



LIBERTY
UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL *of* BEHAVIORAL
SCIENCES

Doctorate of Philosophy:
Counselor Education & Supervision
2026-2027 Program Handbook

Department of Counselor Education & Family Studies

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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 specific to the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies. The policies and procedures apply to current and newly accepted students. Students currently taking Ph.D. courses in Counselor Education and Supervision must adhere to these guidelines, except for any changes to the academic program.

Disclosure Statement

Enrollment in the Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision program does not guarantee a degree from Liberty. 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 Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision program are responsible for knowing the material outlined in this handbook.

Program Contact Information

[Liberty University Executive Leadership](#)

Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies Administration

(For further information call 434-592-4049)

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[Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies Faculty and Staff](#)

From the Counselor Education and Supervision Program Director

Welcome to Liberty University, the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies, and the Ph.D. Program in Counselor Education and Supervision!

As a CACREP-accredited program, the Counselor Education and Supervision doctoral program is designed to provide counseling professionals with advanced instruction and opportunities in counseling, teaching, supervision, leadership and advocacy, and research to develop your skills and influence in the field of counseling. Successful graduates are prepared to work as counselor educators, supervisors, researchers, and advanced practitioners in academic and counseling settings.

The department staff and faculty are here to encourage, mentor, and support you during your doctoral studies. We believe that becoming a leader in the field of counseling is a vital calling, and we are committed to providing you with experiences and relationships that are both rewarding and rigorous. It is our desire that you leave this program fully equipped to make a profound difference in the lives and communities in which you work. May you devote yourself to this endeavor with a mission to serve Christ as highly competent, diversity-honoring, and ethically grounded counselor educators, supervisors, advanced clinical practitioners, scholar-researchers, and social justice advocates.

While we are committed to walking alongside you in the most helpful and meaningful ways possible, ultimately you are responsible for your degree and for obtaining the goals you have related to your vocation. It is our hope and prayer that you flourish in all ways during your doctoral journey!

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” – Ephesians 2:10

Lisa McKenna, Ph.D., LPC-S, BC-TMH
Director, Ph.D. Counselor Education and Supervision Program

Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision Program

1.1 Accreditation

Liberty University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award associate, bachelor's, master's, specialist, and doctoral degrees. Questions about the accreditation of Liberty University may be directed in writing to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097, by calling (404) 679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC's website (www.sacscoc.org).

Liberty is also a member of the Association of Christian Schools International.



As of May 12, 2016, Liberty University's Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision program is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP). For more information, please visit the following website:

<https://www.liberty.edu/behavioral-sciences/counselor-ed/cacrep-accreditation/>

1.2 Overview

The Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision Program is housed in the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies, School of Behavioral Sciences at Liberty University. The primary aim of the Ph.D. Program is to mentor a diverse body of Doctoral students, our future colleagues, who sense a calling to extend the foundation of knowledge on ethical and effective counseling, counselor education, and supervision through the dissemination of meaningful research and scholarship and by impacting the field in leadership positions in clinical settings, higher education, and counseling associations.

The Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision is a 60-hour program, extending Master's-level counseling competencies that comprise the CACREP entry-level standards for counseling specializations. As such, students who gain entrance to this Ph. D. Program demonstrate that they have previously met all of the entry-level competencies outlined in the CACREP Accreditation Manual (CACREP, 2024) prior to beginning doctoral-level counselor education coursework.

This Ph.D. degree Program provides education for students seeking career opportunities as leaders in the field of counseling. Graduates develop knowledge and skills that enable them to ethically and competently promote advocacy, social justice, and social change at the individual and systemic level; disseminate research and scholarship that extend the knowledge base of

the counseling field; and impact the field through teaching and supervising counselors-in-training and active engagement with professional counseling associations. For more information, please see the [Graduate Catalog](#).

1.3 Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies (CEFS) 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 purpose is to accomplish this mission by the professional development of the student across the following domains:

1. Attainment of scholastic competence 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

The mission of the Doctoral Program in Counselor Education and Supervision is to train highly competent counselor educators, supervisors, clinical practitioners, researchers, scholars, and leader-advocates. Faculty in the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies are committed to collaborative inquiry wherein doctoral students are supported in developing competencies in leadership roles in the counseling field. To facilitate these outcomes, faculty and students engage in learning experiences that support them in developing:

1. Collaborative relationships with faculty and other professionals in the field of counseling
2. Leadership skills in counselor education, supervision, advanced clinical practice, research and scholarship, and social justice action
3. Expertise in an area or areas of professional identity and functioning
4. Knowledge and skills in developing and disseminating research and scholarship that makes a significant impact on the field and the lives of others
5. Competency and comfort in participating in professional counseling organizations (i.e., American Counseling Association and its Divisions)

1.4 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, by offering rigorous academic programs, dynamic interaction with mentors and faculty, and carefully structured practicum and internships.

1.5 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 (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 who 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, professional, and personal growth occurs 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.

While recognizing the importance of all dimensions of diversity, as mentioned 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 the 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 assistantship opportunities to serve diverse student groups;
- To provide departmental opportunities for students and faculty to engage in the exchange of ideas and information related to diversity; and
- To maintain ongoing educational opportunities and equality of access to our academic community.
- To equip students to ethically utilize spirituality as a force for healing when and where appropriate.

Students in the Ph.D. program must exhibit the [American Counseling Association's standards and ethics](#) of the counseling profession regarding sensitivity to and celebration of diversity.

Liberty University admits candidates of any race, color, national and ethnic origin, and accords them all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to candidates 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.

1.6 Special Student (Non-Degree) Status

A non-degree seeking student may take up to twelve hours in the program. Applicants for special student status must submit official transcripts, a special student application, a letter of intent stating a willingness to meet all course requirements and participate in the class, the required APA Paper, and two approved letters of recommendation. Special status students must receive permission from the Program Director to take a Ph.D. Core course.

1.7 Program Intent

The Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies' Doctor of Philosophy in Counselor Education and Supervision program provides students with an integration of academic coursework and applied learning experiences. Students are expected to master coursework considered essential to the doctoral-level professional preparation of counselor leaders who seek to offer services consistent with a biblical worldview. Though students are encouraged to evaluate their own specific needs and to take advantage of available resources for personal and professional development, the following learning outcomes are applicable to all students:

1. The student will be able to apply supervision theory and skills to clinical supervision.
2. The student will be able to demonstrate course design, delivery, and evaluation methods appropriate to counselor education learning outcomes.

3. The student will be able to critically analyze and evaluate scholarly research, develop and implement research designs, and produce scholarly reports that disseminate findings to the profession of counseling.
4. The student will be able to critically analyze, evaluate, and synthesize a broad range of counseling theories, with an advanced understanding of psychopathology, to inform case conceptualization and deliver and evaluate evidence-based interventions across diverse populations and settings.
5. The student will be able to provide leadership and advocacy within the profession and on behalf of its clientele.
6. The student will be able to integrate faith and spirituality into counselor education, supervision, and research in an ethical manner.

Academic Policies

2.1 Course Format

Although the program is classified as an online program, it is designed so that program courses offer a synchronous component. This helps ensure that faculty meet the gatekeeping responsibility of assessing students' character, knowledge, and skills. It also serves to build students' peer networks, opportunities for collaborative discourse, and regular synchronous connection with faculty. As such, students participate in both classroom and online coursework activities throughout the semester as outlined below (see program website for current format per course):

Canvas-Based Instruction: All courses involve online participation using the Canvas® platform for the duration of each semester. Students interact with other doctoral students taking the same course, use links to online resources, view supplemental streaming video clips, and receive direct feedback from their professors on course assessments. The synchronous components of the courses are embedded within the Canvas-based course. This can be through weekly/regular remote meetings with faculty and peers on the course, or through one of the two types of intensive weeks offered by the program (more on intensive weeks below). With weekly/regular remote meetings, missing 15 minutes or more of class, including being off camera or audio without faculty authorization, constitutes an absence. Students must locate themselves in a distraction-free environment where confidentiality can be maintained, and they will not be interrupted.

Remote Intensive Week Instruction: Remote intensive weeks involve meeting through Microsoft Teams for one week during the course where students and faculty meet to synchronously work on course objectives. Students must complete any required pre-intensive assignments prior to beginning class. The intensive week schedule is Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. with two fifteen-minute breaks and an hour for lunch. Friday course hours are from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. with one fifteen-minute break. Students may be required to complete group assignments/presentations as part of the intensive. Full attendance is required in order to pass the course. Students' video cameras must be turned on during all portions of the intensive, and their microphones must be muted at all times unless they are speaking. Students should turn off the Wi-Fi on other devices during intensives and locate themselves close to a modem, which may help ensure the highest functioning. Students must ensure that their internet, video, audio, Microsoft Teams access, etc. are working prior to the intensive. Students must locate themselves in a distraction-free environment where confidentiality can be maintained, and they will not be interrupted. Missing 15 minutes or more of an intensive class, including being off camera without faculty authorization, constitutes an absence and results in not passing the course.

Campus-Based Intensive Week Instruction: Campus-based intensive weeks involve meeting in Lynchburg, VA at Liberty University for one week during the course to work synchronously on course objectives. During the intensive week, students meet Monday through Thursday from

8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., with an hour for lunch. Friday course hours are from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. Students must complete any required pre-intensive assignments prior to beginning class. Students who do not complete the required pre-course work will not be permitted to attend the intensive. Students are expected to enter the first-class session with their computer, necessary textbooks, and completed pre-intensive assignments. Students may be required to complete group assignments/presentations as part of the intensive. Missing 15 minutes or more of an intensive class constitutes an absence and results in not passing the course.

2.2 Planned Program of Study

The Planned Program of Study is a planning document for the Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision Program. Once entrance to the Ph.D. Program is ascertained, students gain access to the Ph.D. Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) Advising Center, found on the student's Canvas dashboard, where they complete the Orientation module to ensure full understanding of Ph.D. Program requirements and Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies expectations.

The doctoral program curriculum includes required coursework, the Qualifying Examination, Supervised Fieldwork, a Candidacy Portfolio Examination, and original Dissertation Research. Students have up to seven years to complete all the CES Ph.D. Program requirements. Faculty advisors, academic advisors, and advanced doctoral student mentors are available at all times to support students in developing proficiency in all learning outcomes.

2.3 Transfer of Credits

A maximum of 50% of a post-graduate and doctoral degree may be transferred if approved and allowable, including credit from an earned degree from Liberty University on the same academic level.

Transfer of coursework for post master's degree coursework may be granted for the Ph.D. Program if the following requirements are met:

1. Courses must be comparable (80%) to the courses required in the Ph.D. CES program
2. Courses must carry a grade of at least a B
3. Courses must be part of a student's post-master's study; in other words, the courses are doctoral level or upper-level post-master's work: 700-900 level
4. Coursework must have been completed within the five years prior to the student's date of admission
5. Coursework is not part of a completed degree. Correspondence studies or life experiences will not be accepted for transfer credit.

It is the responsibility of each applicant to supply transcripts along with a request to have the credit applied to the Ph.D. Program. Students may be requested to submit the syllabus for any coursework being considered for transfer along with a rationale of why the student believes that the course meets the Ph.D. Program's requirements.

2.4 Counseling Prerequisite Courses

The counseling prerequisite courses from the Master's CACREP or CACREP-equivalent program are:

Orientation to Professional Identity and Function
Ethical and Legal Issues in Counseling
Human Growth and Development
Research and Program Evaluation
Multicultural Counseling
Counseling Techniques and the Helping Profession
Counseling Practicum
Group Counseling
Assessment Techniques in Counseling
Career Development and Counseling
Psychopathology and Counseling
Clinical Diagnosis/Treatment Planning
Counseling Internship

Students admitted without counseling prerequisite courses may begin their Ph.D. coursework. However, they may only enroll in the pre-Qualifying Examination courses until all counseling prerequisite coursework is completed:

1. COUC 715
2. COUC 740

Counseling prerequisites can be taken at Liberty University or any regionally accredited college or university.

2.5 Core Courses

Students complete the two pre-Qualifying Examination courses (COUC 715 and COUC 740) first and then take the Qualifying Exam. After passing the Qualifying Examination, students proceed in the Ph.D. Program. Please refer to the Program Website to review the list of core courses offered under the Degree Completion Plan aligned to the date of enrollment in the CES program.

2.6 Elective Courses

Students are required to take one elective course.

Prerequisites: COUC 715, 740, & Qualifying Exam

1. COUC 791: Crisis and Trauma
2. COUC 792: Creative and Expressive Arts in Individual and Group Counseling

2.7 Fieldwork Courses

Fieldwork courses in the Ph.D. in Counseling and Supervision Program are designed to facilitate students' skills as effective and active leaders in the counseling field, which include advanced counseling, teaching, supervision, leadership and advocacy, and research and scholarship. Doctoral students are encouraged to engage in collaborative mentoring opportunities with department faculty throughout the doctoral program, including research, scholarship, conference involvement and presentations, administrative opportunities, Ph.D. Program Review, etc. Students are encouraged to seek out faculty with aligned research interests and collaborate on these opportunities.

Please refer to the Program Website to review the list of fieldwork courses offered under the Degree Completion Plan aligned to the date of enrollment in the CES program. Also refer to the fieldwork available on the Program Website.

2.8 Recommended Course Sequence

Please refer to the Program Website to review the list of core courses offered under the Degree Completion Plan aligned to the date of enrollment in the CES program. Please note the pre-requisites courses listed with the course.

2.9 Qualifying Examination

After students receive the final grade and the completed rubric for the benchmark papers in COUC 715 and 740, students must take the Ph.D. In Counselor Education and Supervision Qualifying Examination (COUC 969). To initiate the Qualifying Examination, students will email the Program Support Coordinator, Ms. Bonnie Gould, at bcsmith@liberty.edu. Email Ms. Gould, using your Liberty email account, the following:

- Name
- Attach the 2 papers and their rubrics into one document following this order:
 - COUC 740 – Benchmark Paper
 - COUC 740 – Benchmark Paper Completed Rubric
 - COUC 715 – Benchmark Paper
 - COUC 715 – Benchmark Paper Completed Rubric

The purpose of the Qualifying Examination is to assess the student's progress and ability to grasp the knowledge and level of scholarship required to succeed in the Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision Program. The Qualifying Exam consists of students submitting the final version of the benchmark papers completed in COUC 715 Advanced Theory Application and COUC 740 Advanced Research Design, incorporating all feedback given by the professors of those courses and demonstrating mastery of experimental design, applied counseling theory, and case conceptualization. The student will also include the completed rubrics from the benchmark assignments in COUC 715 and 740. The completed rubrics from the courses will be

reviewed to assess if final feedback offered by the faculty was addressed in the exam submission. The rubrics for the benchmark papers serve as the evaluation criteria for the qualifying exam.

The faculty review committee will assess the papers to ensure that the student demonstrates doctoral-level aptitude and readiness to progress in the program. Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge of advanced counseling theory and practice as well as research. Work must adhere to current APA formatting guidelines. Once a student demonstrates mastery of the core concepts related to research design and applied counseling theory, the faculty review committee will submit a decision on whether the student has passed the exam.

Students will receive notification of their results within four (4) weeks via email. Students who meet passing criteria for the exam will receive notification without feedback that they passed. If mastery is not demonstrated and a non-pass decision is made on one or both of the papers, the student will be given specific feedback on areas of deficit. The student has 30 days to revise and resubmit. The student cannot continue taking courses until passing the entire exam. There are no exceptions to this requirement. Failure on the second attempt on any or all sections of the Qualifying Examination will result in dismissal from the Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision Program.

2.10 Candidacy Examination Portfolio

From the start of their program, doctoral students work on their Candidacy Examination Portfolio and plan to have it completed after the following program milestones: the Qualifying Examination, Core and Elective courses, and Fieldwork courses. This capstone activity requires students to present an overview of their professional development as a counselor educator to their Doctoral Faculty Advising Committee and CES peers. The Candidacy Examination Portfolio reflects the student's proficiency in the Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision Program Learning Outcomes, CES professional identity, and readiness for the rigors of dissertation research.

2.11 Dissertation Research

Each candidate for the Doctoral degree in Counselor Education and Supervision must prepare and defend a Dissertation. The Dissertation is a scholarly project that represents the results of original and significant empirical research of publication quality. The candidate must demonstrate the ability to conceive, design, conduct, and interpret independent and original research related to the counseling field. The Dissertation is the culmination of the Doctoral Program and is overseen by the student's Dissertation Chair and Dissertation Committee Members. The Dissertation Committee (Chair and two Committee Members) provides continual assistance, guidance, and timely feedback throughout the process of completing the Dissertation.

Students request a faculty member to serve as Dissertation Chair when they register in their first semester of dissertation after completing all of their required and elective courses.

Dissertation chairs and readers must be core faculty members. Faculty are limited to serving as a chair for a maximum of 5 CES students. The CEFS department will confirm the committee assignment during the registration process.

All Doctoral students must orally defend their Dissertation Proposal and their Final Dissertation project. The Dissertation Defense is scheduled when the student's Doctoral Dissertation Chair and Committee Members all approve of moving forward with the Final Defense. Successful completion of the Dissertation Defense results in awarding the student with the Doctoral Degree (if all other degree requirements are met).

Per the Graduate School, the following steps must be completed before a student receives a final grade in COUC 990:

1. Student defends the dissertation
2. Student completes all edits the dissertation committee requests
3. Chair provides final approval
4. Student gets the dissertation professionally edited
5. Student uploads the dissertation to ProQuest through the library
6. Student forwards the email they receive from the library confirming the dissertation manuscript was successfully uploaded to the library to their chair
7. Student also posts a copy of the confirmation email from the library in the CES Center
8. Chair posts the passing grade for COUC 990 (the grade should not be posted until steps 1-7 are completed)
9. Chair emails the Ph.D. CES program director with the following information:
 - a. Student name and LUID
 - b. Chair name and LUID
 - c. Reader names and LUID

Note: no student can graduate prior to receiving a passing grade in COUC 990, completing their Candidacy Examination and fulfilling all other graduation requirements as outlined in the Ph.D. Handbook.

For a comprehensive understanding of the Dissertation process and to review the Dissertation Grading Rubric, see the Dissertation Handbook linked in the Program Website as well as the Research Topics and Activities Policy Document.

2.12 Professional Identity Competencies

As future leaders in the field of counseling, Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision students develop a strong sense of counselor identity by engaging in activities that enhance leadership competence and professional identity in Counseling, Supervision, Counselor Education, Research/Scholarship, and Leadership/Advocacy. Many of these competencies can only be developed through involvement in counseling professional associations, organizations, and activities. Every year within the CES Advising Center, students will document their activities via an assignment. To promote doctoral students' professional identity and functioning

competencies, students in the Ph.D. Program are encouraged to maintain the following professional activities:

- Membership in Professional Counseling organizations (e.g., the American Counseling Association (ACA)/ACA Divisions, the American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA), the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), etc.)
- Professional Licensure (For students entering and completing the program with incomplete licensure requirements, submit evidence of progress toward licensure while in program)
- Involvement with legislative or social advocacy (opportunities can be found on the ACA website)
- Attendance at State or National Counseling Conferences (full conference, not a workshop)
- Manuscript submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed counseling journal (note the submission does not need to be accepted for publication)
- Scholarly presentation submitted to a state, regional, national, or international counseling conference
- Department or outside department research/scholarship involvement: Participation in collaborative research/scholarship with mentoring others (i.e., research study design, data collection/analysis, manuscript preparation, etc.)
- Assist program faculty teaching a graduate course in counselor education or present in a graduate-level counselor education class.

Faculty in the Ph.D. Program support students in developing these competencies.

Students who maintain a 3.5 Grade Point Average are encouraged to **join Chi Sigma Iota (CSI)**, the International Honor Society for counseling students. They are invited by our Faculty Sponsors to join the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies chapter of CSI, the Rho Eta chapter. CSI promotes excellence in counseling leadership functions (i.e., research, scholarship, professionalism).

2.13 Faculty Advising

The Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies faculty and leadership are committed to a mentoring model of developing counseling leaders. To promote faculty/student collaboration, each doctoral student is assigned to an advising committee consisting of faculty advisors. Students get to know and work with their advisors to plan and discuss their

knowledge, skills, and performance in the doctoral program. Additionally, students collaborate with program faculty in various counselor education, supervision, research, scholarship, and advocacy roles throughout their Ph.D. Program. Students are encouraged to connect with their advisors regularly and are required to collaborate with their faculty advisors yearly to complete a Program Progression Evaluation. Additionally, during the Fall and Spring semesters, advising team meetings are held monthly, and CES students must attend a minimum of 2 meetings per semester.

2.14 Ph.D. Program Progression

The process through which a student moves to graduation involves the following stages:

Inquiry Stage: The student makes an inquiry concerning the program, receives program information from the University, and begins the process of completing an application.

Hold Stage: The student has applied and is waiting for feedback regarding acceptance status.

Acceptance Stage: The student is accepted into the Ph.D. Program. Students are notified about their acceptance status in writing. Students must respond within twenty-one (21) days of the date of acceptance, acknowledging intent to enter the program and agreeing to adhere to the particulars of the Admission Contract. Once the contract materials are returned to the office administrator, students receive access to the Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision Center, which is a non-term course in Canvas.

Orientation Stage: Students complete the Orientation module and associated quizzes/assignments and register for the pre-Qualifying Exam Ph.D. course(s) or, if any are required, pre-requisite M.A. entry-level competency course(s). Students register for their first course by contacting their assigned academic advisor at phdcounseling@liberty.edu

Prerequisite Completion Stage: *If students have required M.A. entry-level clinical prerequisite* courses to take, as outlined in their Admission Contract, these must be completed before registration is permitted for Ph.D. courses.

Pre-Qualifying Examination Core Stage: Students complete Pre-Qualifying Exam Core Courses (COUC 715 and COUC 740).

Qualifying Stage: After completing the required COUC 715 and COUC 740, students register to take the Qualifying Examination by contacting Mrs. Bonnie Gould at bcsmith@liberty.edu. Students must pass both sections of the Qualifying Examination before taking further coursework (see Qualifying Examination section for further details).

Doctoral Student: Following the successful completion of the Qualifying Examination, students are awarded the designation of “Doctoral Student” and begin taking courses following the recommended course sequence.

Candidacy Examination Stage: The Candidacy Examination is a program-learning outcomes-based portfolio developed throughout the program and evaluated by the Faculty Advising Committee after all courses, pre-dissertation, are completed.

Doctoral Candidate Stage: Following the successful completion of the Candidacy Examination, students are awarded the designation of “Doctoral Candidate” and take their Dissertation Research course requirements.

Dissertation Stage: After a student passes the Candidacy Examination, s/he registers for the dissertation courses following their DCP until the Dissertation Defense is scheduled. A student must register each subsequent term for COUC 989 until the Dissertation is Defense-ready. At that time, the Committee Chair will approve the student to register for COUC 990: Dissertation Defense. The Defense is the culmination of the program and the last stage before graduation.

Graduation Stage: The department requires that a student successfully completes

1. All required coursework, including fieldwork, with a grade of B or better
2. The Qualifying Examination
3. The Candidacy Examination
4. The Dissertation and Oral Defense

Students must also review the Liberty University Graduate School website for additional requirements that may apply.

2.15 Break in Enrollment

Once admitted to the PhD CES program, students must remain continually enrolled. Continual enrollment involves taking at least one course per academic year. Students who do not register for and complete at least one course per academic year lose their enrolled status in the program. During the Dissertation Phase, the student must register for COUC 989 every term until their Dissertation Defense is scheduled.

Students who break enrollment must reapply to the Ph.D. Program. Note that students who break enrollment are not guaranteed re-entrance to the program. If readmitted, students will be held responsible for the requirements under the most current Graduate Catalog and Degree Completion Plan.

If graduate study is interrupted by active military service or the equivalent, as much as two years of that time will not count toward the time limit for the degree. In such an event, an official letter from the appropriate agency should be sent to the Ph.D. Program Director to document the interruption. There are no other exceptions to this policy.

2.16 Course Repeat and Grade Replacement Policy

As Gatekeepers to the field of counseling, the faculty and leadership are responsible for ensuring academic and ethical competency and excellence. To this end, the degree of scholarship required by students in the program is high. While all course grades are averaged into students' Grade Point Average (GPA), course credit toward degree completion is not granted for a grade of C, D, or F. Any student who earns a grade of D or F in any course will not be permitted to retake the course and will be academically dismissed from the Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision Program. If a student earns a grade of C in any course in the Ph.D. Program, he or she will be placed on Academic and Registration Hold. This policy includes, but is not limited to, counseling prerequisite courses taken after admittance into the program, core courses, elective courses, or any other required course as determined by faculty.

The student may appeal a grade per academic policy.

2.17 Statute of Limitations

The counseling profession is ever evolving. To ensure that graduates are up to date in evidence-based practices in counseling leadership roles, the time allowed to complete the Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision is limited. The time limit for completing the Ph.D. degree is seven (7) years, which begins the year of admission to the Ph.D. Program.

2.18 Leave of Absence

A student in good academic standing may request two leaves of absence from graduate study for a stated period (up to one-year) during which the student will not make academic progress. Reasons for a leave of absence include, but are not limited to, a medical/mental health problem or a family crisis. To request a leave, the student must submit a letter to the Ph.D. Program Director stating the reason for the leave and proposed timeframe. Leaves due to a medical or mental health issue must be documented by a letter from the treating professional(s). Students must obtain written approval from the Ph.D. Program Director documenting authorization of the leave before the leave is activated.

2.19 Graduation

Liberty University Graduate School offers two types of honors for graduating Doctoral Students. The first level of honors, ***Graduation with Distinction***, is for students whose cumulative GPA is 3.90-3.94. Students whose cumulative GPA is 3.95 to 4.0 receive a ***Graduation with High Distinction*** honor. Each designation is awarded its own unique regalia accessory.

2.20 American Psychological Association Format

The counseling profession endorses the use of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) for the formatting of all scholarly work. Therefore, the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies requires APA formatting and writing

style for all submitted course and Dissertation work. The rules that reflect the most recent edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association are required.

Student Expectations

3.1 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 national, state, and local divisions, the [American Mental Health Counselors Association \(AMHCA\)](#), and/or the [American School Counselor Association \(ASCA\)](#), as well as the [American Association of Christian Counselors \(AACC\)](#). These organizations allow students higher levels of involvement in their areas of interest. Most professional organizations and divisions offer reduced membership rates to students as well as:

- benefits such as access and receipt of their professional publications (journals and newsletters)
- reduced registration fees for professional meetings (seminars, conventions, workshops) that are sponsored by the particular organization
- eligibility for member services (library resource use, legal defense funds and services, group liability insurance)
- opportunities to present research and scholarship related to the field, involvement in activities and issues which are directly or indirectly pertinent to the profession (legislation and professional credentialing including licensure, certification);
- affiliation with other professionals having interests and areas of expertise similar to one's own; and the opportunity to fellowship and network.

3.2 Academic Honesty & 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 not to give nor receive assistance of any kind that is not specifically permitted on graded assignments or examinations. For more information on the *Academic Code of Honor* and *Personal Code of Honor*, see the [Student Code of Honor](#).

Most assignments submitted throughout the Ph.D. Program are automatically processed through the university plagiarism software program (Turnitin). Additionally, faculty are required to report all incidences of academic dishonesty/misconduct. Students who are academically dishonest/participate in academic misconduct will face consequences ranging from a failing grade on the assignment to dismissal from the Ph.D. Program and Liberty University. Such consequences are determined by the Program Faculty, Ph.D. Program Director, Department Chair, Associate Dean, School of Behavioral Sciences Dean, Dean of the Graduate School, and University Provost. Students who engage in these practices will face disciplinary action as outlined in the [Liberty University Honor Code](#).

3.3 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.

3.4 Grievance Procedure

All faculty, staff, and students of the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies shall perform their duties and studies according to the policies of Liberty University. Students, faculty, or staff members who believe that a student, faculty member, or staff member has not acted according to these program, departmental, or university policies are encouraged to contact the student, faculty member, or staff member directly to informally resolve the situation.

If the student, faculty member, or staff member cannot resolve the issue, the complainant should notify the Ph.D. Program Director. The submitted documentation should include a description of the perceived problem behavior and all attempted solutions.

A copy of the complaint will be given to the student, faculty member, or staff member about whom the complaint has been made. The Ph.D. Program Director may then meet with the parties involved, separately or together, may convene a faculty or staff meeting to resolve the issue, and/or may request a recommendation from other University personnel. All decisions will be recorded in writing and signed by all parties. Complainants who are not satisfied with the action of the Ph.D. Program Director as specified above may avail themselves of the grievance procedures delineated in university policies.

3.5 Department Faculty-Student Interaction

The faculty in the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies are dedicated to mentoring doctoral students in leadership roles. Many opportunities are provided for both formal and informal interaction among students and faculty. It is expected that both faculty and students will conduct themselves in a professional manner in all interactions.

In the event of a student's disclosure, either verbally or in writing, of either a 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.

3.6 Behavioral Standards

Students enrolled in the Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision Program at Liberty

University are preparing for a leadership career that requires the highest standards of practice, research, scholarship, and community advocacy. Therefore, appropriate behavior must be evident in all communications (e.g., verbal, written in discussion boards, emails) with other students, Liberty University staff and faculty, site Practicum and Internship Personnel, and clients. Failure to demonstrate professionally sound behavior could jeopardize the student's status in the program.

Specifically, the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies faculty expects students enrolled in the Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision Program to demonstrate the following behavioral standards:

1. A willingness and ability to acquire and integrate professional standards into one's repertoire of professional behavior. Students must conduct themselves with an awareness that their conduct, personal appearance, attitudes, values, and behavior influence client, peer, and public opinions. They are expected to demonstrate professionalism, so these constituencies view them in a manner consistent with the spirit of Liberty University and the counseling profession.

2. An ability to acquire leadership and professional skills to reach an acceptable level of competency. The Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies provides a learning environment in which students become vulnerable as they test out new behaviors and acquire new skills as counselor leaders. Students who convey the attitude that they are not teachable are not suited for doctoral education.

3. A willingness and ability to give appropriate feedback and to receive and integrate feedback from faculty, supervisors, and peers. Students are expected to be open to receiving feedback from others, including verbal or written comments in private or public settings. A teachable and open attitude is expected of all students. Thus, regardless of the quality of the feedback, students are expected to consider the possibility that valuable feedback is found in the comments. Students aware of another student's behavior or performance that violates the Liberty University Honor Code, the American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics, and the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies behavioral standards have a responsibility to intervene. This includes notifying program faculty and/or the program director.

4. An ability to control personal stress, psychological dysfunction, and/or excessive emotional reactions that interfere with personal, professional, or interpersonal functioning.

Counseling is an interpersonal profession in which counselor leaders are provided with a level of influence upon their domains of practice. Therefore, it is essential that they are not impaired by intrapersonal or interpersonal liabilities. Students are expected to monitor their own behavior and address any personal issues that might impair their performance in academic or counseling settings or jeopardize the well-being of faculty, staff, clients, or peers. Students are encouraged to discuss concerns about personal impairment that may impact their ability to function in academic and counseling settings with academic and faculty advisors, clinical supervisors, and/or with any member of the faculty. Although it is a goal of the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies to help students reach their professional goals, it

remains the primary responsibility of the faculty to protect the public, the student body, and the profession.

5. A lifestyle that is consistent with a Christian testimony. It is expected that students will conduct themselves in a manner that reflects Christian love (e.g., John 13:34-35; Philippians 2:2-4; Colossians 3:14-15; James 2:8; 1 Peter 4:8-10; 1 John 4:7-8). Feedback to others should be given in the most professional and Christ-like manner possible. In keeping with the apostle Paul's teachings, students are expected to get along with others as much as possible (cf. Romans 12:18), to not hold grudges (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Ephesians 4:31-32; Leviticus 19:17-18), and to encourage one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11). A mark of spirituality and psychological maturity is loving all and demonstrating the fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). While it is a challenge to live out a Christian life in all respects at all times, especially when under stress, we are to challenge ourselves to pursue holiness.

3.7 Professional Development, Student Support, & Administrative Review

Ethical Conduct

All students in the Ph.D. Counselor Education and Supervision program are responsible for behaving ethically throughout their training, as well as in clinical and professional settings. Violations of the [ACA Code of Ethics](#), and/or the [Student Honor Code/Liberty Way](#) and/or failure to take steps to rectify violations are considered extremely serious and may result in termination from the program.

Students are expected to adhere to the *ACA Code of Ethics*, the Graduate Student Honor Code, and the Liberty Way as guides to their behavior throughout their program, and reading them is just the beginning of understanding professional ethics. Being an ethical counselor-in-training involves:

- understanding the underlying principles and values associated with professional Codes of Ethics
- connecting them to a strong commitment to biblical principles
- developing a set of beliefs that guide one's everyday practice
- discerning 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 your professional development.

Professional Development

To successfully complete the Counselor Education and Supervision online program at Liberty University and be eligible for graduation, a student must be able to demonstrate proficiency in four areas:

1. Attainment of scholastic competency in all coursework as evaluated through the assessment of Counselor Education and Supervision online standards, the

comprehensive examination given at the completion of the core curriculum, and by maintaining an overall GPA of 3.0.

2. 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 and includes both verbal and written communications.
3. Adherence to the Professional Identity and Standards as outlined by the American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics and the Liberty University Graduate Student Code of Honor. This proficiency is evaluated across the program in all interactions with faculty, staff, administrators, supervisors, adjuncts, and fellow students and includes both verbal and written communications.
4. 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 in the above areas of proficiency in an ongoing and consistent manner in all settings in which faculty and students interact. This interaction can include formal and informal settings such as the classroom, online communication, advising, and personal conversations. To align with CACREP standards, all students will be evaluated through a rubric that lists 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.

3.8 Remediation

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 assists 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:

- Knowledge Deficits
- 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, 2024), 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 act 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.

Administrative Hold

A student's account may be placed on administrative hold by the program director for the following reasons:

- Dispositional concerns
- Refusal to meet via an audio and video platform to discuss dispositional concerns
- As part of an administrative review
- As part of the remediation process
- As part of the disciplinary process
- As part of the grade appeals process
- Failure to complete the advising module

A hold may prevent the candidate from registering for courses, including practicum and internship, which would prevent them from progressing in the program until the issue has been resolved. Students will be notified of any hold placed on their account by the program director. Once initiated, the student will remain on administrative hold in the program pending the outcome of ongoing processes. 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 dispositional issues or other concerns, which may include an interim suspension of the candidate from courses, internships, or clinical placements. The program director may, in his or her discretion, also apply a registration hold to prevent the candidate from progressing in the program pending resolution of the issue.

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 the 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 decide 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.

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

The problematic behavior continuum can also be considered along the lines of Academic, Clinical, and Personal, with Academic being more related to deficiencies and Personal more related to impairments. Clinical limitations may involve both Academic and Personal. 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 to apply ethics into practice. These behaviors are considered excessive or inappropriate and require remedial action beyond the course instructor or supervisor.

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

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

Students Determined to be Deficient

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

Students Determined to Lack Competence

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

Students Determined to be Impaired (not inclusive)

Four Themes:

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

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

Early Remediation Process (Stages 1 and 2)

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

Secondary Remediation Process (Stage 3)

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

Remediation Committee Referral (Stages 4-6)

- Notification
- Assessment of Problematic Behavior
 - Problems concerning attendance and approach to assignment completion
- Development of a Plan
- Acceptance or Appeal
- Provision if Unsuccessful

Possible Remediation Committee Recommendations for a Remediation Plan

- Psychological or evaluation by a mental health professional
- Increased supervision
- Reduced practicum or internship
- Leave of absence
- Formal reprimand
- Formal probation
- Counseling out of the program
- Dismissal from the program
- Or any other information gathering deemed necessary in order to properly support student growth

Remediation Process for the Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision Program

Note: The remediation plan is designed to protect the students' rights under University policies and ensure 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. Instead, 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 faculty member determines that problematic behavior of an academic, clinical, or personal nature exists and cannot be resolved on an informal basis, the faculty member discusses this with the student and her or his FAM. If problematic student behavior is brought to the attention of the department through other means (e.g., from another student, a report from university staff, evaluation from a supervisor, etc.), the student's advisor will notify the student and discuss the concerns.

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

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

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

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

Stage 4: Referral to the Remediation Committee:

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

Stage 5: Development of a Remediation Plan: The Remediation Committee will review the presented information, examine the **remedial action plan** developed by the student and advisor, evaluate progress toward 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 final. The program director and the student's advisor will notify the student in writing of the outcome of the meeting.

Stage 6: Acceptance or Appeal: The student will be given the opportunity to accept the plan of correction or to appeal it. If accepted, the student will follow the plan as developed and regularly report progress to her or his advisor. If not fully resolved, additions, amendments, or extensions to the plan may be implemented. If the problematic behavior is corrected, no further action is needed. Four options are available to faculty when reevaluating the student:

(1) continuation in the program, (2) continued probation and remediation, (3) counsel the student out of the program, and (4) dismissal from the program.

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

Final Determination Following Recommendation of Dismissal: Based on the Remediation Committee's recommendation of dismissal, the program director will either dismiss the student from the program or allow the student to remain in the program until the concerning behavior has been fully addressed to the satisfaction of both the program director and the Remediation Committee. If the student is dismissed from the program, the program director will provide a written notice of dismissal to the student. 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 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 may 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 decide 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.

3.9 Remediation Fieldwork

If, during the Ph.D. Fieldwork courses, a student fails to successfully demonstrate the required skills in these courses and consequently receives failing evaluations, if a student is

dismissed from a site, or if a student is found practicing at a site without having received approval by the department for the site, the site supervisor will notify the student's faculty supervisor. The faculty supervisor will write an incident report and send it to the PhD Practicum /Internship office of the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies. The Clinical Director and the Leadership Team will examine the nature and reason for the skills deficit and/or dismissal. At that point, the student may receive a grade of F for the course and be placed on hold in the Ph.D. Program in order to fulfill remediation procedures aimed at addressing and resolving the verifiable deficits.

For behaviors that constitute a violation of the University's Honor Code the student's professor will fill out an Honor Code Violation form, which will be investigated by the Ph.D. Director, LU Online, and Graduate Student Affairs. Students are given an opportunity to appeal. For further information on the expectations for clinical courses and the remediation process for Ph.D. Practicum and Internship, see the Practicum and Internship Manual.

3.10 Harassment

Sexual harassment, and/or any harassment, based on color, race, religion, or national origin has long been 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 or students.

3.11 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 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](#).

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.

3.12 Personal Counseling

Students are strongly encouraged to seek individual and group counseling as a part of the doctoral educational experience. Even if a student is a participant in a support group or self-help group, that participation alone does not really provide the necessary benefits for counselor preparation. As Christians who are called to serve others with the training of a counseling leader, it is imperative that we deal with our own personal issues that may interfere with our ability to impact others in meaningful ways. Moreover, getting the experience of being in the client's seat will help you better understand your clients' experiences in counseling.

As noted above, personal counseling might be required by the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies administration as a condition of continuing in the program. When a student's personal issues are assessed to interfere with progress toward becoming a doctoral-level trained professional counselor, a developmental plan is created to help the student address the problematic issues. In such cases, the Department's leadership must agree with the professional's choice and might, in some circumstances, require the student to see a particular counselor. A release of information will be mandatory in order to obtain progress reports from the treating counselor.

3.13 Faculty Endorsement

Upon successful completion of the program of studies and demonstration of the requisite competencies, faculty members may endorse students for employment, certifications and licensure. Upon request, the faculty will write letters of recommendation for employment in the student's specified area of specialization or for advanced studies (e.g., Post-doctoral programs). Endorsement only occurs when faculty believe students are qualified to perform the duties associated with credentialing or employment.

3.14 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 fieldwork 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 in a few formats (electronic, print, or backup) and in a secure location. It is difficult and sometimes impossible for faculty or program administration to locate old syllabi. Keeping copies of course syllabi, schedules, and fieldwork hours is the student's responsibility.

General Information

4.1 Registering for Classes

All Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision students enter the program with a hold on their accounts until they successfully pass the Qualifying Examination. Students can find a list of Ph.D. courses offered each term (all have a COUC prefix) in the [Course Registration Tool](#). To register for Clinical pre-requisite courses, email phdcounseling@liberty.edu or call 855-466-9218. After passing the Qualifying Exam, students log into the Course Registration Tool and register online.

Although students may be able to register for courses out of sequence via the Course Registration Tool or a registration advisor, it is the student's responsibility to follow the program sequence outlined in this document.

4.2 Graduate Student Assistant (GSA) Positions

The Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies offers a limited number of Graduate Student Assistant (GSA) positions, awarded to qualified students when available. These assistantships are intended to support the instructional and administrative needs of the undergraduate and graduate programs as well as support GSAs in their growth as scholars. GSAs are expected to work 20 hours per week. Stipends are granted annually. Some of the GSA responsibilities include assisting faculty with course-related functions and research under the direction of a supervisor, in relation to the department's goals or needs. Applications for GSA positions are posted in the CES Advising Center when positions are available.

4.3 Academic Support

Students obtain academic support by contacting our Ph.D. advisors at phdcounseling@liberty.edu and from their Faculty Advising Committee. Additionally, students have full access to the Liberty Library online. When on campus, the Student ID card can be used to check out materials from the Library and to access computer accounts. This ID can be obtained from the [Office of ID and Campus Services](#). Students in need of help with scholarly writing can contact the [Online Writing Center](#).

4.4 [Computer Needs](#)

Each student at Liberty University is expected to demonstrate computer literacy prior to admission to the program. Each course in the Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision Program requires the student to use computer programs. Additionally, students need to bring a laptop computer with wireless internet functioning to each doctoral intensive. 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 [Microsoft 365 | Information Services | Liberty University](#))
- Internet that can access Canvas and Liberty University's website, Liberty Email
- A computer that meets the hardware/software specifications to access Canvas

For information on recommended hardware, software, operating systems, and student discounts on computers, see the [Liberty Information Technology website](#).

4.5 Email Account & Communication

Upon admission, each student is assigned a computer account and an email address on Liberty University's system. All correspondence from the university, counseling department, and your course instructor will be delivered via this email address. Students are required to check their Liberty University email accounts regularly (every 24-48 hours) for communication from the university and counseling faculty. Students are required to respond to e-mails from the department leadership and faculty within 24-48 hours, using their Liberty email address, in a manner that sufficiently addresses the content of the e-mail received.

All concerns regarding courses need to be communicated to the course instructor. Concerns that arise related to the program at large are to be communicated to the Program Director. Please use email to express/summarize concerns, so that there is documentation of the communication and outcome. Students are expected to be courteous and respectful in all communication with instructors, support staff, and department leaders. Unprofessional and discourteous communication will not be tolerated and will result in remediation procedures up to and including dismissal from the program.

Students 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 allow them time to respond. Do not post a message to the class on Canvas 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.

4.6 Dress Code

When on campus or in a class (in person or virtual), students are expected to comply with the dress code outlined in the [Code of Honor](#).

In addition to the information presented in this Handbook, please review the resources linked in the Program Webpage.