup> COUC 602, 603, 610, 611 & 620 can be used to fulfill the 60 hour requirement for LPC in VA. These courses can be taken after the 4th semester (as long as COUC 601 is Completed by this time), and may or may not be one-week intensives			
<b>Remember:</b> Students who are located in states that require 60 hours for licensure will need to research their state's requirements for necessary or required electives. Liberty University or the CCFS are not responsible to inform students of specific educational requirements for state licensure.			

## Core Teaching Faculty

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The following information summarizes the professional achievements and qualifications of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling faculty.

**Jeanne Brooks, Ph.D.** (Northcentral University, Psychology) is a full Professor of Counseling. Dr. Brooks has a PhD in psychology working in the field for over thirty years. She had a private practice in East Texas with her specialty areas working with troubled adolescents, alcohol and drug addiction, as well as helping children and families adjust to divorce. Her passion has been children, trauma, and helping people recover. She research in 2008 on the neurobiology of trauma examining complex trauma as it relates to the trafficked individual. She currently leads students around the world training anti-sex trafficking organization on trauma and self-care. Most recently, she joined Dr. Daniel Amen and Dr. Andrew Newberg on a research project, examining SPECT Scans and QEEG's of those practicing certain spiritual disciplines. Dr. Brooks believes there is much that neuroscience is revealing that fully supports what the Bible states about how we are to be anxious for nothing but prayerful and thankful for all things. In fact she believes that if we follow the direction of The Word we will be healthy neurologically and therefore be much better at emulating the love of Christ. Dr. Brooks is a full Professor for the Department for Counselor Education and Family Studies at Liberty University and has a part time private practice with Advanced Psychotherapeutics and Neoplastic Research. Dr. Brooks can be reached at [jupchurch@liberty.edu](mailto:jupchurch@liberty.edu).

**Nicole M. DiLella, Ph.D., LPC, LCPC, NCC, ACS** (Loyola University Maryland; Counselor Education and Supervision) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies and the Program Director for the Residential Clinical Mental Health Counseling program. Prior to joining the faculty in July 2015, Dr. DiLella worked as a Clinical Counselor at a college in Baltimore, Maryland providing clinical services to college students for four years. Additionally, she served as Lead Clinical Counselor and Director of the Counseling Services Department, providing administrative oversight and supervising other counselors and interns. Dr. DiLella's professional experience also includes private practice, work as a school counselor at a middle school in Norfolk, Virginia, and work at a non-profit community agency in Hampton, Virginia. As needed, Dr. DiLella has been deployed through the Green Cross to both domestic and international disaster sites to provide clinical and supervision services to those affected by these horrendous events. Clinically, she has spent a majority of her time in the subfields of trauma and personality disorders. Dr. DiLella is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC, VA) Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC, MD), Certified School Counselor (MD), and Certified Traumatologist. She is a member of several professional organizations including the American Counseling Association (ACA), Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), Southern Association of Counselor Education and Supervision (SACES), Green Cross Academy of Traumatology, and American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC). Most recently, Dr. DiLella was invited to join the ACA's Presidential Task Force for Trauma and Crisis Preparedness, collaborating with colleagues nationwide to establish and develop competencies for counselors in the areas of crisis, trauma, and disaster mental health. Currently, Dr. DiLella serves as the Faculty Advisor for the department's Rho Eta Chapter of CSI. Dr. DiLella has coauthored peer-reviewed publications on personality and spirituality. She plans to continue pursuing her research interests, particularly in personality pathology, trauma, dysfunctional spirituality/spiritual struggle, and sexuality. Her email address is [nmdilella@liberty.edu](mailto:nmdilella@liberty.edu).

**Victor Hinson, Ed.D., LPC, NCC** (Argosy University) is a Professor of Counseling in the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies. Dr. Hinson has varied professional experiences in pastoral care and counseling, professional counseling, student counseling, and mentoring young married couples. As a pastor, he has over 14 years of experience as senior pastor of churches, disciplining and mentoring individuals, teaching groups and facilitating small group therapy in churches and the community. His teaching and research interest include clinical mental health counseling, group counseling, marriage and family counseling, and adult children of alcoholics. His e-mail address is [vdhinson@liberty.edu](mailto:vdhinson@liberty.edu).

**David E. Jenkins, Psy.D.** (George Fox College, Clinical Psychology) is a Professor of Counseling and the Director of the M.A. in Addiction Counseling program in the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies. He has served as Clinical Director of the International Board of Christian Counselors of the American Association of Christian Counselors and is on the Executive Board of the Society for Christian Psychology. Dr. Jenkins also served on the Executive Draft Committee for 2014 update to the AACC's Code of Ethics for Christian Counselors. With over 25 years of clinical experience as a clinical psychologist, Dr. Jenkins specializes in the integration of Christian faith and clinical practice. He has worked extensively with addictive, mood, and anxiety disorders in the context of individual, marital, group, and family therapy. Dr. Jenkins has provided education, consultation, supervision and training for a variety of churches, ministries, and professionals. He is also an author and speaker at conferences, seminars, and retreats. Dr. Jenkins' teaching and research interests include professional ethics, addiction, integration of Christian faith and clinical practice, and marital/identity/gender issues related to the image of God. His email address is: [djenkins@liberty.edu](mailto:djenkins@liberty.edu).

**Elias Moitinho, Ph.D.** (Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary) is professor of counseling and residential chair in the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies (DCEFS). Dr. Moitinho is licensed as: LPC-S by the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors, LMFT by the Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists, and LPC by the Commonwealth of Virginia Board of Counseling. He is a member of the following organizations: American Counseling Association (ACA); Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES and SACES); Virginia Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (VACES); Virginia Counselors Association (VCA); Virginia's Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (VA-ASERVIC); American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA); and American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC). He has many years of work experience in various roles including pastor, counselor, seminary professor, and director of a Christian counseling center. Prior to joining Liberty University, he was the Hope for the Heart Chair of Biblical Counseling at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. At Liberty University, Dr. Moitinho has worked as director of counseling licensure programs and director of clinical training within the DCEFS. His interests are multicultural counseling focusing specifically on the Hispanic/Latino population. He also focuses on the use of Scriptures in counseling, marriage counseling, and family ministry. Additionally, Dr. Moitinho has taught as guest professor in seminaries in Mexico, Cuba, and Spain. Dr. Moitinho has a website: [www.motivationandgrowth.com](http://www.motivationandgrowth.com) and a YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/c/MotivationandGrowth>. His email is [emoitinho2@liberty.edu](mailto:emoitinho2@liberty.edu).

**Gary Sibcy, Ph.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist** (The Union Institute and University) Dr. Sibcy is a Professor in the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies. His research has focused on interpersonal neurobiology and attachment theory and their clinical application to childhood disorders, personality disorders, trauma, chronic depression, and family development. In addition to co-authoring three books on attachment, he has published numerous book chapters and journal articles on a wide range of clinical issues in counseling, clinical psychology, developmental psychology, behavior medicine,

and interpersonal neurobiology. Dr. Sibcy is a Certified Cognitive Behavior Therapist and he is a certified trainer for a new multi-million-dollar NIMH funded, empirically supported treatment for Chronic Depression called Cognitive Behavior Analysis System of Psychotherapy (CBASP). Dr. Sibcy is an internationally recognized speaker, conducting trainings and workshops on CBASP and certification trainings on attachment-based interventions. He has produced numerous training videos on a wide range of clinical topics, clinical research methods, and interpersonal neurobiology. He is currently conducting research on a new treatment protocol for treating disruptive behavior disorders in children (Attachment-Based Family Therapy for Children with Severe Emotion Dysregulation). He has been in private clinical practice for the past 25 years (10 of which was as an LPC, LMFT). He currently practices at Piedmont Psychiatric Center, a private practice owned by Centra Health and Virginia Baptist Hospital. His practice includes treating children, adults, and families and providing clinical training and supervision to Masters and Doctoral level students in clinical mental health and clinical psychology. He specializes in treating children with attachment disturbances, severe emotion dysregulation, disruptive behaviors, and anxiety disorders. In adults, he specializes in Anxiety disorders, OCD, PTSD, and Chronic Depression. His e-mail address is: [gsibcy@liberty.edu](mailto:gsibcy@liberty.edu).

**John C. Thomas, Ph.D.** (University of South Carolina, Counselor Education and Supervision), **Ph.D.** (Capella University, Organizational Psychology) is a Professor of Counseling. Prior to joining the faculty in 2004, he worked as a full time Employee Assistance Consultant (EAC) with DuPont in Waynesboro, Virginia for over twelve years and continued as a contractor for the next four years. Dr. Thomas's professional experience includes private practice, clinical director of the Lexington/Richland Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council in Columbia, South Carolina, adjunct professor at the University of South Carolina, and chair of the counseling and psychology program at Florida Bible College. In addition to two Ph.D. degrees, he has a Graduate Certificate in Alcohol and Drug Studies from the University of South Carolina and a Master of Arts in Counseling from Liberty University. Dr. Thomas is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), Certified Substance Abuse Counselor (CSAC), a Certified Sex Therapist, and a Certified Sexual Addiction Therapist. He is and has been a member of many professional organizations including the American Counseling Association (ACA), American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), Employee Assistance Professional Association (EAPA), and the American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC). Dr. Thomas has authored numerous professional publications as well as two curriculum series and five books. His primary research interests include shame, sexual shame, sex therapy, sex addiction, supervision, and techniques. His e-mail address is: [jcthomas2@liberty.edu](mailto:jcthomas2@liberty.edu).

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## **Student Agreement Form: Part One**

Welcome to Liberty University's M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program! As you begin your professional journey, please know the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies (DCFS) faculty members are committed to offering a program of graduate study that will lead to your professional and personal growth, ultimately benefitting the clients you may serve. The professional positions that students prepare for require individuals who are people-oriented, patient, good communicators, can tolerate ambiguity, can effectively work with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, and possess the capacity to appropriately conduct themselves in unclear interpersonal situations that could be addressed in multiple ways. Because of this, the course content and experiential activities involved in the M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program are designed to afford you the opportunity to advance your intellectual, professional, and personal development and functioning. For example, you will be strongly encouraged to thoroughly research topics and analyze what we do and do not know about the counseling process and how it is that we know this information (e.g., is there research to support what we do?). In addition, throughout your program, faculty members, supervisors (faculty and site-supervisors), peers, and clients will provide you with feedback concerning your academic, personal, and professional performance. You will be expected to deal with this feedback in a mature and professional manner and explore and recognize the effect that your personal beliefs, issues, emotions, and behaviors have on your ability to effectively function as a professional counselor. We provide detailed information on this in the *Clinical Mental Health Counseling Student Handbook*. Please review it carefully and talk with your advisor about any questions you may have.

As a student in the M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program, you will be required to participate in personal reflection, value assessment, and self-growth activities. Some examples of types of activities include, but are not limited to: assuming a client role for another student for short or extended role plays, keeping a journal that helps you explore how your personal strengths and issues influence your professional work, and observing or participating in situations that expose you to cultures different from your own. In addition, as part of a class in group counseling, students in our entry-level programs are required to participate in several group counseling sessions. It is important to know that these activities may bring to light things that you like and do not like about yourself, may affirm or challenge your current beliefs, and may be uncomfortable. In addition, since we do not change in a vacuum, the self-growth nature of the counseling profession and our program may have an impact on your personal relationships. It may be helpful to know that is not unusual for students to seek personal counseling during their program and referrals are available to all students.

You must download and read the most recent copy of the *Clinical Mental Health Counseling Student Handbook* from the counseling program's website. This handbook describes our

programs, courses, requirements, and policies as of August 2021. It is your responsibility to review the handbook and to discuss any questions that you might have with your faculty advisor. Please note that although the handbook is comprehensive, it is impossible to include information about every possible situation that may arise for all students while they complete their course of study. It is therefore essential to work closely with your advisor throughout your program to be sure you have the most current information as you plan your graduate program, enroll in courses, and make arrangements for field placements and graduation.

Because of this, we require all students to review the *Clinical Mental Health Counseling Student Handbook* and to meet with their advisors to discuss any questions they may have by the end of the first semester in the program. In addition, because all M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling students are expected to adhere to the American Counseling Association's (ACA) *Code of Ethics*, the Graduate Student Honor Code, and the Liberty Way. You must review these documents before meeting with your advisor.

You will see a form attached to this page. Please complete the following form and upload it to Blackboard after you have reviewed the appropriate documents.

Again, the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies faculty members welcome you to the program. We look forward to working with you!

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**Student Agreement Form: Part Two**

I, [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) (student’s name), have read the *Clinical Mental Health Counseling Student Agreement: Part One* and the *Clinical Mental Health Counseling Student Handbook*. In addition, I have reviewed the American Counseling Association’s *Code of Ethics*, the Graduate Student Honor Code, and the Liberty Way. I understand the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies faculty members are committed to providing course content and experiences that are designed to help me develop the knowledge and skills I need to become an effective and ethical counselor. I also am aware that the faculty has the right and responsibility to monitor my academic and professional behavior and my personal behavior in relation to my professional work.

I have reviewed the requirements for the M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program and have met with my advisor to discuss any initial questions I may have. I agree to fully participate in the courses and requirements delineated in the *Clinical Mental Health Counseling Student Handbook*. I also agree to abide by the policies set forth in the *Handbook* and to consult with my advisor as I progress through my program of study.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

[Click or tap to enter a date.](#)

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**Student’s Name (Type Name for electronic signature)**

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**Date**

Please also include the name of a counseling agency you could contact should you desire to pursue personal counseling during the course of the program. Students are recommended, but not required, to experience personal counseling during the program and must provide the name of at least one agency below to have on file.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

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**Name of Counseling Location Local to Student**