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WELCOME!

Congratulations on embarking on a career in the counseling profession. What awaits you are 60 semester hours of learning that will be simultaneously challenging, supportive, frustrating, encouraging, and demanding. Indeed, the learning process should be all of that—and more—or else your growth as a counselor and as a person will not occur.

The faculty is eager to get to know who you are and what your aspirations are. We are eager to help you in acquiring the skills, values, attitudes, and knowledge base that a practicing counselor requires. We hope you take maximum advantage of the resources and learning experiences that our program has to offer.

This handbook is a key resource for you in your progress as a student in the counseling program. It will provide you information that will be helpful and serve as a guide as you enter the program. It contains key information about dates, policies, and other important information.

Thank you for choosing the counseling faculty at NIU and the NIU program to assist you toward your degree and professional identity.

NOTE: To open up a link (addresses in blue), hold down your control key and click on link.

MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE MASTER’S IN COUNSELING PROGRAM

The counseling faculty prepares multiculturally competent clinical mental health and school counselors who facilitate wellness, growth, and development across the lifespan. Students learn to develop professional relationships that empower diverse individuals, couples, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals. The faculty is committed to promoting excellence in counselor knowledge, skills, and attitudes that embrace professional ethics, social justice, and advocacy.

(Passed unanimously by the faculty on 11-18-10)

WHAT IS COUNSELING?

Many attempts have been made over the years to define counseling. In 2013, the Governing Council of the American Counseling Association (ACA) revised its definition of professional counseling as, "a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals." For a more detailed examination of how ACA currently defines counseling, please click here. Another helpful website is the Illinois Counseling Association website.

Counseling is a profession. This statement denotes that (a) counselors complete a prescribed course of study leading to a graduate degree, (b) counselors belong to organizations that have professional and ethical standards, (c) counselors are certified or licensed by state and national
associations, (d) counselors must meet minimal educational and professional standards and commit to continuous professional development, and (e) counselors are proactive in dealing with different life and societal problems.

*Counseling deals with wellness, personal growth, career, and pathological concerns.* This part of the definition suggests that counselors work with both intra- and interpersonal concerns in areas that include schools, families, and careers.

*Counseling is conducted with persons who are considered to be functioning well and those who have more serious problems.* What this statement suggests is that counseling meets the needs of a wide variety of people. Many clients experience developmental or situational concerns that require attention. Often these problems can be treated with short-term interventions. If necessary, counselors provide treatment of psychological disorders as described in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (2000) of the American Psychiatric Association.

*Counseling is theory based.* Counseling practice draws on a wide variety of theoretical approaches that encompass the cognitive, behavioral, and affective dimensions as well as interpersonal and systemic. Theories may be applied to individuals, groups, families, and organizations.

*Counseling includes various specialties.* Many counselors focus their practice in a specialty that requires advanced knowledge. This specialty deals with a particular group of clients and often takes place in a particular setting. Common specialties within counseling include addiction and offender counseling, career counseling, couples and family counseling, mental health counseling, gerontological counseling, rehabilitation counseling, and school counseling.

**THE COUNSELING FACULTY**

The faculty offers the benefits of their diverse backgrounds and varied educational, occupational, and professional organization experiences. All faculty members are active in professional associations, such as the American Counseling Association and its divisions, the Illinois Counseling Association and its divisions, and the National Board for Certified Counselors. Meet them “up close and personal”

**Teresa A. Fisher, Ph.D., NCC** is an associate professor who received her doctorate in Educational Psychology/Counselor Education from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. She is a Nationally Certified Counselor, Certified School Counselor in the State of Illinois and Certified in Crisis Management. Dr. Fisher has received specialized training in play therapy, cognitive-behavioral approaches, solution-focused, client-centered, Adlerian psychology and gestalt techniques.

Dr. Fisher has a variety of experiences in school and community counseling as well as working with talented under-represented youth. Some of her research interests include academic and career motivation, resilient youth in U.S, as well as internationally and school counseling interventions. She is a member of the American Counseling Association, Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development, Association for Counselor Education and
Supervision, a founding member of the Illinois Counselors for Social Justice and numerous other state and national counseling/educational organizations. Dr. Fisher consistently presents at national educational, counseling, and psychological conferences.

**Charles Myers, Ph.D., LCPC, NCSC, NCE, ASC, RPT-S** is an assistant Professor of Counseling in the Department of Counseling, Adult and Higher Education at Northern Illinois University. He currently teaches Counseling with Children, School Counseling, Standardized Testing, Substance Abuse Counseling, Counseling Practicum, and Counseling Internship. Dr. Myers is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor in the State of Illinois, a Licensed Mental Health Counselor-Supervisor in Florida, and a Licensed Professional Counselor-Supervisor in Texas. He is also a Nationally Certified Counselor, a Nationally Certified School Counselor, an Accredited Clinical Supervisor, and a Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor, and is certified with the American Red Cross to provide disaster mental health services and with the Delta Society to provide animal-assisted therapy. Dr. Myers has been a professional counselor for 10 years, having served as a school counselor for five years in both rural and intercity schools, as a clinical mental health counselor, and as a private practitioner. He has provided mental health services to adults, children, and parents in homeless shelters and in the shelters following Hurricane Katrina. He has also provided crisis counseling in a field hospital in Haiti following the 2010 earthquake. Dr. Myers is very involved with professional organizations currently serving as Treasurer for the Illinois Association for Play Therapy, Advisor for NIU Counseling Association, and on Newsletter Committee for, Association for Creativity in Counseling. He has served as Elementary Vice President for the Florida School Counselor Association, as Regional Representative for the Florida Counseling Association, and on the Clinical Communication Committee and Ethics and Practice Committee and Task Force, and the Nominations Committee for the Association for Play Therapy, as well as other at the state and local positions. Dr. Myers' research interests include play and filial therapy, trauma, creative arts in counseling and supervision, school counseling, and assessment. Dr. Myers is the author of several works on play and sandtray therapies and is a frequent presenter on the local, state, national, and international levels.

**Jane E. Rheineck, Ph.D., LCPC, NCC** is an Associate Professor in Counselor Education & Supervision. Dr. Rheineck's research and publications have focused on women, mental health and the implications of counseling lesbian and gay individuals. Dr. Rheineck is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC) in the state of Illinois and has a clinical background that reflects a broad range of experiences that include adolescent inpatient residential treatment, outpatient counseling with adults, and mental health counseling in the schools. In addition to her clinical background, Dr. Rheineck has experience in higher education/student affairs with an emphasis in student development and counseling.

**Scott A. Wickman, Ph.D.** is an associate professor and has been a K-12 school counselor in Ramsey, Illinois and taught Spanish at Robinson High School, Charleston High School, and Lincoln Trail College. He also worked as a community support counselor, serving clients with serious and persistent mental illnesses while running court-mandated psychoeducational groups for perpetrators of violence and abuse. Dr. Wickman has published articles in the Journal of Counseling and Development, Counselor Education and Supervision, and the Journal of Media and Communication, Counseling and Values, and Vistas. Dr. Wickman has a B.A. in
Dr. Wickman received the 2004 Beverly Brown Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Field of Group Counseling, 2005 Illinois School Counselor Educator of the Year Award, and 2006 Northern Illinois University College of Exceptional Contributions to Teaching Award.

Kimberly A. Hart, LPC, PEL:SC, NCC is the Director of the Community Counseling Training Center and Field-Based Experiences in Counseling. Kimberly comes to NIU with 10 years of group facilitation experience working with children, adolescents and adults of diverse backgrounds. Kimberly has presented over a dozen presentations at national, regional, and state conferences in areas such as experiential education, adventure-based counseling, cross-cultural facilitation, multiculturalism in counseling, and the culture of counselor preparation programs. Kimberly is a Doctoral Candidate specialized in clinical mental health counseling, school counseling and consultation, clinical supervision in counselor education, and mental health first aid/mental health facilitation. Kimberly has held office in the Illinois Counselors Association under the Illinois Association for Specialist in Group work as well as Illinois Counselors for Social Justice. Kimberly was the recipient of the Illinois Association for Specialists in Group Work Beverly Brown Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Field of Group Counseling and the 2013 Presidential Commission on the Status of Women Outstanding Women Award. Kimberly continues to conduct research on multiculturalism and cultural inclusion among counseling professionals with an emphasis on increasing multicultural consciousness and curiosity.

PROGRAM ACCREDITATIONS AND NIU COLLEGE OF EDUCATION CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Accreditations

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) has awarded accreditation to the Masters of Science in Education (M.S.Ed.) in Counseling program in two areas of professional preparation: school and clinical mental health counseling. CACREP accreditation is an important credential that attests to how NIU's counseling programs are fulfilling their commitment to educational quality. Students are urged to log onto http://www.cacrep.org/ to learn more about CACREP's history and mission. The School Counseling area of professional preparation at NIU is approved by the Illinois State Board of Education to certify school counselors in Illinois.

The College of Education Conceptual Framework

Students should become familiar with the Conceptual Framework, the central philosophical and operational principle of the certification programs at NIU. The Framework's three basic tenets include knowledge, practice, and reflection as the building blocks of exemplary educators.
The purpose of the Conceptual Framework is threefold:

1. It expresses the shared vision of the NIU community of learners
2. It provides common goals for the certification programs
3. It provides coherence among
   - Curriculum
   - Instruction
   - Field education experiences
   - Clinical practice
   - Assessment

The commitments and dispositions of an exemplary educator include:

- **Collaboration**: A partnership, using the strength of our diversity
- **Diversity**: We are all unique individuals and can learn from each other in a caring community
- **Caring**: To encourage and develop those who can and those who won't so that they will continue the learning process
- **Life-Long Learner**: Exploring the educational opportunities available and modeling the pursuit of knowledge to our students and community
- **Scholarship**: Seeking knowledge to become more than competent teachers, pursuing excellence in educational studies
- **Creative Critical Thinking**: To think outside the box and yet know the boundaries of our discussions

**THE MASTER’S IN COUNSELING PROGRAM**

Advanced education in counseling and human development is designed to prepare professional counselors as human development specialists. The counseling program at NIU offers strong didactic and experiential course work; varied theoretical approaches; a quality faculty who value research, inquiry, and professional involvement; and well-equipped facilities.
Entering the Counseling Program

Applicants to the Counseling Program select one of the two areas of specialized professional counseling preparation: School or Clinical Mental Health counseling.

Questions about the counseling program and each area of professional preparation may be answered by contacting the Program Coordinator, Dr. Jane Rheineck at jrheineck@niu.edu or by contacting the Counseling Admissions Graduate Assistant at cahc_admissions@niu.edu Questions may also be answered by faculty connected to the various areas of preparation:

School Counseling: Dr. Wickman (753-9324; swickman@niu.edu)  
Dr. Fisher (753-7268; tafisher@niu.edu)  
Dr. Myers (753-7501; cemyers@niu.edu)  
Clinical Mental: Dr. Rheineck (793-8792; jrheineck@niu.edu)

The Master of Science in Education Program (M.S.Ed.)

All master's students in the counseling program are working toward the same degree, a Master of Science in Education with a major in Counseling. Each student chooses one of TWO areas of specialized professional preparation (i.e., School Counseling or Clinical Mental Health Counseling) that include specific courses related to that area of preparation. Students need to meet with their academic counselor early in their program matriculation phases to determine which courses are necessary for their chosen area of professional preparation. A portfolio is required of all students in order to graduate. Information about portfolio components and requirements can be found in the Internship section of this manual. Students need to read these requirements prior to their enrollment in core counseling courses.

This degree provides students with entry-level skills to work as counselors in clinical mental health agencies or schools.

This 60-semester hour program consists of three components:

1. 36 credit hours in the core curriculum
2. 9 credit hours in supervised practicum and internship
3. 15 credit hours devoted to study in one of the two areas of specialized professional preparation (school and clinical mental health) and electives

Completion of the school counseling area of professional preparation allows students to make application to the State of Illinois for a Type 73 School Counseling certificate. This certificate is required for a student to work in Illinois as a professional school counselor. The State of Illinois no longer requires individuals to hold a current State of Illinois teaching certificate as one of the qualifications for school counselor certification. However, for students who do not hold a teaching certificate, three additional educational courses are required (specified below).
Candidates must also pass the state examination for school counseling, the Illinois Basic Skills test, and meet other criteria when applying for the Type 73 Certification.

Since NIU’s Counseling program is CACREP accredited, upon completion of the M.S.Ed. in Counseling all students are eligible to apply for and take the National Counselor Examination (NCE). Passing the NCE enables the student to apply for the credential of Nationally Certified Counselor (NCC). Upon completion of the M.S.Ed., graduates who have passed the NCE may also apply to become a Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC) in Illinois. Further work in the counseling field, including appropriate supervision, may allow the graduate to become a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC) in Illinois. The LCPC credential is required for independent practice as a counselor and to qualify for third-party reimbursement. More information about licensing follows within this Handbook.

Objectives and Related Courses

The purpose of the master’s in counseling program is to prepare counselors in a 60-credit-hour program to work in one of two areas of professional preparation: Clinical Mental Health Counseling or School Counseling. There are 36 hours in the common core courses that everyone takes no matter the area of professional preparation. These courses allow students to meet program and CACREP objectives and goals. These courses also address the following program objectives.

Objective 1 - Common Core Courses

Students will demonstrate mastery of a common core of knowledge and skills in counseling. This common core involves coursework in such areas as (a) human growth and development, (b) social and cultural foundations, (c) groups, (d) career and lifestyle development, (e) research and program evaluation, (f) professional orientation, and (g) appraisal. Specific courses that comprise the common core are indicated below.

Common Core Classes (36 credit hours required)

- CAHC 500 Professional Identity and Ethics in Counseling (3)
- CAHC 501 Diagnosis of Mental Health Issues in Counseling (3)
- CAHC 511 Career Counseling [NOTE: CAHC 511 is a prerequisite for teaching CAHC 211 in exchange for 200 hours of internship credit] (3)
- CAHC 525 Counseling Skills and Strategies [not offered in summer] (3)
- CAHC 530 Counseling Theories and Practices (3)
- CAHC 533X Standardized Testing (3)
- CAHC 540 Group Counseling [NOTE: requires 15 additional hours outside of class for students participating in an experiential group] (3)
Objective 2 - Experiential Courses

Students will be able to demonstrate effective use of counseling skills for a selected setting. Specific courses that address this objective are:

Supervised Experiences (9 credit hours required)

- CAHC 550 Practicum in Counseling (3) [NOTE: School counselors-in-training are required to find a school where they can acquire 16 audio-or video-recorded direct contact hours with student clients. All counselors-in-training must complete a minimum of 25 individual counseling hours and a minimum of 15 hours in group counseling with a co-facilitator]

- CAHC 586 Counseling Internship (6) [NOTE: Internship requires a minimum of 600 clock hours of which 240 must be direct contact hours; a tuition waiver is granted for the semester(s) during which CAHC 586 is taken]

*More detailed information about these clinical courses is provided later in this Handbook under the heading Supervised Counseling Experiences

Objective 3 - Specialization Courses

Students will demonstrate mastery of knowledge and skills in a selected area of professional preparation (Clinical Mental Health Counseling or School Counseling).

Clinical Mental Health Counseling courses that address this specialization are:

Environmental/Specialized Studies (15 hours required, including one 3-hour elective)

- CAHC 524 Clinical Mental Health: Programs, Issues and Practices (3)
- CAHC 532 Evidence-Informed Practices in Counseling (3)
- CAHC 784X Theoretical Foundations of Family Therapy (3)

School Counseling courses required for the Type 73 state certification that address this specialization are:

Environmental/Specialized Studies (15 hours required, including one 3-hour elective)
CAHC 513  Post-Secondary College and Career Counseling (3)
CAHC 521  Counseling with Children (3)
CAHC 523  Secondary School Counseling: Programs, Issues, and Practices (3)
CAHC 570  Consultation and Management in Developmental School Counseling Programs (3)

**Electives in Counseling** (Choose non-required classes below or speak with an advisor to earn approval to substitute another class)

CAHC 521  Counseling with Children (3)
CAHC 594  LGBT Issues in Counseling (3)
CAHC 595  Women and Careers (3)
CAHC 667  Counseling Older People (3)
CAHC 766  Human Sexuality Counseling (3)
CAHC 784X  Theoretical Foundations of Family Therapy (3)
CAHC 590  Workshop in Counseling (varying topics) (3)

**LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE MASTER’S IN COUNSELING PROGRAM**

In addition to the three general program objectives described above, each area of professional preparation has identified more explicit learning outcomes. These specific outcomes are explained in greater detail below. Students who intend on completing their area of specialization in that area are responsible for completing these requirements and outcomes.

**Overall Learning Outcomes for Masters Students**

As a result of participating in this program, students will demonstrate:

- Knowledge of common core areas in counseling.
- The ability to formulate a professional counselor identity by developing professional counseling skills, including general dispositions toward self-reflection, being non-judgmental, openness to supervision, readiness for internship and entering the counseling field.
- Professional counseling qualities of multicultural competence, professional ethics, social justice, and advocacy.
• Knowledge of ACA code of ethics and demonstrate ethical decision-making skills.

• The ability to understand and use the current issue of the DSM system to accurately diagnosis mental disorders, co-occurring disorders, mental illness and disabilities.

• Knowledge and skills in a selected area of professional preparation (Clinical Mental Health or School Counseling).

• Knowledge of professional licensure/certification.

The Clinical Mental Health Area of Professional Preparation

The Clinical Mental Health specialization is designed for students seeking professional counseling positions in agencies that assist clients in resolving psychological disorders and/or developmental issues through crisis intervention, remediation, and/or primary prevention interventions. Thus, counselors-in-training are exposed to a range of educational experiences—through practicum, internships, and specialized studies—that insure they have an appreciation for the diversity of clientele served as well as services and programs provided in these community agencies.

Although the number of elective courses in this area is limited, every effort is made to tailor students’ programs of study to their preferred work setting. Advisors are assigned to assist students to obtain the necessary credentials and experience for entry-level positions. Students are encouraged to develop skills and a knowledge base suited for general counseling and a specialized area of counseling (e.g., substance abuse, family, gerontological counseling). This specialized expertise can be achieved through the judicious selection of elective course work, an internship at an appropriate site, and a post-master’s course work and supervised experience.

Students are expected to seek guidance from their advisor or other faculty whenever questions arise. Faculty members are available for appointments to monitor students’ progress toward practicum, internship, graduation, and post-master’s placement.

Learning Outcomes for Clinical Mental Health Counseling

Counselors-in-training are expected to:

• Develop a professional identity for clinical mental health counseling.

• Exhibit knowledge and understand program development, grant writing, and not-for-profit structures within clinical mental health settings.

• Display the ability to work on multi-disciplinary teams.

• Demonstrate effective counseling skills related to individual, family, community system and group settings required for MS positions in clinical mental health settings.

• Understand the application continuum of care in prevention, early intervention, and treatment across the variety of clinical mental health provider settings.
• Understand the role and responsibilities of counselors in crisis intervention and emergency management response.
• Demonstrate multicultural awareness, knowledge and skills related to serving diverse populations, including intersections of sexuality and addictions.
• Be prepared to serve as an advocate for under-represented populations and to work towards reduction of stigma associated with mental disorders.
• Demonstrate awareness of assessment practices, and the importance of conveying role, procedures and outcomes of assessment in multiculturally and developmentally appropriate client-based terms.
• Understand the link between effective assessment, client engagement, treatment planning and outcome measurement.
• Demonstrate fluency in ability to read, interpret and communicate research findings (evidence-based practices) to clients in various clinical mental health settings.
• Be able to conduct client-based research to find evidence-informed interventions based upon client-based goals and needs.
• Understand and participate in program evaluation, ranging from management of current case documentation, measuring client change, to meta-level reviews for funding sources and accreditation.
• Develop capacity to communicate to clients (and their families) what a diagnosis means and to collaborate and develop client-based treatment goals using evidence-informed practices.

To view the official Clinical Mental Health CACREP standards please click here.

The School Counseling Area of Professional Preparation

The School Counseling specialization consists of course work and experiences that prepare students to do counseling in a school setting. Upon completion of this 60-credit-hour program and fulfillment of other state requirements, students may apply for a Type 73 Certificate in School Counseling. This certification allows students to work as a K-12 school counselor in the State of Illinois. Course work that meets state requirements to become certified school counselors is described above.

Students desiring to be school counselors are trained in the knowledge and skill bases of a comprehensive developmental counseling program that can be implemented at all K-12 educational levels. The program adheres to the American School Counselor Association National Model for school counseling. Students are trained to differentiate their work by paying attention to age-specific developmental stages of growth, tasks, and challenges. Therefore, students are provided with background information and skills to work with school-aged populations in order to develop the educational, social, career, and personal strengths of children and adolescents. Students receive training in the areas of individual and family counseling, referral, small group counseling, large group guidance and counseling, consultation, and coordination. School counselors are professional counselors who not only assist students but also work with parents, administrators, and teachers.
Students who are admitted to the master’s in counseling program and desire to do their area of specialized professional preparation in school counseling must inform their advisor of training or certificates they have in teaching or in education. Students who have teaching certification in the state of Illinois need to complete the 60-hour master’s program, pass the state examination in School Counseling, and be approved through an application to the State Board of Education to be eligible for their Type 73 Certification in School Counseling. However, students who are admitted to the program and DO NOT have an Illinois Teaching Certificate need to take additional coursework in Education before they will be eligible for the Type 73 Certificate in School Counseling. A student's advisor can help determine if prior coursework can be used to address required state standards.

**Learning Outcomes for School Counseling**

School Counselors-in-training are expected to:

- Describe and differentiate the developmental needs of children and adolescents in a pluralistic society, and more specifically utilize local community, social, educational, vocational, and health care resources.

- Demonstrate a brief model for counseling clients and know criteria and procedures for referral of clients who have needs beyond the scope of the school counselor’s level of expertise.

- Write an acceptable management/evaluation plan for a school counseling program for a setting in which they plan to work.

- Utilize the code of ethics and demonstrate the ability to use an ethical decision-making model related to ethical and legal issues in the schools and in the counseling profession.

- Demonstrate throughout their preparation a sensitivity to multicultural and pluralistic issues of school-age populations.

- Demonstrate an ability to use developmentally-responsive approaches (e.g., play therapy, talk therapy, creative arts) in helping children and adolescents.

- Design and implement a developmentally-appropriate classroom guidance curriculum.

- Understand ways to prepare students for college and post-secondary opportunities.

- Describe a K-12 model to assist students with career exploration and preparation.

- Understand ASCA and NACAC codes of ethics and demonstrate application to career and college readiness.

To view the official CACREP standards for school counseling please click [here](#):
ADDITIONAL COURSE WORK FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS-IN-TRAINING WHO DO NOT HAVE A TEACHING CERTIFICATE.

The four areas set forth in the State Rules as required by the State Board of Education are listed below. In addition, the recommended courses at NIU that would satisfy that requirement are also given. However, these courses do not need to be taken at NIU and may be taken at the graduate or undergraduate level, such as at a community college or through an online university. These courses are required for certification but are not part of the master's program in Counseling. Students taking these courses through other institutions should check with school counseling faculty for approval prior to taking the course and should get that approval in writing. School counseling faculty members are also able to answer any additional questions regarding these requirements.

A. State Rules Statement: The structure, organization and operation of the educational system, with emphasis on P-12 schools

   NIU Class **TLCI 500 Curriculum, Instruction, and the Community** or academic transcript proof of an approved equivalent class

B. State Rules Statement: The growth and development of children and youth, and their implications for counseling in schools

   NIU Class **CAHC 521 Counseling Children** (part of the School Counseling Curriculum). EPS 405 Child Development, EPS 406 Adolescent Development, or academic transcript proof of an approved equivalent class

C. State Rules Statement: The diversity of Illinois students and the laws and programs that have been designed to meet their unique needs

   NIU Class **TLSE 557 Systems for Integrating the Exceptional Student in the Regular Classroom** or academic transcript proof of an approved equivalent class

D. State Rules Statement: Effective management of the classroom and the learning process

   NIU Class **TLCI/EPS 550 (2 credits) School Classroom Management** (Special section for school counselors-in-training may be offered when there is a need) or academic transcript proof of an approved equivalent class

CERTIFICATES OF GRADUATE STUDY

To pursue a certificate of graduate study, a student must be admitted to the Graduate School or to the graduate-level classification of student-at-large, and must have the approval of the individual responsible for administration of that certificate. Only courses taken at NIU for graduate credit may be applied toward a certificate, and a GPA of at least 3.00 must be earned in the course work used toward the certificate, all of which must be completed within the six years immediately preceding awarding of the certificate. With the approval of the student’s major department, courses used to satisfy requirements of a certificate may also be applied toward a graduate degree, unless the Graduate Catalog indicates otherwise under the description of the
specific degree or certificate. These certificates typically require 18 graduate credit hours to be selected from specific course options. Visit the graduate certificate website for more details.

SUPERVISED PRACTICUM AND INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES:

An important part of preparation as a counselor includes actual counseling sessions performed under the supervision of a faculty member or experienced counselor. In Practicum in Counseling, CAHC 550, you will see individual clients in the Counseling Laboratory as well as in appropriate settings in the field, and you will co-facilitate a group experience with a counselor from outside the counseling faculty. Only after you have successfully completed practicum, with certain exceptions, will you be allowed to begin Internship in Counseling, CAHC 586. The internship involves completing at least 600 hours of supervised experience in an appropriate professional setting.

Criminal Background Check

The Counseling program requires that all practicum applicants submit to a criminal background check by the Illinois State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (Adam Walsh Child Protection Act) as outlined in the NIU Criminal Background Check Information Sheet (Appendix A) prior to approval for counseling practicum and subsequent internship experiences. This is consistent with the state law that requires Illinois school districts to conduct criminal background investigations of applicants for certified and non-certified positions, including counseling licensure. An applicant whose background check results in a status of "no record" may be admitted into counseling practicum.

General Information about CAHC 550 Counseling Practicum

1. Be sure to refer to the Practicum Handbook regarding policies about Practicum, the Counseling Center, procedures, and other important information.

2. Perhaps the most important guideline is to apply early for Practicum---at least 12 months in advance is recommended. Application forms are created, updated, and submitted via the Tk20 student system. The list of applicants is kept by a Field-Experience Coordinator. Students should make sure their name is on the list for the semester they plan to enroll in practicum. Applications are accepted on a first come, first served basis. If you need to change the semester in which you will complete Practicum, you should contact the Field-Experience Coordinator to be sure there is availability and that your name is added to the new list. Failure to do so may cause you to have to postpone your Practicum experience.

3. Keep in mind that the fall semester is usually the most popular for the 550 practicum. Sometimes more students apply than can be accommodated. You might try to arrange your sequence of classes so that you’re ready for CAHC 550 during a spring semester. CAHC 550 is not offered during the summer session.
4. Students must have completed the required coursework BEFORE being admitted into practicum. Exceptions are rarely made. These courses are PREREQUISITES for CAHC 550:

- CAHC 500
- CAHC 501
- CAHC 511
- CAHC 521 (for school counseling)
- CAHC 525
- CAHC 530
- CAHC 533X
- CAHC 540

5. Toward the end of the fall and spring semesters, the entire counseling faculty reviews all applicants for CAHC 550 who have applied for the following semester. Applicants are reviewed in order to determine: (a) their completion of prerequisite courses, and (b) their overall readiness for a practicum experience. Students’ admission to CAHC 550 may be delayed in order to allow for the completion of prerequisite courses or because the faculty may suggest various developmental or remedial options for students in order to facilitate their readiness for practicum.

6. Students are required to obtain professional liability insurance from the American Counseling Association (ACA), American School Counseling Association (ASCA), or the American Mental Health Counseling Association (AMHCA) before being allowed to work with clients. Liability insurance is included in student membership to these associations. Students must show proof of their insurance at the start of the semester and may not counsel a client without meeting this requirement.

7. In order to satisfy CACREP requirements for practicum experience, a minimum of 40 hours of direct client contact needs to be completed during a master’s program. Client contact requirement is fulfilled by logging 25 counseling hours and a minimum of 15 hours of group counseling during CAHC 550. School specialization practicum counselors will complete 16 individual hours of their total 25 counseling hours required in a school setting. All group sites are to be secured by students including appropriate co-facilitation during all sessions. For school counseling students, the group may be at the same school where individuals are being seen, or the group may be in a different location. It is strongly recommended that these practicum sites be secured several months prior to the semester beginning.

8. All students must attend the Practicum class for the five hours for which they are assigned. Evening classes meet from 4:30 p.m.- 9:30 p.m. Students who are available in the day can be assigned a class from 11:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. Students must make arrangements with work or home responsibilities to be available during class times. Three of these hours are devoted to individual counseling and peer observation, with the remaining time spent on preparation, discussion, and group supervision.

9. Besides the five class hours, one to one and a half additional hours of individual or triadic, face-to-face supervision outside of class is required. Supervision is held on a different day than the class, so students must be prepared to come to campus on a second day of the week
to meet for supervision. Students who are unable to schedule time for supervision meeting may need to postpone Practicum to a semester when a weekly supervision meeting time convenient for both supervisee and supervisor is able to be scheduled.

10. CAHC 550 students are given a detailed orientation of the counseling center. Students are required to follow center, professional, and ethical guidelines, which include: (a) proper operation of mechanical equipment, (b) proper attire and behavior, (c) client scheduling, (d) record-keeping, and (e) maintaining client confidentiality. Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in an unsatisfactory grade for practicum and not being approved to advance into internship. The Community Counseling Training Center (CCTC) works to maintain the highest ethical principles and adheres to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

11. Regardless of the number of hours that have already been completed, all practicum students must be working with between one and three clients in the CCTC during the practicum class time for the entirety of the semester.

12. All other things being equal, the best option for school counseling practicum students is to complete their practicum requirements at the same school where they plan to conduct their internship.

**General Information about CAHC 586 Counseling Internship**

1. Be sure to refer to the Master’s Student Internship Handbook regarding policies about Counseling Internship experiences and expectations for successful completion.

2. An internship is a supervised learning experience designed to provide students with the opportunity to participate in counseling and all the related activities associated with counseling in an actual work setting. Students are able to practice and apply the knowledge and theory acquired in their course work. Therefore, ALL core courses and practicum experiences must be successfully completed before the internship is started. NOTE: the major exception is when students apply for the Teaching Internship to teach CAHC 211. A student who teaches CAHC 211 will receive a maximum of 50 direct service hours and a total of 200 internship hours toward their 600 clock-hour internship minimum.

3. The application deadline for summer and fall internship is January 15th. The application deadline for spring internship is September 15th.

4. Students are required to obtain professional liability insurance from ACA, ASCA, or AMHCA before being allowed to work with clients. Liability insurance is included in student membership to these associations. Students must show proof of their insurance at the start of the semester and may not counsel a client without meeting this requirement.

5. In order to complete the program, each student needs a minimum total of 600 clock hours of internship, 240 of them being direct service hours (see internship handbook for service delineation details).
6. The internship class typically meets on campus every other week during the fall and spring semesters and once a week during summer semester. This class meeting includes professional development activities and discussions regarding internship progress.

7. The major responsibility for finding an internship site belongs to students. Students are encouraged to begin this process early in their program and should consult with their advisors.

   *Note to students specializing in school counseling:* On days when you are performing your internship in the school, you must log a **minimum** of three consecutive clock hours. This requirement affords you an experience that more closely approximates how a school counselor actually functions in his or her position.

8. Currently, each student who has been accepted into the counseling master’s program can receive a tuition waiver for counseling internship credit hour enrollment. **Tuition waiver applications must be completed and returned to the CAHE Department office before you begin internship in order to be considered for the waiver!** Failure to do so means you will not likely receive the tuition waiver for that semester and you will be required to pay full tuition for internship credits. **Tuition waiver applications must be submitted prior to each semester in which a student plans to complete counseling internship credits.**

9. Because there is an abundance of information that pertains to applying for and satisfactorily completing internship students should review the counseling internship handbook for complete details.

**PROGRAM PORTFOLIO AND PRESENTATIONS**

Prior to completing your last semester of internship, you will need to prepare a portfolio presentation. Please review the following portfolio details.

The M.S.Ed. in Counseling program has incorporated **portfolio presentations** as part of the requirements for a student’s **last internship class**. Portfolios are a representative collection of an individual’s work, demonstrating progress, achievements, and personal growth. The overall purpose for implementing portfolios in the counseling program is to provide students an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills, integrate counseling courses and reflect upon growth as professional counselors-in-training.

Portfolio development is an opportunity for students to display and reflect on their various counselor-in-training experiences. The process will help students identify strengths as well as areas of professional development in which they want to continue to grow. Additionally, portfolios provide potential employers with a sample of some of students' best work. The portfolios will serve as a key resource for the counseling program, as they will assist counseling faculty in identifying and meeting needs in the program, as well as respond to feedback from the university program review.
Contents

Following is a brief overview of the portfolio components and evaluation procedures. Many of the counseling instructors incorporate aspects of the portfolio as part of course requirements. Some of the relevant courses are listed after each component.

A. **Resume or curriculum vita.** This should be a summary of students’ academic and professional experiences for distribution to potential employers. Students are encouraged to include workshops attended, presentations at professional conferences, and counseling experiences beyond coursework and internship experiences.

B. **Case description paper.** This paper will include relevant/illustrative information counseling sessions that explicate the prevailing issues and concerns for one client. The counselor-in-training can discuss how his/her own theory of counseling informed counseling processes. The identity of the client should be modified to ensure complete anonymity. Discuss opportunities, challenges, and personalization experiences as a counselor. A case presentation from practicum or internship could suffice here (CAHC 525, 501, 530, 550, 586).

C. **Group work.** Outline and description of a structured counseling/support group that the student has led or co-led that covers student’s knowledge, skills, and awareness in group counseling. Discuss group purpose/treatment goals, opportunities and challenges as a facilitator, and personalization experiences toward group or group work (CAHC 540, 550, 586).

D. **Assessment administration.** Written description of how an assessment instrument was used with a client and the results of those counseling processes that covers student’s knowledge, skills, and awareness of assessment in counseling. (CAHC 533x, 550).

E. **Portfolio Reflection.** This is a summary of students’ entire experience in the Counseling program. Students should incorporate what they have learned that has contributed to their development as a counselor (all core and specialization courses may apply). This paper should include counselor-in-trainings’ personal counseling theory/philosophy. The final portion of this reflection paper should include students’ description of the student’s development during the entire internship experience. This is a detailed 4-6 page (APA style), thoughtfully prepared paper that covers student’s knowledge, skills, and awareness.

Procedures

Students will make an oral presentation on the portfolio contents in the internship seminar during the final planned semester of internship. The student’s site supervisor(s) and advisor can be invited (but not required) to attend the presentation. The university internship supervisor should be informed if interns have formally invited their site supervisor or advisors to their presentation. Students will provide visual and/or interactive components to support their oral presentation. Electronic copies of portfolio contents will be uploaded to the Tk20 system and kept on file with the department.
**Evaluation**

The student's university internship supervisor will grade (satisfactory/unsatisfactory) the portfolio with input from the site supervisor and advisor as needed. For those areas in which a student's portfolio is perceived to be unsatisfactory, the student will be required to modify the portfolio prior to program completion. Students will be provided with the guidelines/rubrics used for evaluation.

**Students will receive details for each portfolio component in the relevant courses. As you develop your portfolio, please feel free to consult with your advisor or any program faculty.**

**Teaching CAHC 211**

CAHC 211, Career Planning/Career Exploration, is an undergraduate course frequently taught by master’s-level counseling students. Current students are given an opportunity to build their teaching and presentation skills by instructing a CAHC 211 section. Master’s students who wish to have this opportunity must successfully complete CAHC 511 (Career Counseling) prior to teaching the 211 sections. Many students who teach 211 have no prior experience in teaching; therefore, classroom management training along with weekly meetings are in place to help new master’s-level instructors develop their teaching skills. Students applying for CAHC 211 teaching internship may complete these internship experiences anytime in their program and the maximum clock-hours of counted toward student’s 600 clock-hour requirement for gradation will not exceed 200 clock-hours. Requirements for teaching CAHC 211 include successful completion of CAHC 511 and application approval from the CAHC 211 program coordinator.

**ENDORSEMENT POLICY**

The counseling faculty will recommend graduates for licensure and employment in those area(s) only for which the graduate has received adequate professional preparation. This policy is consistent with Section F.6.d of the 2005 ACA Code of Ethics which reads:

> Supervisors endorse supervisees for certification, licensure, employment, or completion of an academic or training program only when they believe that supervisees are qualified for the endorsement. Regardless of qualifications, supervisors do not endorse supervisees whom they believe to be impaired in any way that would interfere with the performance of the duties associated with the endorsement. (ACA, 2014, p. 14)

The policy of Counseling Program faculty is to endorse each student in **one area of specialization** during the completion of the Master’s degree in Counseling. Early in student programs planning and in agreement with the advisor, students must indicate one area of specialization. Students’ program plan of study should reflect this decision.

Students who wish to complete additional coursework that relates to other areas of specialization are encouraged to do so after graduating from the program. A full-time student should attempt to graduate from the Master’s program within three years or as quickly as possible for part-time students.
SELECTED UNIVERSITY AND PROGRAM POLICIES

Once admitted to the program, you will want to pay special attention to the following information about being in the Counseling master’s program and a Graduate student at NIU. Each of the subheadings gives you very important policy or procedure information that may pertain to your program completion. Read the material very carefully and if you are unsure about how to proceed, contact your advisor immediately. Failure to know and follow these procedures may cause you difficulties in completing your master’s degree in a timely fashion. The most up to day Graduate School policies and procedures and additional information can always be found on the NIU Graduate Catalog website.

Deferral of Admission

In order to establish their admission, graduate students must enroll in the semester or summer session for which they are admitted, indicated in the letter of admission from the Graduate School. At the discretion of the office of the dean of the Graduate School and with permission of the major department, matriculation may be deferred up to but not beyond one calendar year. The request for deferral of admission must be submitted to the Graduate School, in writing, no later than the end of the academic term for which admission has been granted. If students do not request a deferral of admission, and fail to matriculate (enroll in the term of admission) as required, their admission to that program is canceled. If the student was not already admitted to another graduate program, admission to the Graduate School is also canceled as a result. Provisional admission may not be deferred; the student should instead arrange to provide the missing credentials to permit consideration for unconditional admission in a subsequent term.

Advisement

Students are assigned an advisor when admitted to the program. Courses of study are developed for each student. Students are always responsible for being aware of university policies and regulations affecting their program. Check with your advisor throughout your program.

We recommend that soon after being admitted to the M.S.Ed. in Counseling program students make an appointment with their assigned advisor. Periodic contact with the advisor is also recommended. You will want to discuss with your advisor:

- how student-at-large and transfer courses may be applied to your degree
- completing the Program of Courses form that must be on file
- making plans for practicum and internship courses
- submitting applications for practicum and internship
• career plans for after graduation
• membership in professional counseling associations
• opportunities for graduate assistantships on campus
• a tentative semester-by-semester plan for fulfilling coursework toward your degree
• requirements for licensing and/or certification
• making application for graduation
• making changes to your official program of study
• deciding upon elective courses for your program

While on the topic of advising, it cannot be over-emphasized how important it is for each student to become familiar with the vital information contained in the NIU Graduate Catalog. Information from your advisor can only supplement the material found in the catalog. The catalog is full of information about course descriptions, requirements for degrees, student support services, general regulations, and descriptions of certifications available. Please click here for a copy of this catalog.

Program of Courses

Upon receiving the official letter of admission from the Graduate School, students should consult with the academic counselor to plan their course selection for their first term at NIU. Care should be taken so that selections conform to the requirements of the specific program they wish to pursue in their major department.

Students are urged to consult early in or prior to their first term with their academic counselor to plan an official program of courses. The program of courses must be approved by both the student’s major department and the Graduate School. Prior to registering each term, students should consult with their advisors to address any course selection questions they may have.

The official program of courses form, approved by the major department, must be submitted to the Graduate School no later than the graduation-application deadline for the term for which the student applies for graduation. These forms are completed by the academic counselor with the CAHE Department. [For further information, the student is referred to the section on “The Official Program of Courses” in the current Graduate Catalog.]

Course Rotation

Master’s in counseling courses are offered on a standard course rotation for fall, spring, and summer semesters. Not every course is offered every semester, so careful planning and regular meetings with students’ advisors are recommended. Courses are periodically rotated off-campus at one of three sites, NIU-Rockford, NIU-Hoffman Estates, and NIU-Naperville, but internship
and practicum courses are always on campus. See CAHE department website for current Master’s in counseling course rotation.

Transfer and Student-at-Large Credit

Many applicants take coursework as a student-at-large prior to and during admissions processes. No more than nine semester hours of combined transfer and student-at-large credit hours may be applied to the M.S.Ed. in Counseling degree. If you are interested in taking courses as a student-at-large, we recommend the following courses: for all students: CAHC 500, CAHC 530, EPS 710, or ETR 520 (take the special section for counseling students if possible). NIU’s counseling program, or the NIU program that a course is taught under determines whether or not a course taken at another institution will transfer. Transfer credit procedures are implemented by students in consultation with the academic counselor and faculty after being admitted. It is important to note that core courses in the counseling program may not be transferred. Consult with your advisor on transfer and student-at-large credits.

Permit Courses

You may notice that several courses are designated as permit courses and require a special permit number for registration. These courses are limited to students who have already been admitted into the counseling program. They are not for student-at-large credit. Consult your advisor regarding entrance into permitted course. Under no condition should a student give out a permit number to another student, either in the program or to a student-at-large.

Retention Policy

Counselor education faculty members take seriously the responsibility to admit into professional preparation programs only those individuals who are appropriately qualified for the profession. Faculty members also take seriously the responsibility of mentoring such students once they are admitted, providing support and encouragement toward completion of the desired degree and when necessary, developing remediation plans for students.

Because counseling faculty members have professional and ethical responsibilities to the counseling profession and to future clients, faculty members endeavor to place qualified and quality graduates into the field. Occasionally questions arise regarding the desirability of retaining a given student in the program.

Therefore, for the protection of all involved, faculty members have established the following retention policy to serve as a guide when questions arise regarding retention:

All students are periodically reviewed to assess their academic progress in the program and their personal qualifications as professional counselors in training.

These reviews occur at the following points: after the applicant’s attendance at the Pre-Admission Workshop (PAW); prior to admission to practicum; prior to admission to internship; once annually throughout students’ enrollment in the program and at any time during a student’s enrollment in the program when faculty members may bring a student’s name before the faculty as a whole to discuss that student’s academic and
personal qualifications as they bear on her or his retention in this professional preparation program. That is, because of the sensitive nature and professional counseling and the vulnerability of the populations with whom counselors work, the Counseling Faculty has an ethical gatekeeping responsibility during all courses taught to assess student disposition and appropriateness for advancement throughout the program.

The following levels of action have been delineated to assist students and faculty to resolve questions regarding a student’s progress in the program, appropriateness for the profession, and possible need for remediation, as they pertain to the student being retained in the program:

1. As a first level of action, an individual faculty member and/or the student’s advisor may meet with the student, express their concerns, and seek to establish a plan to remedy the situation before additional corrective actions are necessary.

2. As a second level of action, any faculty member at a meeting of the counseling faculty may raise questions regarding the appropriateness of any student’s progress in the program and to initiate with the faculty as a whole informal discussion of that student’s progress. This discussion may result in the development of remediation strategies that may be implemented by a three-person subcommittee consisting of the student’s advisor and other faculty or professionals who are approved by the faculty.

3. After the subcommittee has been formed and has met with the student, the subcommittee will report back to the faculty as a whole. At this time, the Counseling faculty will decide if further remediation strategies are necessary and, if so, what those strategies should be. The student will then be notified in writing of the faculty decision. The student’s academic advisor will then be responsible each semester (or more often, if necessary) for monitoring the student’s progress according to the remediation plan and reporting such progress back to the Counseling faculty.

4. At this point in the remediation process, the student may make a written appeal to the Coordinator of the Counseling faculty regarding the type of remediation strategies deemed necessary by the faculty.

5. Following such progress report, the faculty as a whole will decide about the retention of the student. If the decision is that the student should be dropped from the program, the student may appeal this decision in writing within 30 days of receipt of the letter regarding the faculty’s decision. This appeal letter should be sent to the CAHE Department Chair who will convene the Committee on Admissions, Retention, and Professional Standards.

6. After studying the appeal, the Committee on Admissions, Retention, and Professional Standards will inform the student in writing regarding its decision.

(Retention policy revised and adopted by Counseling Faculty on February 20, 2003)

In addition to the above policies and procedures, the NIU Graduate Catalog, addressing the issue of retention, states that students are responsible for meeting the professional standards of the College of Education and its respective departments and programs of study.
According to the Graduate Catalog, students are required to (a) remain in good academic standing in the Graduate School, (b) maintain high ethical standards, and (c) demonstrate evidence of functional competency in fulfilling the professional roles required by the discipline.

**Time limit for completing program**

The student must fulfill all requirements for a degree within the six consecutive years immediately preceding the date of the student's graduation from that degree program. This time limit applies to enrollment in all graduate course work used to satisfy degree requirements including work for which transfer credit is allowed.

If an NIU course taken to complete the requirements for the master's degree does not fall within the six-year period allowed for the degree program, the student's major department may require the student to retake the course for credit or may allow the student to demonstrate current knowledge of the subject matter. In the latter case, currency must be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the department offering the course through successful completion of an appropriate examination or other assessment if available from the department. Transfer courses falling outside the limitation of time cannot be used in a graduate program.

(NIU Graduate Catalog, 2015-2016)

**Academic standing**

To remain in good academic standing a graduate student must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.00 in all graduate courses required on the student's program of courses (excluding deficiency courses taken for graduate credit) as well as in all graduate courses taken. The GPA is computed on a cumulative basis, by dividing the total number of grade points by the total number of credit hours that a student has taken in courses earning grade points. The GPA includes any course work taken at NIU for which a student earned graduate credit, but not graduate work taken at other institutions that is accepted toward meeting the requirements of an NIU graduate degree or certificate. Courses in which a student has received I, NR, O, S, WF, or WP are not included in this computation.

Following any academic term at the end of which the cumulative graduate GPA falls below 3.00, the student will be considered on academic probation. A student on academic probation who fails to bring the GPA to the required level of 3.00 upon the completion of an additional 9 semester hours of graduate work, excluding S/U course work but including course work for which a grade of I has been recorded, or upon enrollment in any course work in 3 subsequent terms, will be academically dismissed from the Graduate School. A student on probation who has registered for but not completed 9 or more such additional semester hours, or has enrolled in three terms following the term for which the student was placed on probation, will not be permitted further registration until all grades of I have been removed and the student has achieved good academic standing.

A graduate student or student-at-large who is on academic probation may not carry an overload. A graduate student who has been academically dismissed from the Graduate School may not
register as a student-at-large unless granted academic reinstatement as described in the following section.

A graduate-level student who has accumulated 6 or more semester hours of grades of C-, D, F, U, or WF in graduate course work at NIU will be academically dismissed from the Graduate School, regardless of the student's GPA. If a course is repeated, whether under the special repeat option or otherwise, the grades in both attempts will be considered in determining whether this 6-semester-hour total has been reached.

A graduate student who fails to maintain a GPA of 3.00 in his or her required program of courses for a particular degree may, upon recommendation of the department or program, be subject to termination of admission to that degree program.

A student-at-large must maintain a GPA of at least 3.00 in all graduate course work to be in good academic standing and is subject to the provisions of probation and dismissal as described above.

Although undergraduate course work is not included in the computation of the graduate GPA, it is also expected that graduate students achieve certain levels of competence in undergraduate courses pertinent to their graduate studies at NIU. If a graduate student fails to earn a grade of C or better in an undergraduate course specified as a deficiency course for the student's program, or in course work in English that is required as a consequence of the mandatory testing of English-language proficiency, then upon the recommendation of the department, the student's admission to the corresponding degree program will be terminated. Some programs have higher performance expectations for undergraduate deficiency courses or courses required to remove conditions of admission. Programs communicate such expectations to the student in writing.

Graduate assistants shall be graduate students in good academic standing on the effective dates of their appointments. Assistants will have their appointments terminated if during the term of their appointments they (1) are academically dismissed or (2) fail to achieve good standing after one semester (excluding summer session) on probationary status. If a graduate student is placed on academic probation during the period of appointment, the employing unit may terminate the assistantship at that time.

A student must be in good academic standing in all graduate work taken at NIU at the start of the term for which admission is sought in order to be admitted to any graduate degree program (major) or specialization. A student must be in good academic standing overall and in the degree program in question to be eligible for graduation from the program.

(NIU Graduate Catalog, 2015-2016)

Adhering to Ethics and Professional Behavior

Students enrolled in the counseling program are expected to adhere to the American Counseling Association’s Code of Ethics. Doctoral students and other students involved in counseling supervision are also expected to adhere to the American Counseling Association’s Association for Counselor Education and Supervision Division Best Practices in Clinical Supervision.
Students are expected to become familiar with these documents and their implications to the practice of counseling and supervision. Failure to adhere to the ethical code can result in a student’s dismissal from the program.

Students are expected to adhere to Northern Illinois University’s standards for academic integrity as stated in the current Graduate Catalog. These standards include definitions for plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty.

Students enrolled in the counseling program are expected to maintain professional behavior. These behaviors include class attendance, active class participation, and successful completion of all class assignments. Course instructors should be kept informed of situations that might affect class performance or completion.

**Grading System**

The Graduate School grading system applies to all graduate students taking courses for graduate credit. The graduate grade point average (GPA) is computed by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the total number of credit hours that a student has taken in NIU courses earning grade points. In no case are NIU courses taken for undergraduate or law credit or transfer courses included in the computation of the graduate GPA. Grades and their grade point values are as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades Earning Graduate Credit</th>
<th>Level of Performance</th>
<th>Grade Points Per Semester Hour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Superior</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Satisfactory for courses graded S/U</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades Not Earning Graduate Credit</th>
<th>Level of Performance</th>
<th>Grade Points Per Semester Hour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>Deficient</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Seriously deficient</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory for courses graded S/U</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other transcript entries, with their definition, include the following.
I-Incomplete (see also following section on "Incompletes")
IP-In Progress
WP-Passing at time of withdrawal
WF-Failing at time of withdrawal
O-Audit; no grade and no credit

Students doing less than satisfactory work will be assigned the grade of C-, D, F, or U. Graduate credit is given only for those courses in which a grade of S, or C or better, is earned. A grade of S indicates that the student has performed at a level equivalent to at least a B.

**S/U and IP Grading**

Certain graduate courses are graded on an S/U basis; such grading, however, is restricted to courses titled externship, independent study/research, institute, internship, practicum, seminar, or workshop. Individual students may not elect S and U grading. Other graduate courses are graded on an S/U/IP (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory/In Progress) basis. Thesis and dissertation courses, as well as similar project courses that require completion of work over multiple semesters and that are designated as 699 or 799, are graded on an S/U/IP basis. IP is a neutral grade—that is, the grade does not carry quality points—but IP grades awarded for 699 and 799 count toward the completion of a degree. While a student is working on the thesis, dissertation, or continuing project, a grade of U or IP will be awarded. In the final semester in which the thesis, dissertation, or project is successfully completed, a grade of S will be awarded. Grades of IP previously awarded will remain on the transcript, except in the case of on-going internships or similar courses, as designated in the catalog. In those cases, IP grades must be changed to an appropriate letter grade by the instructor in order for the course to count toward degree. No student may graduate with a U on his or her transcript in such courses.

**Incompletes**

When a student is passing a course yet special circumstances prevent a student's completing the requirements of a course, the instructor may, at her or his discretion, direct that the symbol I (indicating incomplete) be entered in the student's record. When the I is assigned, the instructor will file in the departmental office and in the Graduate School an Incomplete/Reversion Grade Form outlining the work to be completed, the deadline for completion of the work, and the grade that will be awarded if the student fails meet the deadline. In no case may the deadline be later than 120 days after the last day of final examinations during the term for which the incomplete is assigned. The incomplete must be removed within 120 days.

If the instructor does not change the incomplete within the period allowed for resolution, the incomplete (I) will be converted to an F or to the stipulated reversion grade. If no reversion grade is recorded, a grade of F will be awarded at the conclusion of 120 days. An administratively awarded grade, like one assigned by an instructor, may be changed at the discretion of the instructor of record prior to a student's graduation. A student may not graduate with a transcript entry of "I" on his or her record.
Grade Appeals

A graduate-level student may formally appeal a course grade alleged to have been assigned capriciously. The definition of capricious grading is limited to (a) the assignment of a grade to a particular student on some basis other than performance in the course, (b) the assignment of a grade to a particular student by more exacting or demanding standards than were applied to other students in that course, or (c) the assignment of a grade by a substantial departure from the instructor's standards announced during the first fourth of the course. A grade appeal may not be based upon disagreement with the judgment of an instructor in assessing the quality of a student's work. The student must submit a formal written appeal to the departmental Grade Review Board, through the chair of the department offering the course, by the end of the fourth week of the fall or spring semester immediately following the term for which the course grade was assigned. A full description of procedures governing the appeal of allegedly capricious semester grades for graduate-level students may be obtained from the ombudsman, department offices, college offices, and the office of the dean of the Graduate School and online at www.niu.edu/provost2/facpers/appm/III8.htm; and this should be consulted before appealing a grade.

(Academic Reinstatement)

A graduate student or student-at-large who has been academically dismissed may petition for academic reinstatement. Such petitions are acted upon by the Graduate Council Appeals Committee. To submit a request for reinstatement, or for more information about the appeals process, the dismissed student should contact the office of the dean of the Graduate School.

Graduate students or students-at-large who have been academically dismissed from NIU, and who have been absent from the university for ten years or longer, may request consideration for reinstatement under the returning graduate student/student-at-large reinstatement policy. The cumulative GPA of a student reinstated under this policy will be based only on course work attempted after the date of reinstatement. The reinstated student will be considered to be on final academic probation. If upon completion of 9 or more semester hours of graduate-level course work (exclusive of course work graded on an S/U basis but including course work in which a grade of IN or NG has been recorded), or upon enrollment in any course work in three subsequent terms, the new cumulative GPA is below 3.00, a final academic dismissal will be issued to the student.

The student's status upon reinstatement will be governed by that held at the time of dismissal (i.e., graduate student or student-at-large) and prevailing Graduate School policy on reentering graduate students. A former graduate student reinstated to the Graduate School under this reinstatement policy must apply, or reapply, for admission to a desired degree program. All university regulations and program requirements in force at the time of reinstatement will apply to the reinstated student.

(NIU Graduate Catalog, 2015-2016)
Graduation Information

All counseling students must apply for graduation the semester before the student is to graduate. For example, students registering for May graduation sign up in November. Students must submit an application for graduation to the Graduate School. This form must be signed by the student's advisor. After the form has been signed by your advisor, it must be returned to the NIU Bursar’s Office. The Bursar will forward the form on to the Graduate School. After the application is received, a $35 graduation fee will be applied to the student’s account. Students are advised to check with the NIU Graduate School for the exact dates. Failure to submit this form by the exact due date will delay the student's graduation date.

Disability Statement (ADA compliance)

Northern Illinois University will take reasonable steps to ensure that all qualified employees and applicants are treated fairly and equitably, regardless of any physical or mental impairment. The University reserves the right to request verification of an individual's disability. The University will make a reasonable accommodation to all qualified individuals to allow them to perform the essential functions as a student.

Disability Resource Center

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) at NIU has been created to see that qualified individuals who request services are provided appropriate accommodations in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. DRC provides direct support services to students with disabilities and serves as a resource to other offices in the university, which enables them to meet the needs of persons with disabilities more effectively. DRC advocates accessible opportunities by providing a wide range of support services tailored to the individual student, including admissions arrangements, auxiliary aids (interpreters, note-takers, readers, etc.), books in alternative formats, advising/counseling, adapted equipment/computers, special residence hall arrangements, etc. For more information please visit the DRC website at http://niu.edu/disability/

Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy and Complaint Procedures for Employees and Students

Employment and academic decisions that are based solely upon an employee or student's physical or mental disability is prohibited by NIU's Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy and Complaint Procedures for Employees and Students. Retaliation (as defined by the policy) is also considered unlawful and is prohibited by the policy. Any employee or student who experiences and/or witnesses possible acts of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation on the basis of a disability has the right and responsibility to report this activity to the applicable university administrator or to Affirmative Action and Diversity Resources (AADR) immediately. For more information regarding this form of prohibited conduct and the complaint process, please consult the Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy and Complaint Procedures for Employees and Students and applicable appendices located at www.hr.niu.edu.
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON

All members of the university community may consult the Office of the Ombudsperson for neutral and confidential assistance and advice regarding university-related concerns. The office provides assistance for any type of university matter, including academic, financial, housing, consumer, work-related, or interpersonal issues.

Members of the office staff will listen to concerns, discuss options, and offer suggestions and advice from an objective point of view that may assist in the resolution of the concern. Distinctive services of the office include clarification of university policies and procedures, advice regarding appropriate strategic approaches and specific direction, and referral to appropriate individuals and offices on campus.

As designated neutrals, staff members in the office are prohibited from advocating on behalf of any individual, but can suggest others who can serve as potential advocates, if necessary. Due to the strictly confidential nature of communications with the Office of the Ombudsperson, disclosures to the office do not constitute notice to the university.

The Office of the Ombudsperson is located in the Holmes Student Center, Room 601. Services are free of charge and appointments may be made by calling 815-753-1414. Visit the office website www.niu.edu/ombuds for additional information.

(CNIU Graduate Catalog, 2015-2016)

COUNSELING PROGRAM RESOURCES

Community Counseling Training Center (CCTC)

The CCTC, Graham Hall 416, is the training facility for students in the counseling practicum class. During most semesters, four sections of practicum classes serve upwards of 70 clients weekly. Along with NIU’s Counseling & Consultation Services, Couples and Family Clinic, and Psychological Service Center, the CCTC is one of the major counseling resources on the NIU campus. The CCTC contains six counseling rooms, each with a two-way mirror and video recording equipment. Two rooms are connected with in-house telephones to facilitate live supervision. All rooms are linked to a wide-screen monitor in the group conference room, where instructors and practicum counselors can watch a live session occurring in any of the counseling rooms. The CCTC also contains a library of treatment texts, clinical practice guides, and assessment instruments. The CCTC is staffed by a Director and Graduate Assistants.

The Counseling and Career Resource Center

The Counseling and Career Resource Center (CCRC) is located in Graham Hall 427. The CCRC is a primary resource for graduate students who are enrolled in CAHC 511, Career Counseling; for graduate students who are instructors for CAHC 211 Career Planning/Career Exploration; and for undergraduate students who are enrolled in CAHC 211. The CCRC is staffed by the
CCRC Coordinator, one Graduate Assistant, and CAHC 211 graduate intern instructors. The CCRC is typically open morning, afternoon, and evening hours Monday through Thursday. Resources are accessible for both students and instructors, including books, videotapes, computers, assessments, and consultation. Written materials are organized by subjects, including vocational guidance, job search, diversity/gender, career development, and financial aid. Videos are available for instructor use in the classroom. In addition, most CAHC 211 instructors hold their office hours in the CCRC.

**Graduate Assistantships**

Students not admitted to the Graduate School are not eligible to receive graduate assistantships. Also, assistantships do not provide payment of students’ fees. Students who hold assistantship appointments should be prepared to pay the full amount of fees in accordance with published university procedures.

Finding a graduate assistantship requires time and planning. Most offices interview for graduate assistant positions in the spring semester to fill fall semester positions. Because you cannot accept an assistantship until you have been accepted to the counseling program, you may have to negotiate with the potential hiring office to consider your application. Some offices may look for a two-year commitment to the position.

The Graduate School publishes a list of campus departments and offices that hire graduate assistants that is available on the Graduate School website.

The number of graduate assistantships for counseling students within the CAHE department is extremely limited. Additional places to inquire for internships include the Student Housing Offices in Neptune East, University of Resources for Women, the CHANCE program, and the Office of the Ombudsman, to name just a few.

Eligible students may wish to consider applying for a Rhoten A. Smith assistantship. The Rhoten A. Smith Assistantship Program has been established at Northern Illinois University to help provide graduate assistantships to minorities and white women enrolled in graduate programs in which these groups are underrepresented. The program, named in honor of the university’s sixth president, represents part of the institution’s commitment to increasing access to graduate education.

Applications for Graduate Assistantships are available at the CAHE office, Gabel Hall room 200.

**COUNSELING ORGANIZATIONS AT NIU**

All students are encouraged to join our student organizations to become actively involved in the counseling program community and on campus. Through these experiences, students learn more about themselves and the field of professional helping.
Northern Illinois University Counseling Association

The Northern Illinois University Counseling Association (NIUCA) is a chapter of the Illinois Counseling Association, which is a state branch of the American Counseling Association. NIUCA is a not-for-profit organization of counseling and human development professionals and students who are being prepared to practice in education, health care, residential, private practice, community/agency, government, and business/industry settings. This organization is designed for all students in the master’s and doctoral counseling programs at NIU. NIUCA also welcomes students-at-large and students from other helping-related programs on campus.

The mission of NIUCA is to enhance the professional growth and development of counseling students as well as those employed in human service professions. NIUCA seeks to increase a sense of community with the NIU Counseling program.

The benefits of becoming a NIUCA member include:

1. Exposure to current information about trends and changes in the counseling profession.
2. Networking with other chapter members and faculty currently in the field.
3. Sharing with colleagues their ideas, knowledge, and philosophies about counseling.
4. Participating in social and educational activities that promote interaction and friendship among participants.

Past events NIUCA has hosted include speakers on equine therapy, ACA conference preparation, practicum and supervision question and answer sessions, and play therapy presentations. Members have also participated in events such as Challenge Day through participating high schools in the area, and social outings, such as bowling and tailgating. NIUCA is a great way for students to become a part of the NIU community and share with colleagues their ideas, knowledge, and philosophies about counseling. Get connected . . . with NIUCA!

For more information, please visit the NIUCA website. For other questions please contact the faculty advisor: Dr. Charlie Myers at cemyers@niu.edu

Chi Sigma Iota

Chi Sigma Iota is the Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society International.

Purpose - To promote scholarship, research, professionalism, and excellence in counseling and to recognize high attainment in the pursuit of academic and clinical excellence in the field of counseling.

Historical Perspectives - Chi Sigma Iota, the International Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society, was established January 1, 1985, following several months of planning by representatives of the Counselor Education training program at Ohio University and leaders in the U.S. counseling profession. The impetus for forming an international honor society in counseling included a desire to provide recognition for outstanding academic achievement as
well as outstanding service within the counseling profession. The formation of an honor Society was seen as a fruitful avenue to provide a much needed link between students, educators, practitioners, and administrators in various counseling settings who identify themselves as professional counselors, first and foremost.

Benefits of Membership:

Professionalism - CSI values high standards in the relatively young and emerging field of counseling. Along with credentialing, standards, and graduate school accreditation, CSI is striving to define and unify the counseling profession.

Recognition - Recognition for the pursuit of personal excellence is a fundamental purpose of the Society. It is through the efforts of individual members that the collective influence of the Society is realized. In addition to the membership certificate and recognition pin, members are encouraged to wear honor regalia at official functions as both a sign of their accomplishments and continuing commitment to excellence.

Exemplar - The CSI Exemplar is distributed three times a year to all CSI members, and is the main communication for informing members on a variety of professional topics and issues as well as activities of the Society. Its content encourages a commitment to and enthusiasm for academic and professional excellence in counseling.

Leadership Development - Developing leaders for the Society as well as the profession is a part of the CSI mission. The CSI officers, Scholars, and Academy of Leaders for Excellence are a rich source for a variety of leadership development activities. These include occasional papers, articles and workshops focused on leadership. In addition to annual leadership training at the spring conference, CSI leaders conduct leadership training at the chapter level. These activities augment the fellowship and intern programs of the Society.

Annual Conventions - During the spring of each year, CSI meets concurrently with the American Counseling Association (ACA). The annual meeting serves as an ideal time to network with other counseling professionals and students, attend exciting workshops, and recognize outstanding academic and professional achievement. CSI also provides leadership training and related programs at the convention.

Awards - CSI chapters and members are always encouraged to strive for excellence and high achievement. Annual awards and fellowships are given during conventions to further compel students, faculty, and professionals to work for outstanding scholarship and professionalism.

Rho Alpha Kappa Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota at NIU

NIUCA has affiliation with Chi Sigma Iota, the national counseling academic and professional honors society that is open to students in the master’s program. The chapter’s name at NIU is Rho Alpha Kappa.

To be eligible for membership, a student must meet the following eligibility standards:
1. Completion of at least one semester (9-credit hours) of graduate courses
2. Maintaining an overall grade point average of 3.5 or better on a 4.0 scale
3. Professional identity as a counselor

To apply for membership, students must:

1. Complete the application online at www.csi-net.org and submit a $40 fee to Chi Sigma Iota.
2. Turn in a copy of the application to the chapter advisor, Gable Hall, room 201N.
3. Attend an initiation ceremony which takes place once each year.

**Black Counselors Association**

**BCA Mission**

The Black Counselors Association (BCA) is an organization dedicated to academic, scholastic and social excellence and advancement of African American graduate students at Northern Illinois University. The BCA identifies its mission as an organization that provides support and forum for graduate students in the field of counseling. It is the mission of the Black Counselors Association to promote social justice, multicultural competency, and professional networks for African American, as well as other students of color.

We provide opportunities for counseling students to participate in community outreach, mentoring, professional development programs, as well as our Annual Spring Social.

Email: blackcounselors.niu@gmail.com

NIU Huskie Link: https://niu.collegiatelink.net/organization/BCA

**NIU Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counseling**

NIUALGBTIC is comprised of students and professionals in the counseling field. As we seek officially recognized organization status, the vision and mission of the organization is to educate the public and empower people who identify as LGBT+ at intersections of their identities.

**NATIONAL AND STATE COUNSELING ORGANIZATIONS**

Within the American Counseling Association there are 20 divisions. These divisions enhance professional identity and are organized around specific interest and practice areas. The divisions provide professional strength and satisfy the diverse needs of the counseling community.

**Association for Adult Development and Aging (AADA)**

Chartered in 1986, AADA serves as a focal point for information sharing, professional development, and advocacy related to adult development and aging issues; addresses counseling concerns across the lifespan.
Association for Assessment and Research in Counseling (AARC)
Originally the Association for Measurement and Evaluation in Guidance, AARC was chartered in 1965. The purpose of AARC is to promote the effective use of assessment in the counseling profession.

Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling (ACAC)
Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling aims to focus on the training needs of counselors who work with children and adolescents, while also providing professional support to those counselors, whether they are school counselors, play therapists, or counselor educators.

Association for Creativity in Counseling (ACC)
The Association for Creativity in Counseling (ACC) is a forum for counselors, counselor educators, creative arts therapists and counselors in training to explore unique and diverse approaches to counseling. ACC’s goal is to promote greater awareness, advocacy, and understanding of diverse and creative approaches to counseling.

American College Counseling Association (ACCA)
ACCA is one of the newest divisions of the American Counseling Association. Chartered in 1991, the focus of ACCA is to foster student development in colleges, universities, and community colleges.

Association for Counselors and Educators in Government (ACEG)
Originally the Military Educators and Counselors Association, ACEG was chartered in 1984. ACEG is dedicated to counseling clients and their families in local, state, and federal government or in military-related agencies.

Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES)
Originally the National Association of Guidance and Counselor Trainers, ACES was a founding association of ACA in 1952. ACES emphasizes the need for quality education and supervision of counselors for all work settings.

The Association for Humanistic Counseling (AHC)
AHC, formerly C-AHEAD, a founding association of ACA in 1952, provides a forum for the exchange of information about humanistically-oriented counseling practices and promotes changes that reflect the growing body of knowledge about humanistic principles applied to human development and potential.

Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues in Counseling (ALGBTIC)
Educates counselors to the unique needs of client identity development; and a non-threatening counseling environment by aiding in the reduction of stereotypical thinking and homoprejudice.

Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD)
Originally the Association of Non-White Concerns in Personnel and Guidance, AMCD was chartered in 1972. AMCD strives to improve cultural, ethnic and racial empathy and understanding by programs to advance and sustain personal growth.
American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA)
Chartered in 1978, AMHCA represents mental health counselors, advocating for client-access to quality services within the health care industry.

American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA)
ARCA is an organization of rehabilitation counseling practitioners, educators, and students who are concerned with enhancing the development of people with disabilities throughout their life span and in promoting excellence in the rehabilitation counseling profession's practice, research, consultation, and professional development.

American School Counselor Association (ASCA)
Chartered in 1953, ASCA promotes school counseling professionals and interest in activities that affect the personal, educational, and career development of students. ASCA members also work with parents, educators, and community members to provide a positive learning environment.

Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC)
Originally the National Catholic Guidance Conference, ASERVIC was chartered in 1974. ASERVIC is devoted to professionals who believe that spiritual, ethical, religious, and other human values are essential to the full development of the person and to the discipline of counseling.

Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW)
Chartered in 1973, ASGW provides professional leadership in the field of group work, establishes standards for professional training, and supports research and the dissemination of knowledge.

Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ)
CSJ is a community of counselors, counselor educators, graduate students, and school and community leaders who seek equity and an end to oppression and injustice affecting clients, students, counselors, families, communities, schools, workplaces, governments, and other social and institutional systems.

International Association of Addictions and Offender Counselors (IAAOC)
Originally the Public Offender Counselor Association, IAAOC was chartered in 1972. Members of IAAOC advocate the development of effective counseling and rehabilitation programs for people with substance abuse problems, other addictions, and adult and/or juvenile public offenders.

International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors (IAMFC)
Chartered in 1989, IAMFC members help develop healthy family systems through prevention, education, and therapy.

National Career Development Association (NCDA)
Originally the National Vocational Guidance Association, NCDA was one of the founding associations of ACA in 1952. NCDA inspires and empowers the achievement of career and life goals by providing professional development, resources, standards, scientific research, and advocacy.
National Employment Counseling Association (NECA)
NECA was originally the National Employment Counselors Association and was chartered in 1966. The commitment of NECA is to offer professional leadership to people who counsel in employment and/or career development settings.

The Illinois Counseling Association (ICA) is the state chapter of the ACA and may be found at the following link: http://www.ilcounseling.org/

The Illinois School Counseling Association (ISCA) is the state chapter of ASCA and may be found at the following link: http://www.ilschoolcounselor.org/

PROFESSIONAL TESTING FOR LICENSURE

The M.S.Ed counseling specialization programs at NIU are accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP). Graduates, therefore, are eligible to sit for the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) National Counselor Examination (NCE) to become qualified for application as Licensed Professional Counselors in Illinois during their internship or post-graduation. Students must apply approximately six months prior to the examination to be eligible to take it. Announcements are sent-out to students when to contact a faculty to sign up for the NCE. The NCE is administered every October and April on NIU’s campus.

SCHOOL COUNSELING LICENSURE

Applicants and degree candidates should be aware of the information in the NIU Graduate Catalog (2011-2012) that pertains to certification in school counseling:

As of June 1, 2004, a teaching certificate is no longer required in order to become a school counselor in Illinois. At NIU, students must still complete the accredited master’s degree in school counseling. Students who are not teacher credentialed must complete the master’s degree in school counseling and additional course work in education including the following: the structure organization, operation of the education system, with emphasis on P-12 schools; the growth and development of children and youth, and their implications for counseling in schools; the diversity of Illinois students and the laws and programs that have been designed to meet their needs; and the effective management of the classroom and the learning process. Students work with their adviser to determine appropriate courses. Candidates who successfully fulfill the program requirements are eligible to receive faculty recommendation for State of Illinois school counseling certification. (p. 75).

Coursework that satisfies the degree requirements within the school counseling area of professional preparation and that are necessary for Professional Educator License (PEL) with endorsement of School Counselor is described elsewhere in the current NIU Graduate Catalog.
During the last semester of internship, students receive forms to complete to apply for PEL: School Counselor licensure. These forms must be completed and turned in to the counseling office (Gabel 200) during that semester. Besides submitting the paperwork, students must take and pass the Test of Academic Proficiency (TAP) prior to applying for practicum and the School Counselor Content 181 examination prior to applying for internship. Students also need to go online to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and set up an account with the Educator Licensure Information System (ELIS).

**PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING LICENSURE INFORMATION**

All students who graduate from NIU’s counseling program can qualify for the State Licensure Test for Professional Counseling. Students in the Clinical Mental Health as well as the School Counseling areas of specialized preparation are encouraged to take this examination before they graduate. The following section gives specific information on what a license is, how to apply, and what the different levels of licensure mean.

**What is a counseling license?**

A counseling license allows counseling professionals with the proper education, experience, and supervision to offer counseling services to children, adolescents, and adults in Illinois. A counseling license is required to work in a clinical mental health setting. It is not required, but is highly recommended, for individuals working in schools and higher education settings. There are two types of counseling license in Illinois. The first level license is called The Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). The second level license is called the Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC).

**What can I do as a LPC?**

An LPC is a protected title license. This means that when you obtain your LPC, you can call yourself a licensed professional counselor on your resume, on business cards, to your clients, to the general public, to other professionals and in any other way in which professional designations may be used. Individuals who do not have a LPC license cannot call themselves professional counselors.

As a LPC, you can work as a counselor offering professional counseling services to children, adolescents, and adults. You may work in a clinical mental health, school, or higher education setting. You must work under the supervision of a licensed clinical counselor, clinical social worker, psychologist, or psychiatrist. Professional counseling is defined by law as:

> the provision of services to individuals, couples, groups, families, and organizations in any one or more of the fields of professional counseling. Professional counseling includes, but is not limited to: social, emotional, educational, and career testing and evaluation; a professional relationship between a counselor and a client in which the counselor provides assistance in coping with life issues that includes relationships, conflicts, problem solving, decision making, and developmental concerns; and research.
What can't I do as a LPC?

As a LPC, you cannot work in independent practice. This means that you must always receive supervision when you work with clients. It means that you cannot work in a private practice setting.

What do I do to become a LPC?

In order to obtain an LPC license, you must:

- Have a master’s degree in counseling or its equivalent. This means a 60 hour program with at least one course in each of 13 counseling areas. Each course must be 3 credits.
  **CACREP accredited programs automatically meet this education requirement.

- Pass the National Counselors Examination (NCE). There are several ways to apply to take the NCE examination. You can apply for this examination during your last semester in NIU's counseling program. A faculty member will attend your practicum or internship class to register you for the NCE, if you wish to take it at NIU. Or you can wait until after you graduate and register to take the NCE when you apply for your LPC.

- Apply to the Department of Financial & Professional Regulation (IDFPR) for a license.

  Whether you take the NCE through Northern or wait until after you graduate to take the NCE, you must apply to IDFPR for your license. Applications can be found at www.idfpr.com. Click on professional counselor to download an application.

What can I do as a LCPC?

A LCPC is a clinical level license with both title and service protections. This means that when you obtain your LCPC, you can call yourself a licensed clinical professional counselor on your resume, on business cards, to your clients, to the general public, to other professionals and in any other way in which professional designations may be used. Individuals who do not have a LCPC license cannot call themselves clinical professional counselors. They also cannot offer the services of a clinical professional counselor by using another title (psychotherapist, counselor, coach…etc.).

As a LCPC, you can work as a clinical counselor offering professional clinical counseling services to children, adolescents, and adults. You may work in a clinical mental health, school or higher education setting. Clinical professional counseling is defined by law as:

the provision of professional counseling and mental health services, which includes, but is not limited to, the application of clinical counseling theory and techniques to prevent and alleviate mental and emotional disorders and psychopathology and to promote optimal mental health, rehabilitation, treatment, testing, assessment, and evaluation. It
also includes clinical counseling and psychotherapy in a professional relationship to assist individuals, couples, families, groups, and organizations to alleviate emotional disorders, to understand conscious and unconscious motivation, to resolve emotional, relationship, and attitudinal conflicts, and to modify behaviors that interfere with effective emotional, social, adaptive, and intellectual functioning.

_Professional Counselor and Clinical Professional Counselor Licensing Act._ P.A. 92-719, eff. 7-25-02

You can work as a clinical counselor in a private practice setting. You may work, under the law, without supervision. In Illinois, you may also receive reimbursement from third party payers including insurance and managed care companies.

**What do I do to become a LCPC?**

In order to obtain an LCPC license, you must:

- Have a Master’s degree in counseling or its equivalent. This means a 60-hour program with at least one course in 13 counseling areas. Each course must be 3 credits.

  **CACREP accredited programs automatically meet this education requirement.**

- Pass the National Counselors Examination. Many applicants for the LCPC license already have their LPC license, so they have previously taken and passed the NCE. If you have not taken and passed this examination, you must pass it in order to obtain your LCPC license.

- Have 3360 hours of supervised professional counseling work experience and one hour per week of supervision with a qualified supervisor. You must work under the supervision of a licensed clinical counselor, clinical social worker, psychologist, or psychiatrist. This is the equivalent of two years full-time counseling work.

- Pass the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (NCMCH). When you complete your work experience and apply to IDFPR for your license, IDFPR will register you for the NCMCH.

- Apply to the Department of Financial & Professional Regulation (IDFPR) for a license. Applications can be found at [www.idfpr.com](http://www.idfpr.com). Click on clinical professional counselor to download an application.

**After I complete my Master’s in counseling, what type of work setting will help me obtain my LCPC work experience?**

The following work experience requirements should be available to you:

_Counseling work._ This might seem to go without saying, but in order to get the LCPC license, you must be offering counseling services to clients. These services are very broadly defined and include individual, group, and couples/family modalities. Your work can include other counseling-related duties such as teaching classes or doing outreach, but your primary
responsibilities should be to offer counseling services. The work setting doesn't matter. Counseling work can be done in agencies, schools, special programs, hospitals, colleges, clinics, treatment centers as well as a variety of other places.

**Full-time or part-time work.** You can accumulate hours by working part-time, as long as you are doing supervised counseling work. You can use work experience from different settings, but you can’t claim that you work more than full-time (1680 per year is the maximum number of hours you can claim each year). For example, you can work two different part-time counseling jobs, or a full-time non-counseling job (these hours would not count) and a part-time counseling job, but you can't claim that you work a full-time counseling job and a part-time counseling job during the same time period.

**Licensed supervisor.** Your work setting should provide you with a supervisor with a mental health license. This supervisor could be a licensed clinical social worker, a licensed psychologist, licensed psychiatrist or a licensed clinical professional counselor.

**A "real, valid" supervision relationship.** Your supervisor needs to meet with you at least once a week for face-to-face supervision. This relationship should involve diagnosis and developing and reviewing treatment plans as well as treatment interventions. Be careful about this one. Some work settings may offer "counseling services" to clients but do not have a licensed supervisor to help employees get their LCPC license. A site may offer a supervisor without a license and then someone else (with a license) who will "sign-off" on your hours. These work situations should be avoided.

**An agreement regarding work hours and supervision hours.** You might want to work out in advance with your work setting how often a licensed supervisor will meet with you and how many work hours you will accumulate and at what rate.

**The LCPC application paperwork.** Download the application from the website (www.idfpr.com) and have your supervisor periodically document your hours. This way, if you change jobs or your supervisor leaves, the hours are already documented.

**Counseling-related job title.** Often when the board is evaluating an applicant's work experience, it will look at the job title to help determine if the work experience is counseling-related. Be careful about your job title, especially when you are working in a "non-clinical" setting. Job titles like "academic advisor" or "client advocate" or "educator" can create confusion for the board.

**Best counseling practices**- Your work experience prior to obtaining your LCPC license helps socialize you to the profession and becomes the bases for the rest of your professional experiences. Additionally, after you obtain your LCPC license, you will be able to supervise others, if you wish. So you want this work experience to expose you to the "best" counseling work possible. Some work settings, either out of ignorance or neglect, offer services in a less than completely professional manner. Avoid these settings if you can.

**Examination Review Material Information**

The Illinois Mental Health Counselors Association (www.imhca.org) offers review courses for the NCE and the NCMHCE.
Dr. Andrew A. Helwig offers review materials for the NCE (www.counselor-exam-prep.com).

The Encyclopedia of Counseling is also a good review resource for the NCE.

For more extensive review materials, see Counseling Today for several ads.

**Answers to Common Application Questions**

- The applicant completes the general application form & work history (WH).
- Unless you have a license from another state, you do not complete the CT form.
- The applicant completes the Certification of Education (ED) form and sends it to the Registration and Records Department of their university for an official seal.
- For the LCPC license, your supervisor(s) will complete the VE-LPC form.
- If you have not graduated from a CACREP program, you must submit the Professional Counselor Academic Criteria form, transcripts, and course descriptions.
- Application deadlines are on the IDFPR website (www.idfpr.com).

**FINAL COMMENTS**

Welcome to the Counseling program! The faculty hopes that this handbook has answered many of your questions. We encourage you to refer back to it as you make your way through the program. Remember that your academic counselor and faculty advisor are the people designated to help through the process of obtaining your degree. It is important that you contact him or her throughout your course work with the various questions and concerns you may have.

Again, congratulations on this important first step to becoming a professional counselor!
STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & RESPONSIBILITY FORM

I understand that I am responsible for the information presented in the Master of Science in Education (M.S.Ed.) Degree in Counseling Handbook.

I can attest to the following:

• I have reviewed these materials carefully.

• I have discussed concerns or questions with my academic counselor or faculty advisor.

• I understand if I have any future questions concerning these materials, I will ask for clarification from a faculty member or staff advisor.

• I understand that I am responsible for all the policies and information in this handbook as it pertains to my status as a student in the master’s program.

• I am aware that failure to adhere to the information in this handbook could keep me from graduating from this program.

• I will bring any discrepancies of the policies and information in this handbook to my academic counselor or a faculty member as soon as possible.

____________________________________________
Student Printed Name

__________________________________________  ____________
Signature of Student                     Date

____________________________________________
Admission Coordinator

(Original signed form will be filed in student’s record.)
APPENDIX A: Criminal Background Check Protocol

NIU Graduate Counseling Program – Current Students

All applicants who are recommended by faculty for admission into Practicum must successfully pass a criminal background check before being allowed to see clients. The process consists of the following steps:

- If an applicant has already completed and passed a Criminal Background Check through Northern Illinois University for teaching CAHC 211, notify the practicum office at cahc_cctc@niu.edu to have this confirmed.
- If an applicant has already completed and passed a Criminal Background Check through Northern Illinois University through other means (GA or other employment) or other school/agency requiring your CBC for appointment or employment you must have your hiring supervisor send a letter on their company letterhead indicating that in order to have been hired/appointed to your current position you completed and passed a criminal background check. Have the supervisor include the date it was passed and their signature. This letter should be mailed to: Department Chair, 200 Gabel Hall, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115.
- All other applicants must complete and pass the “Non-fingerprint Conviction Information Request Form” or Form ISP6-405B through the Illinois State Police. The fee to process a Non-fingerprint request is $16.00.
- Forms are available in the Community Counseling Training Center in Graham 416 or can be requested either online at http://www.isp.state.il.us/crimhistory/uciaformreq.cfm or by contacting the Illinois State Police at (815) 740-5160.
- When completing the form, applicants must specify that the requested information be sent to the Department Chair, 200 Gabel Hall, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115. A sample form is attached for your convenience.
- These forms are original documents and must not be copied for duplicate submission. If you make a mistake on a form use the means listed above to acquire a new form.
- Always record the Transaction Control Number which is located in the top right-hand corner of the UCIA request form. This number is used in tracking the status of the request form.
- A search will also be undertaken through the Illinois Sex Offender Registry (SOR) and The Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW) through the U.S. Department of Justice. Convictions from any of the sources may prevent admission into the NIU Counseling Program and/or advancement into Practicum.
- Results of the Criminal Background Check must be received by the Department Chair before seeing your first client.

For any additional questions about the process, contact the CCTC office at cahc_cctc@niu.edu or (815) 753-9312. Please note, the Center Director does not have access to any of the criminal background records nor will he ever review. All records are reviewed by the Department Chair.
APPENDIX B: Student Disposition Assessment

Northern Illinois University
M.S.Ed. in Counseling

Student Disposition Assessment
(Adapted from the University of North Carolina-Charlotte’s Department of Counseling)

The Counseling program at Northern Illinois University is responsible for preparing candidates who have the required knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions* to become effective clinical mental health and professional school counselors, as well as counseling advocates and consultants. Therefore, your chosen program of study will prepare you to develop and model the knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected of successful professionals. The CES faculty will evaluate your demonstration of these professional dispositions and provide you with feedback about your progress. Professional dispositions include the attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and nonverbal behaviors as educators interact with students, families, colleagues, and communities. These positive behaviors support student learning and development. They include the ideal of fairness and the belief that all students can learn. The American Counseling Association’s (2014) Code of Ethics articulates the necessary characteristics expected for all counselors- and counselor educators-in-training at Northern Illinois University.

*Dispositions are assessed indirectly, based on candidates’ observable behavior in educational settings (NCATE, 2008).

1. This evaluation is to be used by any faculty member at any time during a candidate’s program of study [and for yearly review].

2. The faculty member who initiates the assessment should schedule a conference with the student to discuss and document the concern.

The student demonstrates:

I. Impact
A. Demonstrates awareness of own impact on others
B. Demonstrates ability to deal with conflict
C. Demonstrates flexibility regarding responding to changing demands in the professional and interpersonal environment.

2. Professional Identity and Continuous Growth
A. Demonstrates openness to new ideas
B. Demonstrates multicultural awareness and sensitivity
C. Accepts and uses feedback
D. Expresses feelings effectively and appropriately
E. Demonstrates professional appearance
F. Cooperates with others
G. Communicates effectively and appropriately
H. Shows initiative and motivation (e.g., meets deadlines, class attendance)

3. Ethics
A. Accepts responsibility for personal actions and behaviors
B. Attends to ethical and legal responsibilities including the ACA Code of Ethics and the NIU’s Student Code of Conduct policy.
C. Discloses any unethical or unlawful activity from the time application was submitted into the program until the end of the program
D. Demonstrates honesty, integrity, fairness, confidentiality, and respect for others
E. Doctoral Students ONLY: Maintains appropriate boundaries when acting in role of instructor or supervisor
F. Doctoral Students ONLY: Understands limits of confidentiality when acting in role of instructor or supervisor