



**LIBERTY**  
UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL *of* BEHAVIORAL  
SCIENCES

M.Ed. School Counseling Online  
2023-2024 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 School of Behavioral Sciences/School Counseling Program specific. The policies and procedures herein apply to current and newly accepted candidates on degree completion plans 2013- 2014 and later. Candidates who are currently taking master's courses in the M.Ed. in School Counseling program must adhere to these guidelines with the exception of any changes in the academic program.

### Disclosure Statement

The School Counseling degree is designed to lead to licensure/certification as outlined by the [Virginia Department of Education](#); other state boards have unique licensure/certification requirements. Therefore, before enrolling in a licensure/certification program at Liberty University, candidates should consult the rules and regulations regarding School Counseling for the particular state in which they intend to seek licensure after graduation. To obtain your state's web address, view [State Certification Requirements](#). To view your state's licensure requirements, view [State Licensure Requirements](#).

Enrollment in the M.Ed. in School Counseling licensure program does not guarantee a degree from Liberty or qualification for professional licensure. Candidates are responsible for meeting all academic and professional requirements for graduation. Further information regarding these academic and professional requirements is outlined in this Handbook. Candidates enrolled in the School Counseling Program are responsible for knowing the material outlined in this handbook. Further, if a candidate intends to practice in a state other than Virginia after graduation, **it is the sole responsibility of the candidate, not the program, to obtain information regarding prerequisites for licensure as outlined by their particular state's department of education.**

For issues regarding the program, first contact LUO (Liberty University Online) Academic Advising. Then, if needed, contact the Director, Dr. Summer Kuba at [skuba@liberty.edu](mailto:skuba@liberty.edu). For Practicum and Internship, please contact the respective offices: [scfieldplacement@liberty.edu](mailto:scfieldplacement@liberty.edu). If appealing a decision made by the practicum/internship office, please contact Dr. Kerry Bowles at [kllamphere@liberty.edu](mailto:kllamphere@liberty.edu).

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

# From the School Counseling Program Leadership Team

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On behalf of the faculty of the School of Behavioral Sciences, we would like to welcome you to the M.Ed. in School Counseling advanced licensure program. We are honored that you have chosen to pursue your graduate studies at Liberty University and consider it a privilege to serve as your gateway to the profession of school counseling.

This 2023-2024 *M.Ed. in School Counseling Program Handbook* serves as a guide to help you better understand the program, courses, requirements, policies and procedures, and candidate rights and responsibilities as of Fall 2023. This handbook and the [Liberty University Graduate Catalog](#) are considered required reading for all M.Ed. in School Counseling candidates and both should be read in their entirety. Although you have access to an academic advisor, it is ultimately your responsibility to know the information contained in this handbook. Your academic advisor will assist you in registration and course information. You will also be assigned a Faculty Advisor Mentor (FAM) when you are admitted to the M.Ed. in School Counseling program, who will answer program-related questions. Review this handbook periodically, and if questions arise, contact your FAM.

Faculty contact information is available online. You can find the contact information for each faculty member on our [webpage](#). Because program policies and requirements may change from one year to the next, it is essential that you always refer to the most current handbook as you plan your graduate program, enroll in classes, and arrange for field placements and graduation. We will, as each year passes, honor the degree completion plan (DCP) under which you enrolled unless you break enrollment. If you break enrollment, you will be required to re-apply to the program and enroll under the active DCP at that time.

Although there is a lot of information contained in this handbook, it may not provide answers to all of your questions. This handbook is not intended to be a comprehensive listing of all Liberty University policies. In addition to this handbook and talking with your Faculty Advisor Mentor (FAM), please review the [Liberty University Graduate Catalog](#) and the [Online Honor Code](#).

You are about to engage in the exciting process of becoming a school counselor, and we are delighted that you have selected Liberty University's School Counseling program. As this handbook will demonstrate, the process and experiences offered at Liberty are planned to ensure a comprehensive personal and professional educational experience. As a faculty, we feel honored to accompany you on your journey.

May God richly bless you as you strive toward the calling the Lord has placed on your life in becoming a school counselor.

Blessings,

School Counseling Leadership Team

# M.Ed. in School Counseling Program

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## 1.1 Accreditations

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](http://www.sacscoc.org)). Liberty is also a member of the Association of Christian Schools International.



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



The M.Ed. in School Counseling program is accredited by NCATE/CAEP. CAEP advances excellence in educator preparation through evidence-based accreditation that assures quality and supports continuous improvement to strengthen P-12 student learning. For further information on this accreditation, consult the agency website at

<http://caepnet.org/providersearch?tab=provider&state=VA#provresults>

## 1.2 Overview

The Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies (CEFS) is a department of the [School of Behavioral Sciences](#). The graduate School Counseling program is committed to providing quality professional training for healing human hurts from a perspective permeated by Christian faith. Our training in the theory and practice of counseling, coupled with carefully structured practicum and internship experiences and dynamic interaction with faculty and mentors, equips candidates for licensure as school counselors. The M.Ed. program provides foundational studies that equip students for licensure, to pursue doctoral studies and careers in counseling in educational settings.

### **1.3 Mission**

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 with unique worldviews.

The CEFS purpose is to accomplish this mission by the professional development of the mental health counseling 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 M.Ed. in School Counseling program supports a collaborative learning environment that prepares a culturally diverse global student body to be competent, responsible, and ethical school counselors in public, private, and Christian elementary, middle, and high schools. The School Counseling curriculum, taught from a Biblical perspective, prepares graduates to plan, develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive school counseling programs that are culturally sensitive and promote the career, personal, social, and academic development of children and adolescents. Our graduates are prepared to meet the holistic needs of diverse bodies of candidates, attending to their cognitive, affective, spiritual, and physical development with a balanced approach that promotes universal and optimal academic achievement and student health and well-being.

### **1.4 Purpose**

Consistent with Liberty 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. Our mission is achieved, in significant measure, through 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 the fundamental Christian values of 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 School Counseling as a profession that fosters holistic human growth and development in the cognitive, emotional, behavioral, relational, and spiritual domains of life.
- Our School Counseling approach also supports the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of others who are made in the image of God. This means for us that all persons possess dignity and worth because they are unique subjects of Divine Creation. Our vision is focused on nurturing an academic community of diverse people and ideas and assuring that diversity enhances academic excellence and individual growth.
- Our faculty and students are comprised of persons that represent various national, ethnic, spiritual, and denominational backgrounds. Learning to be respectful and appreciative of 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 noted above, the School of Behavioral Sciences adheres to the following initiatives:

- To increase, through recruitment and retention measures, the diverse representation of students, faculty, and staff;
- Promote full implementation of professional standards of practice and multicultural counseling competencies across the curriculum and in specialized courses;
- To include issues of diversity across 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;
- To maintain ongoing educational opportunities and equality of access to our academic community; and
- To equip students to ethically utilize spirituality as a force for healing when and where appropriate.

Students in the M.Ed. program must exhibit the [American Counseling Association's standards and ethics](#), [the American School Counselor Association Ethical Standards](#), and the [American Association of Christian Counselors code of ethics](#) of the school counseling profession regarding sensitivity to and celebration of diversity.

Liberty University admits candidates of any race, color, and 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 Seeking) Status**

Candidates who are not seeking degrees but who meet the necessary academic requirements for admission to the University may enroll in master's level courses as candidates under "Special Student" status. Candidates seeking additional information related to enrollment under special student status may contact [Academic Advising \(luoadvising@liberty.edu\)](mailto:luoadvising@liberty.edu).

Our program does not advise as to what types of experience will be accepted by the State of Virginia as appropriate experience for licensure. Upon graduation, Gate 4 and/or the prospective employing schools may submit the "Report on Experience" form, if requested and completed by the candidate, for submission to the VDOE for review for credit toward the two years of teaching experience required for licensure. The VDOE makes all decisions about whether the experience is appropriate. Candidates need to complete Gate 4 requirements for licensure.

Please follow instructions listed on the [Gate 4 website](#).

# Academic Policies

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## 2.1 Program Learning Objectives

The M.Ed. in School Counseling program provides candidates with an integration of academic coursework and applied learning experiences in the classroom and at supervised practicum and internships. Candidates are expected to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions considered essential to the professional preparation of licensed school counselors. To this end, the faculty have developed the following learning outcomes applicable to all School Counseling candidates.

<b><i>MEd School Counseling PLOs</i></b>
<b><i>Cluster 1</i></b>
<b>PLO 1: 350 Apply Ethical/Legal Standards</b> Apply the ethical and professional principles, standards, and expectations that are integral to a counselor's role and identity.
<b>PLO 2: 351 Apply Diverse Populations for Treatment</b> Apply the social and cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills required to work with diverse populations at all developmental stages across the lifespan in a culturally sensitive and ethical manner.
<b><i>Cluster 2</i></b>
<b>PLO 3: 352 Assess Counseling Skills</b> Assess the individual and group counseling skills necessary to establish and build a therapeutic relationship and will form a preliminary theoretical framework when counseling individuals at all developmental stages across the lifespan.
<b>PLO 4: 353 Use Developmentally Appropriate Assessments</b> Use developmentally appropriate assessment relevant to the client's academic/education, career, personal, and social development and identify ethical, social, and cultural factors related to assessment.
<b>PLO 5: 354 Evaluate Research and Writing Skills</b> Evaluate research and apply it to their educational setting in accordance with best practices, and identify social and cultural implications for interpreting and reporting results.
<b>MEd School Counseling – Specialty PLOs</b>
<b>PLO 6: 357 Integrate Biblical Principles and Secular Theories</b> Integrate faith and spirituality into counseling where appropriate in an ethically competent manner.
<b>PLO 7: 355 Evaluate roles and responsibilities of School Counselor</b> Evaluate the roles and responsibilities of the school counselor.
<b>PLO 8: 356 Develop Model of School Counseling</b> Develop a comprehensive model of school counseling.

See [Graduate Catalog](#).

## **2.2 Program Requirements**

The M.Ed. in School Counseling program is a 60-hour blended (online and residential) program of study. All students, even if taking a School Counseling course as an elective MUST purchase CORE, which is required in every course and in many program processes outlined in this handbook.

In addition, candidates must take the Praxis® School Counselor Exam or an equivalent required licensure exam in the state where the Candidate wishes to obtain licensure.

Candidates are required to complete 6 hours of the program in either the intensive (J term) or synchronous (A term) format. Each required course is listed on the DCP. Should you find that you need to edit your PPS, you must work through your Faculty Advisor Mentor (FAM) to ensure we have a documented and approved plan of study on file for you.

### **Matriculation Requirements:**

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

## **2.3 GPA Requirements and Incomplete Courses**

Candidates must maintain a minimum of a 3.0 GPA (effective Fall 2017) to remain in the program. While all course grades are averaged into the GPA, course credit toward degree completion is not granted for a grade of D or F. A Candidate may petition the Registrar's Office for permission to repeat a course in which he or she received a grade of C or below. See below for information on Incompletes.

[Incomplete Policy](#)

[Medical Incomplete](#)

[Military Incompletes](#)

## **2.4 Transfer of Credits**

It is the responsibility of each applicant to supply transcripts along with a request to have the credit applied to the degree program. Candidates may be requested to submit the course syllabus for any coursework being considered for transfer along with a rationale of why the candidate believes the course meets the program's requirements. The [Office of Transfer Evaluations](#) will process the information. Questions related to transfer of credit may be directed to the [Registrar's Office](#) ([registrar@liberty.edu](mailto:registrar@liberty.edu)).

Transfer policies for the programs under the School of Behavioral Sciences can be found [here](#)

## 2.5 Independent & Directed Studies

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

## 2.6 Planned Program of Study

The following chart, Planned Program of Study, lists the courses candidates will take and the order and times they should enroll in the courses; this is the same chart candidates are required to submit to Canvas. Candidates are notified that this curriculum guide is a planning document; it is not a substitute for regular consultation of their DCP or with their faculty advisor mentor (FAM). This guide is subject to change. Use this guide for course planning and for discussions with your FAM when you set up your course of study.

Candidates should plan carefully with the assistance of the FAM and the Academic Advising team. If more than one course is needed per semester to receive financial aid, candidates need to plan for this in advance of internship semesters. Only certain courses are permitted to be taken with internship (see below). Candidates must be mindful of the only courses they are permitted to take prior to formal admission to the M.Ed. in School Counseling program.

### Recommended Course Sequence: 12 Hour Track

Semester	Courses		Semester	Courses		Semester	Courses	
1 <sup>st</sup> Semester	COSC 500 (Gate 2) COSC 501 (B-Term) COUC 502 (B-Term) COUC 504 (D-Term) COSC 510 (D-Term)  <b>Total Credits</b>	0 3 3 3 3  <b>12</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester	**COSC 505 (A or J-Term) COSC 611 (B-Term) COSC 604 (D-Term) COSC 612 (D-Term)  <b>Total Credits</b>	3  3 3 3  <b>12</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Semester	**COSC 512 (A or J-Term) COUC 522 (B-Term) COSC 660 (B-Term) COSC 661 (D-Term) COSC 513 (Gate 2.5)  <b>Total Credits</b>	3  3 3 3 0  <b>12</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> Semester	COSC 692 (A-Term) COSC 662 (B-Term) COSC 622 (D-Term) COSC 665 (D-Term) COSC 690 (Gate 3)  <b>Total Credits</b>	3 3 3 3 0  <b>12</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> Semester	COSC 693 (A-Term) COSC 521 (B-Term) COSC 691 (Gate 3.5)  <b>Total Credits</b>	3 3 0  <b>6</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> Semester	COSC 694 (A-Term) COSC 515 (B-Term)  <b>Total Credits</b>	3 3  <b>6</b>

## Recommended Course Sequence: 12 Hour Track

Semester	Courses		Semester	Courses		Semester	Courses	
1 <sup>st</sup> Semester	COSC 500 (Gate 2) COSC 501 COSC 502 COSC 504 COSC 510  <b>Total Credits</b>	0 3 3 3 3  <b>12</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester	**COSC 505 COSC 611 COSC 604 COSC 660  <b>Total Credits</b>	3 3 3 3  <b>12</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Semester	**COSC 512 COSC 661 COSC 513 (Gate 2.5)  <b>Total Credits</b>	3 3 0  <b>6</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> Semester	COSC 698/COSC 692 COUC 522 COSC 690 (Gate 3)  <b>Total Credits</b>	3 3 0  <b>6</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> Semester	COSC 699/COSC 693 COSC 622 COSC 690 (Gate 3)  <b>Total Credits</b>	3 3 0  <b>6</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> Semester	COSC 699/COSC 694 COUC 515  <b>Total Credits</b>	3 3  <b>6</b>

**\*\* Offered in both intensive and online formats.**

### Travel with LU Send

LU Send organizes international and domestic travel experiences that are linked to course credit. Details related to requirements for participation, specific destinations, and course credit information can be found here: <https://www.liberty.edu/osd/lu-send/>.

## 2.7 Course Delivery Formats

Students enrolled in the online program primarily complete their degree using a 16-week online semester with 8-week courses offered 3 times throughout the semester. The Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies offers courses in a variety of delivery formats. Below some are listed in addition to specific courses that may include a weekly synchronous component through an online platform. Please see the [Academic Calendar](#) for the semester and sub-term schedule.

### Format 1: Online Formats

M.Ed. School Counseling online courses are carefully designed to provide candidates with a full academic experience via distance learning. The University currently uses *Canvas*®, an online software platform, as its primary online instructional delivery method. Candidates interact with other candidates taking the same course, utilize links to online resources, view supplemental streaming video clips, and receive direct feedback from their professors using this innovative means of delivery.

Professors may also utilize Microsoft Teams or Webex for instructional purposes

[Canvas](#)

[Webex](#)

[Microsoft Teams](#)

## Format 2: Intensives

### *J Term Intensives – Residential and Online Formats*

This 14-16 week course is delivered using an intensive format. Candidates that select the residential intensive will attend 36-40 hours of classroom-based instruction at the Liberty campus in Lynchburg, VA. Candidates that select the online intensive will attend 36-40 hours of synchronous, video-based instruction. In addition to the class time, candidates are expected to complete additional work online both pre and post intensive over the duration of the term. Intensive coursework begins at the beginning of the designated term. Candidates must attend every day in its entirety during the days of intensive class meetings in order to pass the course. Candidates are required to have all textbooks at the start of class and during each day of class during the on-campus portion of the intensive course. Not having textbooks during residency may result in a reduction in class participation grade. Candidates are required to have audio and video access during each day of the intensive. To ensure the confidentiality of class discussions, virtual backgrounds will not be permitted. Dates, times, and room numbers for intensive class meetings are in ASIST.

## Format 3: Synchronous Courses

School Counseling online candidates are required to complete three full semesters of clinical experience including practicum, Internship I, and Internship II with a weekly class meeting component. In addition to the weekly class time, candidates are expected to complete additional work online over the duration of the term. The candidate will be provided a meeting time prior to the first week of class, and the instructor will go over the details of the class structure, which will include candidate presentations and case analysis.

### *A Term Weekly Synchronous Online Format (COSC 505, COSC 512, COSC 692, COSC 693, and COSC 694)*

This 14-16 week course is delivered using a video-based classroom format. Candidates attend 2 hours of synchronous online instruction each week. In addition to the weekly class time, candidates are expected to complete additional work online over the duration of the term.

**Important:** All Students in **A-term or J-term courses** must have video and audio access and have their cameras turned on for the entire duration of class each day. To ensure the confidentiality of class discussions, virtual backgrounds will not be permitted. Students must attend all synchronous class sessions using both audio and video access for the entire duration of the class session and all 14-16 weeks in order to pass the class.

Intensive coursework begins at the beginning of the designated term. Candidates must attend every day in its entirety during the days of intensive class meetings in order to pass the course. Candidates are required to have all textbooks at the start of class and during each day of class during the on-campus portion of the intensive course. Not having textbooks during residency may result in a reduction in class participation grade. Candidates are required to have audio and

video access during each day of the intensive, with no use of virtual backgrounds. Dates, times, and room numbers for intensive class meetings are in ASIST.

**COSC 505 A and J terms:** In addition to class time, this course also requires 1 meeting a week, outside of the regular class time, with your assigned triad to practice and record counseling skills.

## 2.8 Dual Degrees and Dual Licensure

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

Although dual degrees will not be awarded within the department, candidates may elect to take additional courses for dual licensure to obtain licenses in both School Counseling and Professional Counseling. For most candidates it is recommended to pursue a Master of Education in School Counseling and take additional courses for their [counseling state licensure](#). Candidates interested in licensure as both a school counselor and a professional counselor are permitted to take the classes listed below prior to practicum as long as all other prerequisites **are successfully completed** in the Degree Completion Plan.

Approved courses are:

- Psychopathology & Counseling (CEFS 546)
- Theories of Family Systems (CEFS 601)
- Substance Abuse: Diagnosis, Treatment & Prevention (CEFS 691)
- Clinical Diagnosis & Treatment Planning (COUC 667)

Pre-requisites to these CEFS courses can be met by the M.Ed. in School Counseling curriculum and do not need pre-requisite override submissions/approvals. Psychopathology & Counseling (CEFS 546) **must be completed** before the other approved CEFS courses are attempted.

Candidates may elect to take additional courses for dual licensure to obtain licenses in both School Counseling and Professional Counseling. These candidates are allowed to take a clinical practicum (COUC 692). If not seeking dual licensure, candidates are required to take a school practicum (COSC 692). All candidates receiving financial aid must consult with the [Student Financial Services](#) office to understand how taking courses not listed on the school counseling DCP will impact financial aid. These additional courses are **NOT** covered by financial aid. The suggested courses allow a candidate to apply for the [Virginia Counseling Board](#); it is the candidate's responsibility to confirm with their respective state board of counseling if they will be



approved. If the candidate determines that an additional course is needed in addition to or in place of one listed above, an appeal will need to be submitted through the Registrar's office.

## **2.9 FAMs and Academic Advising**

Candidates in the M.Ed. School Counseling program are placed in the School Counseling Advising Center in Canvas and assigned to a Faculty Advisor Mentor (FAM). A virtual meeting will be scheduled with the program director in order to review the COSC 500 Orientation Modules and answer any questions.

This meeting provides an avenue for discussing critical program expectations as well as allowing time for questions. During this meeting, the Program Plan of Study (PPS) will be reviewed. Candidates are expected to attend this meeting, as some of the items discussed during this meeting are time sensitive. Dates and times will be communicated to the Candidate via Liberty email.

Candidates are encouraged to meet with their FAM. The FAM will work with the Candidate to ensure an adequate academic plan is in place and to enhance the Candidate's understanding of their Degree Completion Plan (DCP) and Planned Program of Study (PPS). FAM meetings aid the Candidate in successfully matriculating through the School Counseling program. The FAM also serves as a resource and intervenes as needed throughout the program to assess Candidate academic, professional, and personal development, and engages in a Professional Development Plan (PDP) as needed.

### **LUO Academic Advising**

Liberty's **online candidates** also work with a team of Academic Advisors throughout their program. The academic advisors will guide candidates through the logistics of course advising, such as registering for classes and adding/dropping courses. Candidates are not assigned to one specific person. Online advisors can be contacted through <https://www.liberty.edu/online/academic-advisors/>.

***It is always the responsibility of the candidate to be aware of University policies and regulations and [state licensing requirements](#) affecting his or her program. FAMs and Academic Advisors cannot advise on matters pertaining to the regulations of state licensure boards.***

## **2.10 [Praxis® Professional School Counselor Examination](#)**

All M.Ed. in School Counseling candidates take the Praxis® Professional School Counselor examination (0421 or 5421). Candidates may submit scores for their state's equivalency test in place of the Praxis® 0421 or 5421. If the candidate's state does not have an equivalent, then the candidate must complete the Praxis® 0421 or 5421. This comprehensive specialty examination is a requirement for Gate 3 and graduation. Candidates must provide proof that they have taken or registered to take the Praxis® exam prior to Gate 3 and enrollment in Internship 1 (COSC 693). Candidates should consider taking the exam in the semester immediately prior to Internship 1. Currently, there is no required minimum score for the school counseling program, but other

states may have a minimum required passing score for licensure. The purpose of this exam is to assess the candidate's knowledge specific to the specialty of counseling in K-12 schools.

The timed (two hour) exam covers competencies of the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP®), as defined by their School Counseling Specialty Standards for Preparation. The test is designed to mirror the four quadrants of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model. The four subtests of the Praxis® School counselor exam, which consists of 120 multiple choice items, are:

- **Assess:** Specifics on program assessment and school counselor assessment and appraisal.
- **Deliver:** Specifics on direct and indirect services.
- **Define:** Specifics on candidate standards and professional standards
- **Manage:** Specifics on program focus and program planning

For information, exam costs, and to register for the exam, candidates should go to the link above. There you will find a link to the *Praxis® Study Companion*. Another good resource for preparation is *The School Counselor's Desk Reference and Credentialing Examination Study Guide* developed by Dr. Schellenberg (2018, Routledge Publishing). It covers the content needed for the Praxis® exam and other school counseling specialty exams, providing study tips, case studies, and practice exams.

## 2.11 Practicum

Visit the [Practicum website](#) for full details. Please note that Candidates may elect to take additional courses for dual licensure to obtain licenses in both School Counseling and Professional Counseling. These candidates are allowed to take a clinical practicum (COUC 692). If not seeking dual licensure, candidates are required to take a school practicum (COSC 692). See section 2.8.

## 2.12 Internship

Visit the [Internship website](#) for full details.

### *Transfer Credit*

Transfer credits are not offered for COSC 693 (Internship1) or COSC 694 (Internship 2) regardless of the candidate's completion of other internship courses. See [Internship website](#) for full details.

## 2.13 Break in Enrollment

A candidate breaks enrollment if he/she does not matriculate in a course at least once every academic year. Admission status is subject to the terms of any previous academic or disciplinary probation, suspension, or dismissal. Candidates may be required to provide official transcripts from all educational institutions attended since enrollment at Liberty. Admission decisions for re-applicants will be based on the current admission criteria of the respective degree program at the time the new application is submitted. Candidates who break enrollment and apply for

readmission will be required to follow the current degree completion plan in effect at the time of re-entry to the University. Any military candidate wishing to be readmitted who broke enrollment due to deployment must contact the [Office of Military Affairs](#).

## **2.14 Time Limit for Degree Completion**

The time limit for completing the M.Ed. in School Counseling degree is seven years. Any School Counseling courses taken at Liberty that are over seven years old will need to be retaken in order for a candidate to graduate with the M.Ed. in School Counseling degree.

## **2.15 [Course Repeat and Grade Replacement Policy](#)**

In order to graduate from the School Counseling program, a student must maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. A course grade of “D” or “F” cannot be used to fulfill the requirements of the program. A maximum of two courses (6 hours) with a grade of “C+/C/C-” can count toward graduation, but the student must maintain a GPA of 3.0. Students who receive a grade less than B- may repeat a course and replace the initial grade; however, students can only replace a maximum of three courses (9 credits). Both grades will appear on their transcripts, but the replaced grade will not count toward their GPA. The grades of any courses repeated beyond the six credits will apply to their GPA. There is a maximum of two **total** course repeats. In other words, students may repeat **and replace a course in which a grade below B- was received two times**, keeping in mind grade replacement can only be used **a maximum of two times in the program**. Once the grade replacement limit has been met (i.e., two courses have been repeated and initial grades replaced), any additional course repeats will apply to the student’s overall GPA. If a student exceeds the course repeat and grade replacement policy and is unable to maintain a 3.0 GPA **or** has not satisfactorily completed pre-requisite courses in order to continue with degree completion course progression, the administrative dismissal policy may be enacted. Students **should be aware that some state licensure boards do not accept any course work with a grade below B-**.

## **2.16 Administrative Dismissal**

Candidates may be eligible for Administrative Dismissal from the Master of Education in School Counseling if any of the following are true:

1. It will be mathematically impossible for them to raise their cumulative Graduate GPA to 3.00 with their remaining required courses.
2. They do not have a cumulative Graduate GPA of at least a 2.7 after completion of early core counseling courses and/or a 3.0 at Practicum.
3. They have three (3) grades or three (3) courses of C+/C/C- or below applying to their degree and they have applied the repeat policy for the maximum allowed nine (9) hours or three (3) courses, and they earn two (2) or more additional grades or courses of C+ or lower.
4. They earn two (2) grades of D+ or lower.
5. A student with a flagged background check, who is not able to obtain licensure because of the background issue, could be administratively dismissed from the program.

## **2.17 Attendance**

Regular attendance in courses is expected throughout the length of the term/semester. The U.S. Department of Education requires that every university monitor the attendance of their candidates.

[Online Attendance Policy](#)

[Intensive Attendance Policy](#)

### **Intensive courses**

Intensive coursework begins at the beginning of the designated term. Candidates must attend every day in its entirety during the days of intensive class meetings in order to pass the course. Candidates are required to have all textbooks at the start of class and during each day of class during the on-campus portion of the intensive course. Not having textbooks during residency may result in a reduction in class participation grade. Candidates are required to have audio and video access during each day of the intensive. Dates, times, and room numbers for intensive class meetings are in ASIST.

[General Intensive Information](#)

## **2.18 American Psychological Association (APA) Format**

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

## **2.19 Graduation**

All degree completion requirements must be fulfilled before the university will confer the M.Ed. in School Counseling degree. Candidates who wish to participate in the yearly Spring Commencement program must complete the [Degree/Certificate Application](#) in accordance with the calendar deadlines listed in ASIST and posted by the Registrar on the Graduation Requirements webpage. Candidates are advised to submit their applications well in advance of the deadline date.

## **2.20 School Counseling Licensure Process**

All candidates must go through Gate 4 to complete the licensure eligibility paperwork. Gate 4 applications must be completed after the candidate's school counseling degree is conferred. Internship 2 students will receive a Gate 4 checklist and state licensure packet to be completed and returned to the Gate 4 office. Additional Gate 4 information is found here: [Gate 4: Program Exit & Licensure Application | School of Education \(liberty.edu\)](#)

# Candidate Expectations

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## 3.1 Professional Organizations

A significant arena in which counselors can make an impact within the field is through involvement with professional organizations.

- Candidates taking a clinical practicum (COUC 692) are required to join the [American Counseling Association \(ACA\)](#) prior to participation in the clinical practicum.
- Candidates are required to join the [American School Counselor Association \(ASCA\)](#) during COSC 500.

Candidates are encouraged to join counseling associations' regional, state, and local divisions that allow candidates higher levels of involvement in more specific areas of interest. Most professional organizations and divisions offer reduced membership rates to candidates as well as:

- benefits such as access to their professional journals and newsletters
- reduced registration fees for professional seminars, conferences, and workshops sponsored by a variety of organizations
- eligibility for an array of professional services (e.g., library resource use, legal defense funds and services, liability insurance);
- involvement in activities and issues which are directly or indirectly pertain to the profession (legislation and professional credentialing, licensure, certification)
- affiliation with other professionals having similar interests and areas of expertise.

## 3.2 Academic Honesty & Plagiarism

Liberty University holds its candidates to the highest standards of ethics. One significant area of integrity in academics is honesty. Candidates are expected to submit only their own work. Furthermore, candidates are expected to neither 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 *Graduate Student Code of Honor* found at the Graduate Student Affairs website: <https://www.liberty.edu/students/community-life/graduate-and-online-students/>

## 3.3 Academic Appeal Policy

In circumstances where a candidate disagrees with either a course final grade or a sanction due to an Honor Code violation, candidates have the right to appeal the grade or sanction through the [Office of Student Affairs](#). The procedures followed for academic misconduct, personal misconduct, or grade appeals are outlined at the Graduate Student Affairs website: <https://www.liberty.edu/students/community-life/graduate-and-online-students/>.

### **3.4 Department Faculty-Candidate Interaction**

The faculty is responsible to interact with candidates in a supervisory capacity/role. As such, faculty may provide candidates professional principles, guidance, and recommendations as it relates to the context of the student-client setting. The faculty are responsible to avoid dual relationships with candidates such as entering a candidate-counselor relationship. Thus, faculty do not provide personal counseling addressing candidate personal problems. If a faculty member perceives that a candidate is in need of personal or professional counseling, then that faculty member will recommend that the candidate pursue either pastoral or professional assistance from a counselor in their community.

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

For more information and resources, see [Appendix A](#).

### **3.5 Professional Development, Candidate Support, & Administrative Review Ethical Conduct**

All candidates in the M.Ed. in School Counseling program are responsible for behaving in an ethical manner throughout their training, as well as in clinical and professional settings. Violations of the [ACA Code of Ethics](#), the [American School Counselor Association \(ASCA\) Ethical Standards for School Counselors](#), and/or the [Online 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.

Although candidates are expected to adhere to the ACA Code of Ethics, ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors, the Online Student Honor Code, and the Liberty Way as guides to their behavior throughout the program, reading these guidelines is just the beginning of understanding professional ethics. Being an ethical counselor-in-training involves understanding the underlying principles and values associated with professional ethical practices. Ethical codes are inherently built upon a strong commitment to biblical principles, developing a set of beliefs that guide one's everyday practice, being able to discern potential as well as realized ethical problematic situations, and having the character to stand by these when faced with challenging situations.

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

## **Professional Development**

To successfully complete the School Counseling program at Liberty University and to be eligible for graduation, a candidate must be able to demonstrate proficiency in five areas:

1. Attainment of scholastic competency in all coursework as evaluated throughout the program (see [Academic Policies](#) section of this handbook).
2. Acquisition of, and ability to apply counseling skills in a professional, ethical, and culturally sensitive manner with diverse populations and to a standard acceptable by counselors and counselor educators. This ability is evaluated by faculty throughout the program using assessments during specific courses (i.e., COSC 505 and COSC 512) and by the candidate's approved site supervisors using the Pre-Advanced Internship Assessment (Pre-AIA) during practicum (COSC 692) and the Advanced Internship Assessment (AIA) during the internships (COSC 693/COSC 694). This is also accomplished using the assessment of recorded counseling sessions during field experiences.
3. Demonstration of emotional and mental stability and maturity in interactions 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 classmates, and includes both verbal and written communications.
4. Demonstration of dispositions as outlined by the American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics, the American School Counselor Association Code of Ethics, and the Liberty Graduate Student Code of Honor as well as the conceptual framework of dispositions of Social responsibility, Commitment, Reflective practices, Integrity, and Professionalism (SCRIP). These candidate characteristics are assessed throughout the program in all interactions with faculty, staff, administrators, supervisors, adjuncts and fellow candidates as well as by the candidate themselves and by their site supervisors using the Practicum Evaluation of Candidate Performance during practicum (COSC 692) and the Advanced Competency Assessment (ACA) during internship (COSC 693/694). Evaluation includes both verbal and written communications.
5. Demonstration of the ability to work within the worldview of diverse clients and integrate faith and spirituality into counseling where appropriate in an ethically competent and culturally sensitive manner.

The program 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 candidates interact. This interaction can include formal and informal settings such as classroom, online communication, advising, and personal conversations, as well as written communications. To align with CACREP standards, all candidates will be evaluated through a rubric, listing the standards and expectations for various assignments in individual courses. This information will be compiled for each candidate and provide documentation to meet their CACREP requirements for graduation.

### **Candidate Support and Development**

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

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

This committee exists to come alongside candidates and assist in candidate development.

### **Administrative Review**

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

### **Administrative Hold Information**

A candidate'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

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. Candidates will be notified of any hold placed on their account by the program director. Once initiated, the candidate will remain on administrative hold in the program pending the outcome of ongoing processes. As part of the Administrative Review, the program director will review all 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.

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

There may be times when the School of Behavioral Sciences faculty determines that a candidate's behavior is so concerning and/or non-professional, regardless of whether the candidate is making satisfactory academic progress, that prompt protective action is required. This is especially true when candidates are interacting with clients in a clinical setting. In such situations, the program director will place the candidate on Administrative Review.

As part of the Administrative Review, the program director will review all the available and relevant evidence to determine an appropriate interim action to address the concerning behavior, 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 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 candidate 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 candidate'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 candidate and faculty) determines both that the concerning behavior has been resolved and that any pending processes to address the candidate'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 (about 2 days) of the program director's decision to initiate the Administrative Review, the program director will notify the candidate 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 candidate 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 candidate to the Office of Community Life and/or the Remediation Committee. If the candidate's behavior cannot be remedied to a point such that the candidate is qualified to continue in the program, the candidate may ultimately be dismissed from the program. Should the candidate decide to appeal the interim action(s) imposed by the program director, the candidate must follow the appeal procedures below.

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

Candidates who disagree with the interim action(s) imposed by the program director following Administrative Review have an opportunity to appeal. Candidates 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 candidate 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 candidate, the program director, and/or any other person with relevant information. The Dean of the School of Behavioral Sciences (or designee) will endeavor to make a determination within ten (10) days of receiving the appeal. The determination to uphold or reverse the interim action(s) will be sent to the candidate 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.

## **3.6 [Remediation](#)**

### **Candidate Support and Development**

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

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

This committee exists to come alongside candidates and assist in candidate development.

### **Administrative Review**

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

### **Administrative Hold**

A candidate'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 during COSC 500

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. Candidates will be notified of any hold placed on their account by the program director. Once initiated, the candidate 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, the site supervisor will notify the candidate's professor if the candidate:

- fails to successfully demonstrate the required skills and/or
- fails to successfully demonstrate professional behaviors and/or
- fails to successfully demonstrate personal/professional dispositions in this course and/or
- receives failing evaluations and/or
- is dismissed from the site and/or
- is found practicing at a site without having received approval from the department for the site.

The faculty supervisor/professor will write an incident report and send it to the Clinical Director and the department's SC Field Placement 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. The course of action could include an Administrative Review for Behavioral Intervention and/or referral to Remediation and/or the Office of Community Life. Administrative Review is appropriate when a candidate'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 Clinical Director and SC Field Placement 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 in 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 faculty supervisor/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 candidate 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 candidate 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 candidate to retake certain courses, seek personal counseling, etc. If, after remediation, the candidate is unable to correct the deficits, the Remediation Committee will meet to decide the best course of action for the candidate, up to and including issuing an "F" for the course and/or dismissal from the program. The final decision regarding whether the candidate is eligible to retake the Internship and disposition of the hours accrued during the Internship is at the discretion of the Leadership Team, which is based on a thorough evaluation of the incident.

**Note:** When necessary, the Department may immediately remove a candidate from the site upon notification of concerning behavior by the site supervisor. During the remediation process, the candidate 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 School Counseling Practicum Field Manual and School Counseling 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 candidate's behavior is so concerning and/or non-professional, regardless of whether the candidate is making satisfactory academic progress, that prompt protective action is required. This is especially true when candidates are interacting with clients in a clinical setting. In such situations, the program director will place the candidate 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 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 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 candidate 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 candidate'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 candidate and faculty) determines both that the concerning behavior has been resolved and that any pending processes to address the candidate'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 candidate 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 candidate 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 candidate to the Office of Community Life and/or the Remediation Committee. If the candidate's behavior cannot be remedied to a point such that the candidate is qualified to continue in the program, the candidate may ultimately be dismissed from the program. Should the candidate decide to appeal the interim action(s) imposed by the program director, the candidate must follow the appeal procedures below.

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

Candidates who disagree with the interim action(s) imposed by the program director following Administrative Review have an opportunity to appeal. Candidates 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 candidate 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 candidate, the program director, and/or any other person with relevant information. The Dean of the School of Behavioral Sciences (or designee) will endeavor to make a determination within ten (10) days of receiving the appeal. The determination to uphold or reverse the interim action(s) will be sent to the candidate 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 candidate's studies, a faculty, staff, administrator or supervisor believes a candidate lacks required skills, professional behaviors and dispositions to progress in the program, that person will begin remediation procedures aimed to provide the candidate with information and actions to correct the impairment/deficiency. The purpose of the remediation process is to assist the candidate in correcting any deficits in counseling knowledge and skills, as well as problematic personal, interpersonal, or ethical behaviors so the candidate may successfully continue in the program. As such, remedial instruction or interventions are closely linked to the candidates' 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 candidates' limitations, with the need to distinguish between deficient, lacks competence, and impaired:

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Candidates 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

### **Candidates 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

## **Candidates 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 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 candidate.

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

- Faculty or FAM meets with the candidate
- 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 candidate growth

### **Immediate Interventions**

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

### **Remediation Process for the M.Ed. in School Counseling Program**

**Note:** The remediation plan is designed to protect the candidate's rights under University policies and a fair process. In addition, we stress the importance of *engaging the candidate* in the remediation process. These principles are infused throughout the School of Behavioral Sciences program's response continuum. Once a remediation plan is initiated, candidate response to remediation efforts is considered when deciding candidate status in the program. All phases of this remediation process will become a part of the candidate'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 FAM.** When a determination is made by a faculty member that problematic behavior of an academic, clinical, or personal nature exists, and could not be resolved on an informal basis, the faculty member discusses this with the candidate and her or his FAM. If problematic candidate behavior is brought to the attention of the department through other means (e.g., from another candidate, a report from university staff, evaluation from a supervisor, etc.), the candidate's FAM will notify the candidate and discuss the concerns.

The candidate 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 candidate ample opportunity to react to the information presented regarding the problem area. If the problem is resolved, no further action is needed. The FAM will document the meeting, the remedial action plan, and the outcome into the candidate's personal record. The FAM 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 candidate does not engage in the process, disagrees with the validity of the concerns, or does not agree with the **remedial action plan**, the FAM will notify the program director of the outcome of the meeting. A meeting will then be scheduled with the candidate's FAM, the program director, the candidate, 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 FAM persist, the FAM will again meet with the candidate and outline, verbally and in writing, the continued nature and extent of problematic behavior. Informal (e.g., interview with candidate and faculty) and formal (e.g., instruments) may be utilized as a part of the assessment process. This includes feedback from the candidate concerning the outcome of any remedial actions taken by the candidate in response to the concerns raised during the notification session. When it is apparent that the candidate is engaged in the process but has not met the goal of the initial remedial action, a collaborative approach involving candidate 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 FAM will document the meeting; outline the agreed adaptations to the remedial action plan, and the outcome. The FAM 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 candidate's behaviors are at a level that requires a formal remediation process (Stage 4) or the candidate rejects or appeals a **remedial action plan**, a meeting will be held with the candidate, his or her FAM, the program director, and referring faculty member (if appropriate). The meeting date will be set to allow the candidate the opportunity to provide additional evidence to the group for consideration at the meeting. The purpose of the meeting will be to either 1) collaboratively re-assess the problem behavior and develop a **remedial action plan** or 2) determine that the problem needs to be addressed by the program core faculty through a remediation plan. The program director will document the meeting and outcome. The program director will report the meeting outcome to the faculty Remediation Committee.

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

In cases when the outcome of the meeting of the candidate, FAM(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. Once all information has been presented, the

Remediation Committee will decide the level and scope of remediation required to assist the candidate 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 candidate and FAM, evaluate the progress made towards remediating problem behaviors, and develop a formal Remediation Plan. The purpose of the remediation plan is to assist the candidate in correcting any deficits in counseling skills or personal, interpersonal, or ethical problems so that the candidate 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 candidate of the decision both orally and in writing. The candidate will have five working days to respond in writing (and orally, if desired) to the recommendation. The committee will review the candidate's response to the action decided and will make a final decision regarding the disposition of the case. Should the candidate file no response to the action, the decision of the committee will be considered as final. The program director and the candidate's FAM will notify the candidate in writing of the outcome of the meeting.

**Stage 6: Acceptance or Appeal:** The candidate will be given the opportunity to accept the plan of correction or to appeal it. If accepted, the candidate will follow the plan as developed and regularly report progress to her or his FAM. 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 candidate: (1) continuation in the program, (2) continued probation and remediation, (3) counsel the candidate 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 candidate refuses to comply with the Remediation Plan, the Remediation Committee may recommend to the program director that the candidate 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

candidate from the program or allow the candidate 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 candidate is dismissed from the program, the program director will provide a notice of dismissal to the candidate in writing. If any interim action(s) were put into place following Administrative Review (e.g., interim suspension or registration hold), those interim action(s) will remain in place. If the program director allows the candidate to remain in the program, the candidate 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 candidate 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 candidate may appeal to the program director's final determination of dismissal. Should the candidate decide to appeal his or her dismissal, he or she must follow the appeal procedures outlined below.

**Appeal of Dismissal:** Candidates who disagree with the program director's final determination have an opportunity to appeal. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the Dean of the School of Behavioral Sciences within seven (7) days of notification of receiving the notice of the program director's decision. The appeal should clearly state the reason(s) the candidate 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 candidate, the program director, and any others who have relevant information (e.g., members of the Remediation Committee). The Dean of the School of Behavioral Sciences (or designee) will endeavor to make a determination within ten (10) days of receiving the appeal. The determination to uphold or overturn the final determination will be sent to the candidate 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 candidate 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.

### **3.7 [Harassment](#)**

Sexual harassment and/or harassment on the basis of 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 harassment and intimidation of its employees.

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

Liberty University is committed to providing a safe place for learning. As such, Liberty adheres to the Title IX directive of not tolerating any form of sex-based discrimination, which can include: acts of sexual violence, sexual misconduct and disrespect for one another including non-

consensual sexual intercourse, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, childhood sexual abuse, and stalking. Additionally, Liberty University is committed to supporting and coming alongside candidates who may be victims of sexual discrimination and/or violence. Under Title IX, faculty are obligated to disclose to the university's Title IX office any candidate disclosure of sex-based discrimination, physical violence, and/or sexual violence. For additional information and up to date policy please reference the Title IX information page <https://www.liberty.edu/title-ix/speak-up/>

**Thus, if a candidate discloses to a faculty member, verbally or in writing, that he/she has experienced sex-based discrimination, physical violence and/ or sexual violence, presently or in the past, then the faculty member will make a referral to the Title IX office.** This process is in place so that the university can help ensure that candidates 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 candidate 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, candidates are not required to accept any offers of support, resources, or information.

### **3.9 Personal Counseling**

Candidates are strongly encouraged to seek group and individual counseling as a part of the educational experience. As counselor-trainees who are in the process of developing the skills, professional behaviors, and dispositions needed to become licensed school counselors, it is imperative that candidates deal with personal issues that may interfere with their ability to work with clients in a competent and ethical manner. Moreover, experiences as a client will help the counselor better understand the client's experience in counseling. For more information, see [Appendix A](#).

### **3.10 Faculty Endorsement**

Upon successful completion of the program of studies and demonstration of the requisite competencies, the M.Ed. School Counseling Department (Gate4@liberty.edu) will provide documentation to endorse candidates for certification and licensure. Endorsement is provided when candidates demonstrate qualifications to perform the duties associated with credentialing or employment, as well as professional and ethical standards and behavior.

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

### 3.11 Candidate Record Keeping

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

**Keeping copies of course syllabi, schedules, and clinical hours is the candidate's responsibility.**

### 3.12 Computer Needs

Each candidate at Liberty University is expected to demonstrate computer literacy prior to admission to the program. Each course in the M.Ed. School Counseling online program requires the candidate to have a reliable internet connection and computer software programs. Because these are essential for your interactions and completion of the course, candidates **must** have access to the following:

- Microsoft Office® (Note: Microsoft Office 365® is available for free to Liberty University candidates at <https://www.liberty.edu/informationsevice/index.cfm?PID=24600>)
- Internet that can access Canvas and Liberty University's website as well as connect to audio and video during synchronous classes and when recording is needed for assignments.
- A computer that meets the hardware/software specifications to access Canvas
- Send and receive emails via their Liberty Webmail address.

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

### 3.13 Email Account and Communication

Upon admission, each candidate is assigned a Liberty University username and email account (username@liberty.edu). **All correspondence from the university, counseling department, and your course instructor will be delivered via this email address. Candidates are strongly urged to check their Liberty University email accounts daily for communication from the university and counseling faculty.**

Candidates are expected to practice professionalism in all email communications. We live in a fast-paced world with text messaging, which encourages short and abbreviated communication. However, since you are in a counseling program, you are encouraged and expected to use full sentences and good grammar when communicating with other candidates and faculty. It is also an expectation that your electronic communication is pleasing to God. Being courteous and

polite to peers and professors demonstrates dignity and respect, "And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them" (Luke 6:31, ESV).

Communicate complaints directly to the individual involved. Do not send a blanket email to everyone in the class or to administrative personnel until you have communicated your concerns directly to the person involved and allowed them time to respond. Do not post a message to the class on Canvas that is more appropriate for an individual. Avoid offensive language of any kind. Because candidates 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.

### **3.14 Dress Code**

*When on campus or in a class (in person or virtual), candidates are expected to comply with the dress code outlined in the Graduate School Code of Honor found at the Graduate Student Affairs website: <https://www.liberty.edu/students/community-life/graduate-and-online-students/>.*

### **3.15 Tuition and Fees**

Information about tuition and fees for the M.Ed. School Counseling online courses can be found at the following website: <https://www.liberty.edu/student-financial-services/basic-costs/>.

### **3.16 Financial Aid**

For questions and resource information regarding financial aid, see the following website: <https://www.liberty.edu/student-financial-services/>.



## **Appendix A: School Counseling Resources**

[State Boards](#)

[State Licensure Information](#)

[Computer and Technology Requirements](#)

[IT Helpdesk Homepage](#)

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-8255**

**National Mental Health Hotline | 866-903-3787**

For a listing of general resources and program announcements, please visit the [School Counseling Advising Guide](#).

## **Appendix B**

[M.Ed. Course Descriptions](#)