

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY



MASTER OF ARTS

Marriage and Family Counseling

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 Marriage and Family Counseling must adhere to these guidelines with the exception of any changes in the academic program.

Disclosure Statement

The Marriage and Family Counseling degree is designed to lead to professional licensure as outlined by the [Virginia Board of Counseling](#); other state boards have unique licensure requirements. Therefore, before enrolling in a licensure program at Liberty University, students should consult the rules and regulations 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 M.A. Marriage and Family Counseling program 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 M.A. Marriage and Family 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 particular state's board of counseling.

For issues regarding course scheduling, contact the Director, Dr. Nicole DiLella at nmdilella@liberty.edu. For Practicum & Internship, please contact the respective offices practicum@liberty.edu or internship@liberty.edu. If appealing a decision made by the practicum/internship office, please contact Dr. Steve Johnson at sgjohnson2@liberty.edu.

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From the Marriage and Family 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 Graduate Marriage and Family Counseling program. The faculty are honored that you have chosen to pursue your studies here at Liberty University.

This *2020-2021 M. A. in Marriage and Family 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 2020. This handbook is required reading for all M.A. Marriage and Family 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. 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 make arrangements 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* at: <http://www.liberty.edu/academics/catalogs/>. 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 *2020-2021 Graduate Catalog*.

We are glad you are here! You are about to engage in the exciting process of becoming a professional counselor or marriage and family therapist. 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 within a Christian framework. 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, ACS
Director, M.A. in Marriage and Family Counseling Program

Liberty University General Information

1.1 Campus

Liberty University is a Christ-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](#).

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 Marriage and Family Counseling program is accredited by the ***Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP)***. CACREP 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. For further information on the program's accreditation, please visit the [CACREP accreditation page](#).

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

2.1 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 (LPC) or marriage and family therapists (LMFT) 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.

2.2 Mission Statement

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

2.3 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.

2.4 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 School of Behavioral Sciences 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, as well as, 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 basis of: race, color, creed, religion, gender, age, national/ethnic origin, sexual orientation, and physical or mental disability.

Recognizing the importance of all dimensions of diversity noted above, the School of Behavioral Sciences 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; and
- To equip students to ethically utilize spirituality as a force for healing when and where appropriate.

Admission Policies

3.1 Admission and Licensure

The 60 hour Marriage and Family 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 or a marriage and family therapist for their particular state. More specifically, these students should be aware of the following before enrolling in Liberty University's Marriage and Family 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> or <https://amftrb.org/>.

3.2 Admission Requirements

Admission to the Master of Arts in Marriage and Family 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 the Marriage and Family Counseling program are as follows:

Undergraduate Prerequisites

1. An earned baccalaureate degree or its equivalent from an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
2. An undergraduate cumulative GPA of at least 2.7 (on a 4.0 scale).
 - a. 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.
 - b. 3 credit hours of undergraduate coursework in statistics. Applicants who have not successfully completed this course 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 marriage and family 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 marriage and family therapist. The Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies 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.

3.3 Application Checklist and 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: <https://www.liberty.edu/residential/graduate/>.

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 provided by the student 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 (Completing a bachelor's degree).

Students can apply prior to having their degree conferred by sending in a preliminary transcript for acceptance. However, students must be in your final semester and planning to start their Master's degree after the last date of class for their 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.

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 Marriage and Family Counseling program. Admission decisions are not made until all documentation has been received and evaluated by the faculty. The 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. If certain documentation does not meet admission standards, the CEFS faculty reserves the right to offer admissions to students based on use professional judgment.

3.4 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.

3.5 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, 602, 698, or 699 courses. However, the department will review cases for individuals who have graduated and are practicing clinicians who need additional coursework for licensure.

All inquiries should be sent to the Marriage and Family program director for review.

Academic Policies

4.1 Program Learning Objectives

The Masters of Arts in Marriage and Family Counseling provides students with both academic course work and applied learning experiences in the classroom and at supervised practicum and internships. Students are expected to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions considered essential to the professional preparation of licensed counselors. To this end, the faculty have developed the following learning outcomes applicable to all students.

MA Clinical Mental Health Counseling PLOs
Cluster 1 2018-19
PLO 1: Apply Ethical/Legal Standards Apply the ethical and professional principles, standards, and expectations that are integral to a professional counselor's role and identity.
PLO 2: Apply Diverse Populations for Treatment 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.
Cluster 2 2019-20
PLO 3: Assess Counseling Skills 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.
PLO 4: Use Developmentally Appropriate Assessments 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.
Cluster 3 (Includes specialty PLO) 2020-21
PLO 5: Evaluate Research and Writing Skills 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.
PLO 6: Integrate Biblical Principles and Secular Theories Integrate faith and spirituality into counseling where appropriate in an ethically competent manner.
MA Clinical Mental Health Counseling PLO
PLO 7: CMHC/COUC-Synthesize Counseling Theories to Treat Clients 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.

<https://catalog.liberty.edu/graduate/colleges-schools/behavioral-sciences/counselor-education-family-studies/licensure-programs/clinical-mental-health-counseling-ma/>

4.2 M.A. Programs (60 Hour Licensure Track)

In addition to the residential [Master of Arts in Marriage and Family 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 Clinical Mental Health Counseling](#) (CACREP Accredited), [Master of Arts in Professional 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 Clinical Mental Health Counseling and Marriage and Family Counseling residential programs are CACREP accredited.

Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Counseling (60-hour program)

The 60-hour MFC program is designed to meet the licensure requirements for the Commonwealth of Virginia. **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 Marriage and Family Counseling degree requirements.

The Marriage and Family 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, family, and marital counseling issues. This program provides appropriate education for students seeking career opportunities in agencies, private practices, faith-based counseling centers, and a variety of other public and private facilities.

4.3 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.

4.4 Transfer of Credits

Students may transfer 30 hours for the 60-hour Marriage and Family 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 Marriage and Family Counseling, 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 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, 602/667, 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.

4.5 Independent Studies and 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.

4.6 Program of Study

The following chart lists 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 advisor when you set up your course of study together.

M.A. in Marriage and Family 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 602	Assessment, Diagnosis & Treatment Planning in Family Counseling	3
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
Marriage and Family Electives (choose 2 of 3)		
COUC 603	Advanced Marital & Couple Counseling	3
COUC 610	Human Sexuality	3
COUC 620	Counseling Children, Adolescents, and Their Families	3
	Total	60 hours

4.7 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 Marriage and Family Counseling (60 Hour)

Semester	Courses	Semester	Courses
1 st Semester	COUC 500 COUC 501 COUC 502	2 nd Semester	COUC 504 COUC 505 COUC 510
3 rd Semester	COUC 506 COUC 512 COUC 515	4 th Semester	COUC 521 COUC 546 COUC 601
5 th Semester	COUC 602 COUC 522 COUC 698	6 th Semester	COUC 670 ¹ COUC 671 ¹ COUC 603 or 620 ² COUC 699 ³ Elective: COUC 610 or 691
7 th Semester	COUC 603 or 620 ² COUC 699 ³		

4.8 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 Note: All undergraduate prerequisites must be taken before student can progress past this point.
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, 512, 515
COUC 601	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512
COUC 604	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, 602/667
COUC 691	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546
COUC 698	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, *522, 546, *602/667
COUC 699	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 602/667, 546, 698
COUC 711	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546
MFC Courses	
COUC 602	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 601, 546
COUC 603	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 601, *602/667, 546
COUC 610	COUC 500, 501, 502, 505, 510
COUC 620	COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 601, *602/667, 546
Advanced Electives	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 805	By instructor permission only
COUC 806	By instructor permission only
COUC 815	By instructor permission only
COUC 820	By instructor permission only
COUC 850	By instructor permission only

Important Note: The M.A. Marriage and Family Counseling program is designed to meet the Virginia Board of Counseling educational requirements for license as a Marriage and Family Therapist. Additionally, the Virginia Board of Counseling requires 3 hours of coursework in diagnosis and treatment of addictive behaviors for LMFTs.

4.9 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.

If the second degree is a in another counseling program (e.g. School Counseling), they must meet the curricular and internship requirements for each program. For most students it is easier for to pursue a masters in school counseling and take additional courses for their counseling state licensure then the reverse. Due to the extent overlap between required courses in the CEFS Department programs, dual degrees will not be awarded within the department.

4.10 Faculty/Academic Advising

Liberty's **residential students** in the MA Marriage and Family Counseling Program are assigned when you enroll in your first course. Your residential faculty advisor will contact you by email.

Dr. Jeanne Brooks	jdbrooks6@liberty.edu
Dr. Nicole DiLella	nmdilella@liberty.edu
Dr. David Jenkins	djenkins@liberty.edu
Dr. John Thomas	jcthomas2@liberty.edu

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.

4.11 Comprehensive Examination

All Marriage and Family 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 pursuing state licensure in counseling by providing them with an examination that mirrors the content as well and format of the National Counselor Exam (NCE), a multiple-choice, timed exam used for licensure by many state licensure boards. Please note that the comprehensive exam does not prepare students adequately for the National Exam for Marriage and Family Therapy, a multiple-choice, timed exam used for licensure by many state licensure boards. However, the coursework in the marriage and family specialty courses (COUC 601, 602, 603, 610, and 620) are designed to prepare students for the Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards (AMFTRB) MFT licensure exam.

The Comprehensive examination is offered the third Saturday of February, July, and October. It is also offered at the end of the COUN 602 Intensives that are offered throughout the year. Students must register with the Comprehensive Examination Coordinator at 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/academics/arts-sciences/counseling/index.cfm?PID=5975&_ga=1.144661174.2054727618.1388455157.

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 Marriage and Family 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 in an ethically competent manner (COUC 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 602/667, 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 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 COUN 670 (CPCE®) and/or COUN 671 (Integration) courses. There will be a class fee of \$45 charged to their student account. The fee covers the CPCE® examination, grading, and postage.

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 Marriage and Family 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 the correct textbooks related to your exam. If you took COUC 506 before Fall B-term 2020, then your exam covers the entire Entwistle (2015) text and the McMinn (2011) text. If you are taking the exam after Fall D-term 2020 then your exam covers Entwistle (2015), Hawkins (2015), and Neff & McMinn (2020).

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

Hawkins, R., & Clinton, T. (2015). *The new Christian counselor: A fresh biblical & transformational approach*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House. ISBN: 9780736943543.

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

Neff, M.A. & McMinn, M. (2020). McMinn, M. R. *Embodying integration: A fresh look at Christianity in the therapy room*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Online Free Required Resource: is available through Liberty University's library at the following website: <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/lib/liberty/reader.action?docID=4534457&ppg=1>

* Please note that due to copyright issues, you are not allowed to download this resource. You are only allowed to read it online. Should you require a hard copy of this resource, you are welcome to do so at your own expense. A study guide to prepare for the integration exam is at <https://www.liberty.edu/behavioral-sciences/counselor-ed/cpce-counselor-prep-comp-exam/>

4.12 Practicum and Internship

Practicum: The student must have completed the following courses in to be placed in the Practicum: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 506, 510, 512, 515, 521, 601, and 546. COUC 522 and 602 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. Note: All prerequisite courses are non-negotiable and must be completed prior to taking COUC 698.

*COUC students can enroll in Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment Planning in Marriage and Family Counseling (COUC 602) as a co-requisite with the Counseling Practicum (COUC 698) *only if:*

- they enroll in the Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment Planning in Marriage and Family Counseling (COUC 602) **Intensive** that occurs before or in the same month as the start date for the Counseling Practicum (COUC 698).
- they are enrolled in a **B-term** online section of Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment Planning in Marriage and Family Counseling (COUC 602).
 - *If a student is enrolled in a D-term online section of COUC 602 the same semester they wish to take Practicum, they will need to switch to a B-term online section or take the intensive version of COUC 602, or they will be denied.*

The Practicum experience provides students with a planned clinical experience in an approved clinical setting under an approved supervisor. During the Practicum, students are actively engaged in the field of professional counseling and contribute to their cooperating site by learning and beginning to participate in many of the daily clinical activities of that agency.

Internship: The student must have completed the following courses to be placed in Internship: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 506, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 601, 546, 602/667, 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. Note: All prerequisite courses are non-negotiable and must be completed prior to the start of the Internship.

The Internship experience provides students with a planned clinical experience in an approved clinical setting under an approved supervisor. During the Internship, students continue to apply knowledge to practice, develop advanced counseling skills, and personal qualities, characteristics and behaviors of a professional counselor as they transition from “trainee” to “professional practitioner.”

Being Successful

Since most, if not all, course work 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.

Approval Process

Students will submit an online application through the SharePoint submission portal by using a link posted on the Practicum and Internship websites located on the Degree Program Information-website: <https://www.liberty.edu/behavioral-sciences/counselor-ed/degree-program-information/> 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.

*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. 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.

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.

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. Marriage and Family Counseling students are required to have a minimum of 200 hours out of the required 240 direct hours with couples and families. Their site should have a couple/family client population that accommodates this requirement.

State Licensure Requirements

Students intending to seek licensure in a state other than Virginia after graduation **are required to know their state(s) licensure requirements where they will seek licensure** because a state's fieldwork course hours and supervisory requirements may differ from Virginia. When there is a difference, students must complete the greater amount: Liberty University or the state the student resides (e.g., Florida requires 1000 hours of fieldwork experience and CA requires additional classes). 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> or <https://amftrb.org/>.

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:
 - **Site must be sponsored by an American Organization**
 - **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
 - 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:
 - **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.

4.13 Break in Enrollment

A student breaks enrollment if he/she does not matriculate in a course at least once every academic year. Admission status is subject to the terms of any previous academic or disciplinary probation, suspension, or dismissal. Students may be required to provide official transcripts from all educational

institutions attended since enrollment at Liberty. Admission decisions for re-applicants will be based on the current admission criteria of the respective degree program at the time the new application is submitted. Students who break enrollment and apply for readmission will be required to follow the current degree completion plan in effect at the time of re-entry to the University. Any military student wishing to be readmitted who broke enrollment due to deployment must contact the Office of Military Affairs.

4.14 Time Limit for Degree Completion

The time limit for completing the Master degree from the enrollment date of the first course taken is seven years. Any Marriage and Family Counseling courses taken at Liberty over ten years old, will need to be repeated in order for a student to graduate with the Marriage and Family Counseling degree.

4.15 Course Repeat Policy

In order to graduate from the Marriage and Family 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-.**

4.16 Administrative Dismissal

Students will be eligible for Administrative Dismissal from the Master of Arts in Marriage and Family 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.
4. They earn two (2) grades of D+ or lower.

4.17 Attendance and 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 will be identified as either excused or unexcused and are handled per the Liberty University Graduate School policy and as 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

4.18 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.

4.19 Graduation

All degree completion requirements must be fulfilled before the university will confer the MA in Marriage and Family 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

5.1 Tuition and Fees

Information about tuition and fees for the Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Counseling courses can be found at the following website: <https://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=296>.

5.2 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

6.1 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) and/or the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT). These organizations allow students higher levels of involvement in more specific areas of interest. Most professional organizations and divisions offer reduced membership rates to students as well as:

- benefits such as access to professional journals and newsletters
- reduced registration fees for professional activities sponsored by the organization (conferences, seminars, workshops)
- eligibility for member services (resources, ethics consultation, group liability insurance)
- involvement in activities and issues directly or indirectly pertinent to the profession (legislation and professional credentialing including licensure, certification)
- affiliation with other professionals having similar interests and areas of expertise.

6.2 Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

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. Furthermore, students are expected to neither give nor receive assistance of any kind regarding assignments or examination. For more information on the *Academic Code of Honor* and *Personal Code of Honor*, see the *Graduate Student Code of Honor* found at the Graduate Student Affairs website:

<http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=19155>

see the Graduate Student Code of Honor found at the Graduate Student Affairs website:

<http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=19155>.

6.3 Academic Appeal Policy

In circumstances where a student disagrees with either a course final grade or a sanction due to an Honor Code violation, students have the right to appeal the grade or sanction through the Office of Student Affairs. The procedure followed for academic misconduct, personal misconduct, or grade appeals is outlined at the Graduate Student Affairs website:

<http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=19155>.

6.4 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 as it relates to the context of the student-client setting. The faculty are responsible to avoid dual relationships with students, such as entering a student-counselor relationship. Thus, faculty do not provide personal counseling addressing student 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.

6.5 Professional Development, Student Support and Administrative Review

Ethical Conduct

All students in the MA Marriage and Family 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 these guidelines 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 that 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 when faced with challenging situations.

This is an essential component of the candidate's professional development. For behaviors that constitute a violation of the University's Honor Code, the candidate's professor will complete the Honor Code Violation form and send it to the faculty mentor, who will document the incident in the candidate's record and inform the program director, then forward the form to the Associate Dean, who may involve Liberty University Online and Graduate Student Affairs. Candidates are given an opportunity to appeal.

Professional Development

To successfully complete the Marriage and Family 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 Professional Counseling standards, the comprehensive examination 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 (COUC 505, 512, 602/667) 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 during the program in all interactions with faculty, staff, administrators, supervisors, adjuncts, and fellow students and includes 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, as well as written communications. 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 and Development

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. Faculty must 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.

6.6 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 and/or conceptual approach
- *Impaired*: Requires additional intervention-based and/or therapeutic approach

The problematic behavior continuum can also be considered along 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 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 effective member of 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 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 CMHC/MFC Programs

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, report from university staff, evaluation from 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 a 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 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 determine 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, 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. The student may request or may be requested to be in attendance. 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 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.

6.7 Harassment

Sexual harassment, and/or any 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.

6.8 Sexual Violence Consultation and 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. For additional information and up to date policy, please reference the Title IX information page

<https://www.liberty.edu/titleix/index.cfm?PID=35152>

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. The faculty member will also notify the department chair. 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.

6.9 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 marriage and family therapist, it is imperative that students deal with personal issues that may interfere with their 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.

6.10 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. Students should reach out to a faculty member who can best speak to their academic and professional performance.

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.

6.11 Student Record Keeping

Students should keep copies of all class syllabi and course schedules 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

7.1 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 a variety of delivery formats. Below some are listed in addition to specific courses that may include a weekly synchronous component through an online platform.

Format 1: Traditional Residential

Marriage and Family 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 Marriage and Family Counseling may take elective courses in the intensive format only during the summer. The intensive courses involve attending a full week (approximately) 36-40 hours of classroom-based instruction at Liberty University 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 –Thursday and 8:00 a.m. to noon on Friday with an hour and a half for lunch. Grades are posted according to end of semester deadline dates as determined by the registrar's office.

Format 3: Online Format Using Blackboard® and Canvas® Learning management system

M.A. Counseling courses are carefully designed to provide students with a full academic experience via distance learning. The University currently uses *Blackboard*®, an online software platform, as its primary online instructional delivery method. In the spring, the LU graduate school will transition to *Canvas*® for the class platform. 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 means of delivery.

7.2 Graduate Assistantships

Graduate Student Assistantships are available for residential and online students living in the Lynchburg area. These positions involve a stipend and tuition rebate. The application is separate from the admissions process. To apply to a GSA position, students will need to contact the Graduate School. Detailed information can also be found in the Graduate Student Assistant Webpage at <https://www.liberty.edu/academics/graduate/index.cfm?PID=30539>

7.3 Computer Needs

Each course in the M.A. Marriage and Family Counseling program requires the student to have a reliable internet connection and computer software programs. Because these are essential for your interactions and completion of the course, students **must** have access to the following:

- Microsoft Office® (Note: Microsoft Office 365® is available for free to Liberty University students at <https://www.liberty.edu/informationseivices/index.cfm?PID=24600>)
- Internet that can access Blackboard and Liberty University's website
- A computer that meets the hardware/software specifications to access Blackboard
- Send and receive emails via their Liberty Webmail address.

For information on recommended hardware, software, operating systems, and student discounts on computers, see the Liberty Information Technology website at <https://www.liberty.edu/informationseivices/index.cfm?PID=30890>

7.4 Email Account and Communication

Upon admission, each student is assigned a Liberty University user name and email account (username@liberty.edu). **All correspondence from the university, counseling department, and your course instructor 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 be professional in your email communication. We live in a fast-paced world with text messaging, which encourages short and abbreviated communication. However, since you are in a counseling program, you are encouraged and expected to use full sentences and good grammar when communicating with other students and faculty. It is also an expectation that your electronic communication is pleasing to God. Being courteous and polite to peers and professors demonstrates dignity and respect, "And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them" (Luke 6:31, ESV).

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 for behaving 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.

7.5 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>.

Student Support Services

Library/Media Services

[Jerry Falwell Library](#) provides a wide range of resources and services to meet the needs of students and faculty. State-of-the-art technologies and world-class collections designed to support and enhance the University's curricula are readily accessible in a variety of formats to both residential and online students and faculty. Candidates have access to [databases](#), [research guides](#), [physical and electronic collections](#), and [workshops](#) on a variety of topics that can be attended in person or via streaming video. Both the [Education Research Guide](#) and the [Counseling and Psychology Research Guide](#) include School Counseling. The Library also houses an exhaustive list of books and journals related to counseling, school counseling, and counseling-related professions to include ACA journals and the ASCA journal, Professional School Counseling. Online students have access to Inter-Library loan, and full-text journal articles and e- books for printing. Candidates can link to professional counseling associations, including the American Counseling Association (ACA) and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). Candidates interested in making use of the Library's resources and/or services should visit the Library's [website](#).

Technology Services

Candidates have access to technology support services via the Helpdesk through Liberty's Information Technology HelpDesk. A technician will aid students in diagnosing and resolving issues related to technology. Technicians can access computers remotely, offering the same service to online students as they would to residential students. Through IT, students may purchase software at a discount (or obtain for free), and gain training and certifications. Candidates interested in making use of IT resources and/or services should visit the IT website link above.

Counseling Services

Student counseling services are available through the Student Care Office of Liberty University and include individual counseling, group counseling, crisis counseling, and referral services. Candidates can access a variety of online counseling resources provided by Student Care counselors at and additional campus resource offices. Candidates interested in making use of Student Care resources and/or services should visit the website above, email studentcare@liberty.edu or call 434- 582-2651.

Career Services

Liberty's Career Center provides students with a variety of career services, including career counseling, resume writing, networking, interviewing, and assessment. Both face-to-face and phone appointments are available. Candidates interested in making use of the Career Center's resources and/or services should visit the website, email careers@liberty.edu or call 434-5924109.

Appendices

- A. **M.A. Course Descriptions**
- B. **Academic Planning Sheets**

M.A. COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

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.

COUC 546 *Psychopathology and Counseling (3 hours)*: Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512. 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 *Marriage and Family Counseling I (3 hours)*: Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512. 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 a historical perspective are presented along with current developments within marriage and family systemic models.

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 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, 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, 602/667. 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, 602/667. The Comprehensive Exam-Integration must be successfully completed prior to degree conferral. There is no charge for the Integration part.

COUC 691 *Substance Abuse: Diagnosis, Treatment, and Prevention (3 hours)*: Prerequisites: COUC 501, 504, 505, 510, 521, 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, 506, 510, 512, 515, 521, 546, Co-requisites: 522, 602/667. 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, 602/667, 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. MFC students are required to complete 200/240 of their direct client contact hours with couples or families.

Marriage and Family Counseling Specialty Courses:

COUC 602 *Marriage and Family Counseling II (3 hours)*: Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 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 family counseling theories and awareness presented in COUC 601. Students will have significant engagements in diagnosis, treatment planning, and role-play of clinical practice of various marriage and family therapy methods. Additionally, the impact of addiction, crisis, disasters, and other trauma-causing events on diagnosis and treatment planning in marriage and family therapy will be addressed.

COUC 603 *Premarital and Marital Counseling (3 hours)*: Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 601, 546. Co-requisite: 602 or 667. This course introduces students to a variety of approaches that have been developed for through premarital counseling. The course also teaches students a conceptual model of understanding the variety of ways marriages can become dysfunctional, and introduces them to short-term method that can be used when those kinds of problems develop.

COUC 610 *Human Sexuality (3 hours)*: Prerequisites: COUC 500, 501, 502, 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, 521, 601, 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

COUN 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.

COUN 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.

COUN 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.

COUN 630 *Gerontology and Counseling (3 hours)*: COUC 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 510, 512, 515, 521, 522, 546, 602/667. 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 structure are examined.

COUN 687 *Counseling Women (3 hours)*: Prerequisite: COUC 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 psycho-pharmacology. 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.