



Northern Illinois University

Your Future. Our Focus.

Master's in Counseling Student Handbook

Counseling and Higher Education | 815-753-1448 | cedu.niu.edu/cahe

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome!	5
Mission Statement for The M.S.Ed. in Counseling Programs	5
The Counseling Faculty.....	5
Program Accreditations.....	8
The College of Education Conceptual Framework	8
Master’s Degree In Counseling	9
Program Goal	10
Program Objectives	10
Objective 1 - Common core courses.....	10
Objective 2 - Experiential courses.....	10
Objective 3 - Specialization courses	10
Learning Outcomes	11
Counseling core.....	11
Clinical mental health counseling	11
School counseling.....	11
General Program Outcomes	11
Outcome Assessment Methods.....	11
Program Information.....	12
Cohort Model	12
Matriculation Requirements	12
Orientation for All Master’s Students.....	12
Coursework.....	12
Common core classes (39 credit hours required).....	12
Clinical practice (9 credit hours).....	13
Clinical mental health counseling specialization courses (6 credit hours).....	13
School counseling courses (9 credit hours)	13
Additional coursework for school counselors-in-training who do not have a teaching certificate/license.....	13
Electives (3-6 credit hours).....	14
Multicultural Counselor Development.....	14
Program Advising	15

Master’s Counseling Practicum	15
Criminal Background Check for Counseling	15
General Information about CAHC 550 Counseling Practicum	17
Master’s Internship	18
Goals of Master’s Internship	19
General Information about CAHC 586 Counseling Internship	20
Liability Insurance	21
Criminal Background check	21
Clinical Mental Health Counseling	21
School Counseling	22
Site Selection and Interviews	23
Applying for Internship	24
School Counseling Specialization: Content Area Test (181)	26
Credit Hours for Internship (CAHC 586) Registration	26
Master’s Internship Attendance Policy	27
Program Portfolio and Presentations	27
Contents	27
Procedures	29
Evaluation	29
Other Professional Development Experiences	29
Teaching CAHC 211	29
Trauma Informed Counseling Certificate	29
Selected University and Program Policies	30
Advisory System	30
Attendance Policy	30
Academic Integrity	31
Grading System	32
Retention, Remediation And Dismissal	34
Retention Policy	34
Remediation	34
Dismissal Policy	35
Student disposition dismissal	35
Student dismissal for academic dishonesty	36

Dismissal Process	37
Time Limitation	37
Disability Statement (ADA compliance)	38
Disability Resource Center	38
Transfer Credit.....	38
Financial Aid	39
Endorsement Policy	40
Professional Educator License.....	40
Licensed Professional Counselor	40
Counseling Organizations at NIU.....	41
Northern Illinois University Counseling Association.....	41
Chi Sigma Iota.....	42
Black Counselors Association.....	44
NIU Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues in Counseling	44
National and State Counseling Organizations.....	44
American Counseling Association (ACA)	44
Student Responsibilities.....	45
Student Responsibility for Obtaining Current University Information.....	45
Final Comments.....	46
APPENDIX A: Student Acknowledgement And Responsibility Form	47
Appendix B: Counseling Student Disposition Assessment	48
Appendix C: Criminal Background Check Protocol	50
APPENDIX B: Criminal Background Check	53

WELCOME!

Congratulations on embarking on an advanced degree in the field of professional counseling. Northern Illinois University (NIU) takes pride in providing master's degree counselor education programs that will prepare students for careers in school counseling and clinical mental health counseling. Throughout this program, students will develop their counseling skills and professionalism.

This handbook is a key resource for you as a student in our school or mental health programs. It provides information that serves as a guide throughout the program and contains key policies, procedures and other important information about successful completion of this program. Thank you for choosing our counseling program to develop your talents and work toward your degree and professional identity.

MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE M.S.ED. IN COUNSELING PROGRAMS

The counseling faculty are committed to preparing multiculturally competent counseling professionals for school, community and higher education settings who can facilitate positive change in the development and interactions of diverse individuals throughout their lifespans. The faculty are also committed to the generation and application of knowledge about counseling and related issues and techniques.

THE COUNSELING FACULTY

The faculty offer 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, Chi Sigma Iota, and the National Board for Certified Counselors.

Suzanne Degges-White, Ph.D., LPC is department chair and professor who received her doctorate in counseling and counselor education, graduate certificate in women's studies, Master of Science in counseling from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Master of Science in counseling, and Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Degges-White is a licensed counselor whose focus includes working with individuals and families facing transitions. Her academic research explores development over the life span with a strong focus on women's relationships and women's developmental transitions. She is currently president of the Association for Adult Development and Aging, a division of the American Counseling Association.

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 is certified in crisis management. Fisher has received specialized training in play therapy, cognitive-behavioral approaches, solution-focused, client-centered, Adlerian psychology and gestalt techniques.

Fisher has a variety of experiences in school and community counseling as well as working with talented underrepresented youth. 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. Fisher consistently presents at national educational, counseling and psychological conferences.

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. Wickman has published articles in the *Journal of Counseling and Development*, *Counselor Education and Supervision*, the *Journal of Media and Communication*, *Counseling and Values*, and *Vistas*. Wickman has also presented workshops and keynote speeches related to counselor education, counseling, advocacy and linguistic analysis at numerous national, regional and state professional conferences. Wickman also facilitates the internationally popular podcast [*Mental Illness in Pop Culture*](#) and organizes annual social justice through service learning trips to Guatemala.

Wickman has a Ph.D. in counselor education and supervision from Southern Illinois University Carbondale, an M.S.Ed. in School Counseling from Eastern Illinois University and B.A. in journalism/Spanish from Northern Illinois University. Wickman is currently president of the Illinois Association for Spiritual, Ethical and Religious Values in Counseling. He is a former president of the Illinois Counseling Association, Illinois School Counselor Association, North Central Association of Counselor Education and Supervision, and Coalition of Illinois Counseling Organizations. Wickman has received the Beverly Brown Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Field of Group Counseling, the Illinois School Counselor Educator of the Year Award, and the Northern Illinois University College of Exceptional Contributions to Teaching Award.

Adam W. Carter, Ph.D., LCPC, CCMHC, NCC, ACS is an assistant professor of counseling, teaches in the CACREP accredited master's and doctoral counseling programs, and is the coordinator of the Trauma-Informed Counseling Graduate Certificate. He received his Ph.D. in counselor education and supervision from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte with an emphasis in multicultural counseling, his Master's in Counseling from UW-Stout, and his bachelor's in education from Berea College.

Carter is licensed as a professional counselor with a supervisor's credential (NC-LPCS), a national certified counselor (NCC), and an approved clinical supervisor (ACS). His clinical experiences are broad having worked as a counselor and supervisor in community mental health clinics, in-home intensive settings, community advocacy agencies and in private practice. Carter's research and presentations focuses on preschool grief reactions, using play therapy with diverse populations, and LGBTQ+ issues in counseling and clinical supervision. In 2014, Carter was one of two inaugural scholars-in-residence with the American Counseling Association and helped developed strategies for empowering clinicians to conduct single-subject design research in community settings.

Melissa J. Fickling, Ph.D., LCPC, NCC, ACS joined the NIU faculty in 2017. She completed her doctoral work in counseling and counselor education in 2015 at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and her master's degree in counseling at Roosevelt University. Her primary research interests are focused on the intersections of work, mental health and meaning. She also does research in the areas of clinical supervision and career counseling. Fickling has practiced professional counseling in higher education, community, and private practice settings and is a licensed clinical professional counselor in Illinois. Her clinical interests include adult career transition, grief and loss, identity, and spiritual issues. She is a member of the editorial review board for the Journal of College Counseling. Fickling was the 2016-2017 Edwin L. Herr fellow for Chi Sigma Iota and currently co-chairs the National Career Development Association's Committee on Diversity Initiatives and Cultural Inclusion.

Dana T. Isawi, Ph.D. is an assistant professor of counseling at Northern Illinois University. She joined NIU in fall 2017. Isawi holds a Ph.D. in counselor education and supervision from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and a master's degree in school counseling from Marymount University. She has experience in teaching a variety of graduate courses in mental health counseling, school counseling and play therapy as well as providing supervision for graduate students. Isawi has clinical experience in the school and community settings both locally and internationally. Her professional experience also includes counseling intervention development, implementation and evaluation.

Isawi's research and presentations focus on multicultural issues in counseling, especially on the traumatic experiences of refugees and counselors working with trauma survivors. Her presentations also focus on cultural considerations in play therapy and in working with families from diverse backgrounds.

Kimberly A. Hart, Ph.D., LPC, PEL:SC, NCC, ACS is the director of the Community Counseling Training Center and Field-based Experiences in counseling. Hart comes to NIU with 10 years of group facilitation experience working with children, adolescents and adults of diverse backgrounds. She 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.

Hart specialized in clinical mental health counseling, school counseling and consultation, clinical supervision in counselor education and mental health first aid.

Hart was the recipient of the Illinois Counselor Educators and Supervisor Site Supervisor of the Year Award in 2018, 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. Hart continues to conduct research on multiculturalism and cultural inclusion among counseling professionals with an emphasis on increasing multicultural consciousness and curiosity. She 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. Hart was elected to the ICA Presidency line of succession in 2017 as president-elect.

PROGRAM ACCREDITATIONS

NIU has systematically met the national standards set for the M.S.Ed. counseling programs. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) has awarded accreditation to the M.S.Ed. programs in counseling at NIU. The M.S.Ed. programs have also been accredited by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA). Receiving a degree from an accredited program acknowledges that students have been taught the necessary skills to work in the counseling field as professional school and/or clinical mental health counselor. The counseling faculty take pride in continuously preparing students for careers in the field of professional counseling. Current and prospective students are urged to log onto the [CACREP website](#) in order to learn more about CACREP's history and mission.

THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

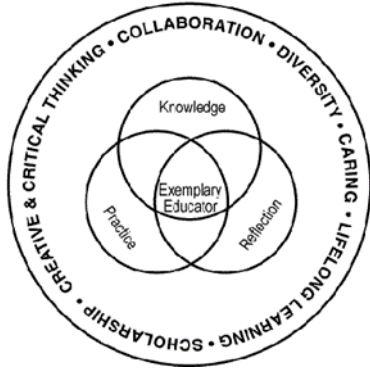
Students should become familiar with the central philosophical and operational principle of the certification programs at NIU. The conceptual framework has three basic tenets that include knowledge, practice and reflection as the building blocks of the exemplary educator.

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 degree 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.

MASTER'S DEGREE IN COUNSELING

Master's students in the counseling program are working toward a degree of Master of Science in education in clinical mental health counseling or Master of Science in education in school counseling. Each student chooses one of two areas of specialized professional preparation when applying to the program. Each specialization includes specific courses related to that area of preparation. Students need to meet with their academic counselor soon after being accepted into the counseling program to determine which courses are necessary for their chosen area of professional preparation. An electronic 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 K-12 schools. This 60-semester hour program consists of three components; 1) Core curriculum, 2) Supervised practicum and internship and, 3) Specialized courses and electives. Students are required to attend three multicultural workshops prior to counseling practicum.

Completion of the school counseling area of professional preparation allows students to apply for a professional educators' license with an endorsement in school

counseling. This license is required for a student to work in the state of Illinois as a professional school counselor. The state of Illinois no longer requires a teaching license as one of the qualifications for school counselor licensure. However, students who are not licensed teachers need coursework in three additional areas (specified below). School counseling candidates must also pass a basic academic skills examination and the state examination for school counseling ILTS content 181 exam. You may need to meet other criteria when applying for the Professional Educator License.

Because NIU's counseling program is CACREP accredited, all graduates are eligible to apply for and take the National Counselor Examination (NCE), which allows applicants to become a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in Illinois. With 3,360 hours of supervised clinical — 1,920 of which are direct contact — and passing the National Clinical Mental Health Exam, you would be eligible to apply for the 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.

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the counseling program faculty and staff is to train and prepare professionals with a counselor identity to work as multicultural ethical counselors and advocates. This goal is achieved through successful completion of all requirements.

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.

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)*

Objective 3 - Specialization courses

Students will demonstrate mastery of knowledge and skills in a selected area of professional preparation (12 hours in clinical mental health counseling or school counseling coursework and electives).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Counseling core

The eight common core areas represent the foundational knowledge required of *all* entry-level counselor education graduates. Therefore, counselor education programs must document where each of the lettered standards listed below is covered in the curriculum (from [CACREP Standards, 2016](#)).

The common core includes the following major domains that all Counseling students are exposed to: professional orientation and identity, counseling ethics, human growth and development, multicultural diversity and social justice issues, diagnosis of mental health concerns, career, theories, helping relationships, group work, assessment, crisis intervention, substance abuse, counseling skills, treatment strategies, and research use in counseling practice.

Clinical mental health counseling

Students who are preparing to specialize as clinical mental health counselors will demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to address a wide variety of circumstances within the context of clinical mental health counseling. Counselor education programs with a specialty area in clinical mental health counseling must document where each of the lettered standards listed below is covered in the curriculum ([CACREP Section 5-C Entry Level Specialty Area – Clinical Mental Health Counseling](#)).

School counseling

Students who are preparing to specialize as school counselors will demonstrate the professional knowledge and skills necessary to promote the academic, career and personal/social development of all P–12 students through data-informed school counseling programs. Counselor education programs with a specialty area in school counseling must document where each of the lettered standards listed below is covered in the curriculum ([CACREP Section 5-G Entry Level Specialty Area – School Counseling](#)).

General Program Outcomes

- Demonstrate knowledge of core training areas in counseling.
- Demonstrate effective counseling competencies.
- Demonstrate general dispositions toward self-reflection and being non-judgmental, and openness to supervision.
- Demonstrate knowledge and skills in a selected area of professional preparation (Clinical Mental Health or School Counseling specialization).
- Demonstrate knowledge of multicultural counseling skills and social justice issues.

Outcome Assessment Methods

- Assignments from core courses (1,4,5)
- Dispositions evaluation (3)
- Counseling Competencies Scale (2,3,5)
- Internship site supervisor evaluation (1-5)

- Portfolio (1,2,3,4)
- Internship Site Supervisor Survey (1-5)
- Graduate Exit Survey (1,4,5)
- Alumni Survey (1,4,5)
- Employer Survey (1-5)
- National Counselor Exam (1)
- Content Exam 181 (4)
- Focus Groups (1,4,5)

PROGRAM INFORMATION

COHORT MODEL

The counseling program is operated as a *quasi-cohort model* program with a new cohort starting each fall. Master's students can choose to enroll full time or part time. However, prescribed courses must be taken accordingly. Please contact your program advisor to develop your program of study.

MATRICULATION REQUIREMENTS

Students may matriculate into the program as early as summer once an admission offer is made and accepted in the spring. Student-at-large enrollment is by instructor permission only. Ongoing matriculation is dependent on successful completion of coursework and maintenance of an adequate GPA.

ORIENTATION FOR ALL MASTER'S STUDENTS

Each fall semester, the counseling faculty will host a master's orientation to the program. This is a required meeting and is held prior to the start of fall classes. At this meeting students meet faculty; learn about program structure, student expectations and community; student and professional organizations in counseling; field experience courses; and get an overview of program requirements and expectations.

COURSEWORK

Both the MS.Ed. in school counseling and the M.S.Ed. in clinical mental health counseling are 60 semester hours, including 39 credit hours from the CACREP Core, nine credit hours of clinical practice, six to nine hours of specialization courses, and three to six credit hours of electives.

Common core classes (39 credit hours required)

- CAHC 500 – Professional Identity and Ethics in Counseling (3)
- CAHC 501 – Diagnosis of Mental Health Issues in Counseling (3)
- CAHC 510 – Counseling Skills across the Life span (3)
- CAHC 511 – Career Counseling (3)

- CAHC 521 – Counseling with Children (3)
CAHC 525 – Counseling Skills and Strategies [not offered in summer] (3)
CAHC 530 – Counseling Theories (3)
CAHC 533X – Standardized Assessment Testing in Counseling (3)
CAHC 540 – Group Counseling (3)

[NOTE: Group Counseling requires 15 additional hours outside of class for students participating in an experiential group]

- CAHC 565 – Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling (3)
CAHC 567 – Substance Use and Addictions in Counseling (3)
CAHC 593 – Crisis Intervention for Counselors (3)
ETR 520 – Introduction to Research Methods in Education (3)

Clinical practice (9 credit hours)

- CAHC 550 – Practicum in Counseling (3)

NOTE: Practicum requires a minimum of 100 clock hours, of which 40 must be direct-contact clock hours; counselors-in-training are required to find a school where they can acquire 20 direct-contact clock hours with student clients.

- CAHC 586 – Counseling Internship (6)

NOTE: Internship requires a minimum of 600 clock hours, of which 240 must be direct-contact hours.

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

Clinical mental health counseling specialization courses (6 credit hours)

- CAHC 524 – Clinical Mental Health: Programs, Issues and Practices (3)
CAHC 784X – Systems, Couples, and Family Counseling (3)

School counseling courses (9 credit hours)

- CAHC 513 – Post-Secondary College and Career Counseling (3)
CAHC 523 – Secondary School Counseling: Programs, Issues, and Practices (3)
CAHC 570 – Consultation and Management in Developmental School Counseling Programs (3)

[Note: Additional courses required for Professional Educators License are listed below.]

Additional coursework for school counselors-in-training who do not have a teaching certificate/license

The four areas set forth in the state rules as required by the [Illinois 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 licensure 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.

1. 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.

2. NIU class **CAHC 521 Counseling Children** (part of the core counseling curriculum).

3. NIU class **CAHC 510 Counseling Skills across the Life span** part of the core counseling curriculum), 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.

4. 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.

5. NIU class **EPS 550 (Elementary; 2 credits) or EPS 552 (Middle and High School; 3 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.

Electives (3-6 credit hours)

See your advisor for electives.

MULTICULTURAL COUNSELOR DEVELOPMENT

Concurrent with program coursework, master's students are expected to attend and participate in a minimum of three training and/or educational workshops focused on multicultural competence. Appropriate workshops are those that infuse training objectives from the 2015 [Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies](#) including; I) Counselor self-awareness, II) Client worldview, III) Counseling relationship, and IV) Counseling and advocacy interventions from diverse multicultural perspectives. (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler and McCullough, 2015.)

PROGRAM ADVISING

When a student is admitted into the program, the student will be assigned a faculty advisor as their program chair. In consultation with their chair, a student shall select their program committee, composed of three counseling faculty members. This committee will assist the student in composing their program, determining internship opportunities and overseeing the student's progress through the doctoral degree. The student, in consort with the chair, should call a program committee meeting early in their first semester to develop their program plan. This written plan must be submitted to the office. A copy is given to the student and to the chair. The program plan must be signed by all members of the committee, and turned in by the end of the first semester of classes.

A student can change the program chair or anyone on the program committee at any time so long as the request for change of advisor form is completed.

Generally, the program committee remains through the completion of comprehensive exams. At the conclusion of comps, a student's committee is disbanded. The student formulates a new committee for their dissertation. The same faculty can remain in this role or the student may select new faculty. A detailed description of the comprehensive exams is given below.

MASTER'S COUNSELING PRACTICUM

An important part of preparation as a counselor includes facilitation of 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 NIU Community Counseling Training Center (CCTC) as well as in appropriate field settings. You may also co-facilitate a counseling, therapy or psychoeducational group with an experienced counselor from outside the counseling faculty. Only after you have successfully completed the practicum experience, 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 FOR COUNSELING

This policy was passed unanimously by the counseling faculty, Feb. 17, 2011. We encourage students to complete their CBC when entering the program, but do not require it. However, current students **MUST** complete the CBC prior to beginning CAHC 550 Practicum in Counseling through completion of CAHC 586 Internship in Counseling courses. Additionally, specific courses in the counseling program may require that a CBC be completed **prior** to taking the class. These classes are CAHC 521 and CAHC 533X. This requirement is based on the fact that counseling students are working with persons who are vulnerable, non-adult minors and/or have increased risk for vulnerability.

The counseling program requires that all practicum applicants submit to a criminal background check. 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.

- An applicant may not be placed in any schools if the background check determines that they have been convicted of criminal behavior that, by law, automatically prohibits them from attaining professional educator licensure in Illinois.
- The offenses that have automatically prohibited licensure include first degree murder, any Class X felony, juvenile pimping, soliciting a juvenile prostitute, exploitation of a child, obscenity, child pornography, criminal sexual assault, aggravated criminal sexual assault, criminal sexual abuse, aggravated criminal sexual abuse, some offenses set forth in the Cannabis Control Act and some crimes defined in the Illinois Controlled Substances Act.
- Applicants whose criminal background check reveals an offense other than these may be recommended for approval if, in the judgment of the program, the offense should not disqualify the individual from obtaining a counseling degree. Applicants are advised that their admission into the counseling program, approval for counseling practicum and advancement to internship does not guarantee professional licensure or certification post-degree. These applicants must follow the additional admission process indicated below.
- Please note that criminal background checks are also conducted as part of the Illinois counseling licensure process. This is a separate evaluation process from NIU’s counseling program and may end in different results. Students who are concerned that their backgrounds may prohibit them from obtaining counseling licensure may contact the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulations for an evaluation prior to applying.

If a student interrupts their program for one semester or longer, a criminal background check may be required upon their reentry. A criminal background check is only good for two years. Thus, completion of more than one background check may be required during the course of a students’ degree program and/or internship experiences.

It generally requires three to six weeks to obtain the results of a fingerprint check. During that period, the student is not permitted to participate in field experiences in the schools.

Applicants are responsible for all fees connected with this procedure. Applicants may retrieve background check forms from the Community Counseling Training Center in Graham 416. Students should indicate the current CAHE department chair as the requester/receiver of background check results. The results of this background check are kept confidential from the counseling faculty. If a positive response is found from the background check, this information is shared with the chair of the Counseling and Higher Education Department and shared with the student.

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Follow-up on the results:

If the student wishes to continue with the program processes, they must send a letter to the department chair indicating that; 1) They are aware that the results of the background check will be shared with the counseling faculty, 2) They wish to still be considered for program completion. This letter can also include any additional information that may be helpful to the faculty in making program decisions.

If the student wishes, they can arrange to meet with the three person committee in addition to submitting a letter to counseling faculty members who will be convened to evaluate the student's program request. If program continuation is denied by the three person committee, the applicant may appeal to the entire counseling faculty. At this point, the entire counseling faculty will evaluate the student and a final decision will be rendered.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT CAHC 550 COUNSELING PRACTICUM

1. Be sure to refer to the CCTC handbook regarding policies about practicum, the [Community Counseling Training Center](#) (CCTC), procedures and other important information.
2. Perhaps the most important guideline is to apply early for practicum. Application forms are created, updated and submitted to the CCTC director. 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 CCTC 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. Students must have completed prerequisite coursework before starting practicum.
4. Students are required to obtain professional liability insurance from the American Counseling Association (ACA), American School Counseling Association (ASCA), American Mental Health Counseling Association (AMHCA) or an approved alternative 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. Toward the end of the fall and spring semesters, the entire counseling faculty reviews all applicants for CAHC 550 who have applied for practicum the following semester. Applicants are reviewed to determine; a) Their completion of prerequisite courses, and b) Their overall readiness for a practicum experience. Practicum admission 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 to facilitate their readiness for practicum.

6. To satisfy CACREP practicum requirements, a minimum of 40 hours of direct client contact needs to be completed. School specialization practicum counselors will complete 20 of their total 40 counseling hours working with school-aged clients in a school setting. It is strongly recommended that these practicum sites be secured **by the student** several months prior to the semester beginning.
7. Besides class hours, consider group supervision (one-and-a-half to two hours), individual or triadic (one to one-and-a-half additional hours), face-to-face supervision outside of seminar class is required. Supervision may be held on a different day than the class. 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 is convenient for both supervisee and supervisor is able to be scheduled.
8. CAHC 550 practicum counselors 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 technological 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 the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
9. Regardless of the number of hours that have already been completed, all practicum counselors must be working with between one and three clients in the CCTC during the practicum class time for the entirety of the semester.
10. All other things being equal, the best option school practicum counselors are to complete their practicum requirements at the same facility where they plan to conduct their internship.

MASTER'S INTERNSHIP

An internship is defined as a supervised learning experience designed to provide students with opportunities to implement knowledge and theory acquired through coursework in actual work settings. Therefore, **the core curriculum and other practical coursework must be completed before internship experiences are started.**

The counseling internship program at NIU is part of the nationally accredited CACREP program. CACREP regards internship as a distinctly defined, post-practicum supervised clinical experience intended to enable counselors-in-training to refine and enhance basic counseling or student development skills, and integrate

professional knowledge and skills appropriate to students' area of specialization and initial post-graduation professional placement.

The nature and placement of the internship is determined by students' career goals and area of specialization. Counselors-in-training are expected to identify and complete internship experiences in a setting that is congruent with their designated specialization. Because of the diversity of career goals, student characteristics and unique learning experiences of each student, internship experiences must be individually developed. It is your responsibility to do this in cooperation with your advisor, the internship coordinator and the site supervisor. Placement sites must be able to provide the diverse and comprehensive experience needed for a successful internship experience.

Students must complete 600 clock hours of counseling internship, of which 240 of those hours must qualify as direct service hours in which the intern is providing counseling and counseling-related services to clients or directly on-behalf of clients. Students must complete at least 400 cumulative internship hours in their degree specialization setting and at least 300 cumulative internship hours at their primary internship site.

GOALS OF MASTER'S INTERNSHIP

Through the internship experience, counselors-in-training should learn and experience, under supervision, the roles and responsibilities of professionals employed at the site. In addition, counselors-in-training will have specific professional goals to fulfill during internship experiences. A plan to meet these goals will be developed jointly with the site supervisor and counselors-in-training, with the assistance of the university supervisor as necessary. **Although the goals of individual counselors-in-training will vary, basic internship requirements outlined by the counseling program must also be addressed and included in the student's internship plans:**

- ❖ Learning about client characteristics of individuals served by institutions offering counseling services, including, but not limited to the effects of socioeconomic status, unemployment, aging, gender, sexual orientation and sexual preferences, spiritual and/or religious values, race, ethnicity, chronic illness, developmental transitions, interpersonal needs, family context and community violence.
- ❖ Learning about organizational, fiscal and legal dimensions of the institutions and settings in which counselors practice.
- ❖ Understanding the theories and techniques of conducting needs assessment to design, implement and evaluate counseling interventions, programs and systems.
- ❖ Understanding the principles of program development and service delivery for clientele based on assumptions of normal development, including, but not

limited to prevention, implementation of support groups, peer facilitation, training, parent education, career information and counseling, and encouragement of self-help.

- ❖ Exploring roles of counselors in a variety of practice settings and relationships between counselors and other professionals in these settings.
- ❖ Exploring the requirements for operation, management and support of counseling programs/agencies.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT CAHC 586 COUNSELING INTERNSHIP

1. The application deadline for summer and fall internship is Jan. 15. The application deadline for spring internship is Sept. 15.
2. Students are required to obtain professional liability insurance from ACA, ASCA or AMHCA (or other approved entity) 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.
3. In order to complete the program, each student needs a minimum total of 600 clock hours of internship, 240 of the total clock hours must be direct service hours.
4. The internship supervision seminar class typically meets every other week during the semester. These seminar meetings includes professional development activities, counseling consultation, and discussions regarding internship progress.
5. The major responsibility for securing placement at an approved internship site with an approved site supervisor belongs to students. Students are encouraged to begin this process early in their program and should consult with their advisors.

Note that approved sites include (a) locations in which all required and most recommended counseling experiences can be completed and (b) where sample audio recordings of individual counseling can be completed.

Note that an approved site supervisor must (a) hold an earned master's degree in counseling or counseling-related degree program, (b) have a minimum of two years counseling experiences, (c) hold active counseling licensure (LPC, LCPC, LCSW, Licensed Psychologists; PEL:SC required for school internship site supervisors), (d) demonstrate training in clinical supervision, (e) be available to provide an average of 1 hour of weekly individual supervision for all NIU interns on their counselor load, and (f) demonstrate knowledge and agreement to participate in counseling program expectations, requirements, and evaluation procedures.

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 their position.

6. Because there is an abundance of information that pertains to applying for and satisfactorily completing internship, students should consult with their academic advisor, counseling faculty mentor, and/or the counseling field-experience coordinator regarding information presented in this handbook.

LIABILITY INSURANCE

Counseling interns are required to have professional liability insurance prior to participation in the internship experience. You must have a policy that provides a minimum liability of \$1 million per incident and \$1 million per annual aggregate. Professional liability insurance is offered to student members of many professional organizations (i.e., ACA, ASCA). You may not start collecting internship hours until proof of insurance has been verified by the internship coordinator.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

Please see the criminal background check information above. Students may be subject to completion of a post-practicum background check under unique circumstances such as time off between practicum and internship, related student investigation and/or specific requirements of an internship site.

CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

Required experiences

- ❖ Intake evaluation: Conducting an intake interview and mental health history for planning counseling interventions.
- ❖ Counseling intervention: Provide individual and group counseling under supervision with diverse client populations that represent the demographic diversity of the agency community.
- ❖ Clinical assessment: Complete at least one biopsychosocial and/or formal mental status client assessments with at least three different clients.
- ❖ Consultation: Document interactions with third-party providers or other agency professionals and how the issues were handled. Consult at with a partner, parent, family member or teacher about a client concern.
- ❖ Crisis response: Review the crisis protocol for your agency. Discuss with your supervisor your role as a counselor-in-training when there is a crisis. Discuss suicide assessment and hospitalization policies at your agency and when applicable initiate client dialogs about suicide ideation in sessions.
- ❖ Client advocacy and/or professional advocacy: Practice effective strategies for client advocacy in public policy and government relations issues.

- ❖ Program evaluation: Create an evaluation plan (conduct if possible) relevant to agency's service delivery including marketing, intake procedures, referral processes, interventions, client follow-up and outcomes, provider training and continued development, provider wellness and efficacy, and other relevant program efficacy and sustainability measures.
- ❖ Professional development: Participate in learning seminars and workshops that are provided for site personnel or attend outside conferences/workshops designed for practicing professionals.

Recommended experiences

- ❖ After-hours/on-call response: Complete at least one on-call shift (as defined by agency policy and procedures) under agency supervision.
- ❖ Case conference/staffing: Observe, participate-in and co-facilitate case presentations and staffing discussions.
- ❖ Community outreach: Observe and participate in community intervention and education characteristic of human service programs and networks in local community (public, private, and volunteer).
- ❖ Case management: Implement effective strategies for promoting client understanding of and access to community resources.
- ❖ Curriculum development: Create or revise (facilitate if possible) at least one prevention group topic relevant to the agency's service provisions. Have someone observe the session and gather feedback from observer. If possible, collect feedback form participants.

SCHOOL COUNSELING

Required experiences

- ❖ Classroom curriculum: Teach at least one developmental counseling class on a topic from one of the three domains. Have someone observe the session and gather feedback from observer. Class presentation may come from your curriculum project. Optional: Collect feedback from students on the session.
- ❖ Group experience: Lead a minimum of four group sessions with a co-leader or on your own. Write up a brief report on the type of group and pertinent information about the group. Optional: Get feedback from group members.
- ❖ Exceptional students: Attend at least two IEP or 504 meetings and discuss with your supervisor the different roles of stakeholders.
- ❖ Assessment and/or evaluation: Spend time talking with your supervisor about doing an assessment at your school that will help bring information about student (or faculty or parent) need to the attention of your counseling program. Build upon what you learned in class. Organize, design, total your findings and report them to the chair or supervisor of the counseling program. Document this on your time sheet and with your university supervisor. Discuss what

counselors could do to respond to these needs. Optional: Present this to the principal of the school.

- ❖ Consultation: Document interactions with parents and how the issues were handled. Consult at least once with a teacher over a student/classroom concern.
- ❖ Career counseling: Conduct at least three career counseling sessions. Do these conjointly if necessary. Discuss this experience with your supervisor and in your journals.
- ❖ Crisis plan: Read the crisis plan for your school. Discuss with your supervisor what your role is as a counselor when there is a crisis. Document that you have done this with your university supervisor.
- ❖ Suicide response: Discover what the protocol is for students who are suicidal or talk about suicide ideation in a session. Discuss this with your supervisor.
- ❖ Classroom/teacher visits: Visit at least two representative classes in your school to familiarize yourself with what you don't know about curriculum. Write about these in your journal. You must visit at least two classrooms from varying arenas such as vocational education, physical education, special education, dual credit courses, etc.
- ❖ College counseling: Meet with at least three students to discuss college planning. Write about these in your journal. Consider what resources you need to do this effectively.

Recommended experiences

- ❖ Systems support: Review with supervisor the management activities that establish, maintain and enhance the total guidance and counseling program. Participate in meetings, plans or evaluations of such supports if possible.
- ❖ Educational and employability planning: Administer and interpreting test and inventory results, and assist students with school-to-work transition planning.
- ❖ Professional development: Participate in service training activities, counseling staff meetings and relevant teacher in-service meetings. Attend outside conferences or workshops designed for professional school counselors.

SITE SELECTION AND INTERVIEWS

You and your faculty advisor cooperatively select appropriate agencies/educational settings for interviewing. Personal and professional counseling goals and the goals of the university program are considered carefully. You should discuss internship goals, career aspirations and potential sites with your advisor up to one year prior to the actual beginning of internship experiences.

Lists of counseling internships where previous interns have worked may be reviewed and discussed. The approval of internship sites is based upon the ability of the site to

meet or exceed the CACREP standards and counseling program expectations. These include the kinds of experiences offered, the quality of supervision, the quality of support provided to counselors-in-training and the ability of the site to provide sufficient working hours.

Counseling interns work in a variety of internship sites. Sites may include substance abuse counseling centers, community mental health agencies, universities and community colleges, youth services agencies, K-12 schools, career centers and others counseling provider settings. You are encouraged to interview with supervisors from more than one setting to insure compatibility between your goals and the potential experience in the setting. You need to prepare carefully for the interview just as you would for permanent employment searches. You should prepare the following materials for your internship site application and to take to internship interview for site supervisors/directors:

1. Cover letter that clarifies professional goals and career interests.
2. Résumé outlining education, training, professional experiences and transferable skills.

Some sites may require initial placement contact from university faculty or staff; however, the faculty does not place counselors-in-training with internship sites. The advisor and internship coordinator must approve sites, although it is the responsibility of the site and/or site supervisor to accept or reject prospective interns.

Policy on internships in private practice settings

Master's students in the NIU counseling program are not permitted to use private practice site placements for completion of counseling internship experiences. A private practice is defined by the Professional Counselor and Clinical Professional Counselor Licensing and Practice Act (2012) in the state of Illinois as:

“Independent private practice of clinical professional counseling means the application of clinical professional counseling knowledge and skills by a licensed clinical professional counselor who regulates and is responsible for their own practice or treatment procedures.”

If students are unsure if their desired site location qualifies as private practice, they should request a meeting with their advisor and/or the internship coordinator to consult on the appropriateness of an internship site.

APPLYING FOR INTERNSHIP

You must complete the counseling internship application and submit it to the internship committee via Blackboard NIU Counseling Program Community. Applications are reviewed by the full faculty.

- Fill out Part One of the CAHC 586 Internship Application before the semester deadlines below. We use part one to verify students' intent to register for internship.

- **Summer/fall internship — NO LATER THAN JAN. 15.**
- **Spring internship — NO LATER THAN SEPT. 15.**
- School Counseling Part One applications should include the attachment of their passing Content 181 scores.
- Submission of the Part Two internship application is required before registration permits for MyNIU enrollment will be issued. Typical permit submission deadlines are Dec. 15 for spring semester and May 15 for summer/fall semesters.
- If you intend to begin internship before the start of NIU internship seminar meetings, you must notify your advisor and university supervisor in writing to inform the department of your plans, and your site supervisor must sign a letter on their agency/school letterhead. Interns must attach this to the Blackboard Community MEd Internship page. This letter is to express the site's willingness to take full responsibility for you and your clinical work during that time frame. Your internship plan agreement must detail the date your internship will officially begin.
- Complete an internship plan agreement before your internship begins. You should meet with your site supervisor to develop your plan. This plan should be as specific as possible, including time you will spend at on-site, various activities in which you intend to participate, outside events that you plan on attending, plans to complete required internship experiences and other goals and objectives.
- Enroll for one credit hour of CAHC 586 per every 100 clock hours you intend to complete at your internship site for the semester.

NOTE: Internship applications, plans, hours tracking, live observations, evaluations and other internship documentation must be completed separately for each semester in which counselors-in-training intend to enroll in CAHC 586 internship.

NOTE: If you complete internship at two sites, you must complete two separate plans, two separate sets of hours tracking, and have midterm and final evaluations completed by both site supervisors.

NOTE: Although you may use the same plan contents if continuing at the same internship site beyond one semester, (provided you are performing the same duties/activities), you must provide new copies with amended dates for the specific and current NIU semester. If any duties change, or if you are going to a new site, you must create a new plan.

NOTE: School counseling interns must commit themselves to a minimum of three consecutive hours per day at their site. Occasionally, school counseling students opt to perform 200 internship hours at an agency that serves youth.

SCHOOL COUNSELING SPECIALIZATION: CONTENT AREA TEST (181)

According to [Public Act 097-0607: An Act Concerning Education](#), as of July 1, 2012:

All applicants seeking a state license shall be required to pass a test of content area knowledge for each area of endorsement for which there is an applicable test. There shall be no exception to this requirement. No candidate shall be allowed to student teach, serve as the teacher of record or begin an internship or residency required for licensure until he or she has passed the applicable content area test (Sec. 21B-30; d).

School counseling interns are subject to teacher law in Illinois and must complete and pass the Content 181 Test for school counselors prior to the start of counseling internship. NIU's counseling program policy is that students **pass the Content 181 exam prior to submitting application for internship** (see above for internship application deadlines). See visit our [counseling student resources licensure and certification webpage](#) for frequently asked questions about school counselor examinations (basic skills and Content 181) and licensure preparations.

CREDIT HOURS FOR INTERNSHIP (CAHC 586) REGISTRATION

Six hundred clock-hours of involvement in counseling and counseling-related activities are required for completion of the internship. In some cases, more than one semester will be required. For registration purposes, one credit hour equals 100 clock hours. For example, if a student only expects to complete 300 clock hours of internship in one semester, that student would register for three credit hours. A permit number is required to register for enrollment in CAHC 586 courses. Each semester after internship applications are approved, accepted applicants will receive internship acceptance materials including their enrollment permission number.

Internship acceptance and permit numbers may be distributed up to 30 days after NIU's open enrollment period begins. Applicants do not need to worry about being locked-out of CAHC 586 sections for which they were approved. However, once permit numbers are distributed to students, it is imperative that students enroll in their approve course sections within five days otherwise the course may be dropped all together.

Counselors-in-training must be enrolled for at least one credit hour of internship seminar (CAHC 586) whenever they are accruing internship experience. If a student requests a temporary incomplete due to nonfulfillment of credit hour enrollment for the previous semester, the intern, advisor, site supervisor and university supervisor must communicate on the expected contract extension for fulfilling incomplete contract hours. If interns are not able to fulfill incomplete contract hours before the start of the next NIU semester the intern must enroll for at least one credit hour of internship seminar and complete required university responsibilities as arranged with the interns' advisor and university supervisor.

MASTER'S INTERNSHIP ATTENDANCE POLICY

During each semester interns are enrolled for internship credit, students must attend internship seminar meetings that are typically held on Tuesday nights. Summer internship seminars typically meet weekly, while fall and spring seminar meetings are typically biweekly. Failure to attend the seminar may result in an unsatisfactory grade for that semester of internship, even if the student is doing satisfactory work at their site. Absences will be monitored by instructor and make-up work may be required for missed sessions.

As noted above, students are strongly encouraged to complete their area of counseling specialization internship over the course of at least two semesters (even if 211 internship was previously completed). Students who have completed at least two full semesters at the same site and/or are not contracted with their site(s) for a full NIU internship semester may petition for modification of seminar attendance policies based on instructor's decision in consultation with the intern's program advisor. The student is required to develop a plan with the instructor that may include not attending the seminar during part of the semester.

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 master's 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 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.

Résumé. A résumé should be a formally structured 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.

Theory/individual counseling. A theory paper will include relevant/illustrative information of counseling sessions that explicate the prevailing issues and concerns for one individual client. Briefly delineate client description, presenting concerns and conceptualization. The identity of the client should be modified to ensure complete anonymity. The counselor's theoretical orientation will be defined, including relevant reference citations. Discuss how their own theory of counseling informed counseling processes. APA writing style mechanics should be utilized. A revised client case report from practicum or internship may suffice here (draw from CAHC 525, 501, 530, 550, 586).

Group counseling. A group counseling paper is an outline and description of a structured counseling/support group that the counselor-in-training has led or co-led. The contents will cover the counselors' knowledge, skills and awareness in group counseling processes and strategies. Include reflections of group work, facilitator development and co-facilitation processes (if applicable). Counselors can draw from CAHC 540, 550, 586 courses.

Assessment administration. An assessment interpretation paper is a written description of how an assessment instrument was chosen and administered with a client, including results of those counseling processes that covers student's knowledge, skills and awareness of assessment in counseling. Client choice, interpretation and outcomes of counseling process will be articulated. The counselor-in-training will report what knowledge, skills and awareness of assessment in counseling were implemented and what developmental areas in assessment administration are still needed. A revised submission of an assessment report from CAHC 533x or 550 would be appropriate.

Program reflection. A program reflection paper is a critical reflective summary of student's 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 counselors'-in-training personal counseling theory/philosophy. At least one full-page should be dedicated to student's multicultural development and reactions to at least three events that were focused on multicultural development and/or multicultural competence, which the student attended. 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 five- to seven-page (APA style), thoughtfully prepared paper that covers student's knowledge, skills and awareness. The conclusion may include the next phase and processes of counselor development and potential employment pursuits.

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 Blackboard and kept on file with the department.

EVALUATION

Internship supervisors grade (satisfactory/unsatisfactory) portfolios with input from site supervisors and advisors 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 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.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES

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 CAHC 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 experiences may complete this work anytime in their program. Requirements for teaching CAHC 211 include successful completion of CAHC 511 and application approval from the CAHC 211 program coordinator. See Professor Melissa Fickling for details.

TRAUMA INFORMED COUNSELING CERTIFICATE

The certificate of graduate study in trauma-informed counseling is available online to any graduate-level student in good standing. This certificate is designed to prepare or enhance master's- or doctoral-level clinicians in various agency and treatment contexts. Courses focus on understanding elements of traumatic exposure, common

threads of treatment and outcomes, trauma-sensitive care and organizational commitment, crisis intervention, and developmental, exposure-based, experiential and cognitive-behavioral approaches for multiculturally relevant treatment across the life span. All courses are online. See Professor Adam Carter for details.

Requirements:

- CAHC 593: Crisis Intervention (3 credits).
- CAHC 715: Concepts in Trauma-Informed Counseling (3 credits).
- CAHC 716: Counseling for Complex Trauma (3 credits).

One of the following:

- CAHC 717: Creative and Experiential Approaches in Trauma-Informed Counseling (3 credits).
- CAHC 718: Resiliency and Wellness in Trauma-Informed Counseling (3 credits).
- CAHC 590/719: Counseling for Grief and Loss (3 credits).

SELECTED UNIVERSITY AND PROGRAM POLICIES

ADVISORY SYSTEM

Each student is assigned by their major department an advisor or advisory committee whose purpose is to guide the student's studies and recommend them for the degree when the student is properly qualified. A program of study is formulated by the student, in consultation with the departmentally assigned advisor or advisory committee. See "The Program of Study" for details.

Departmental advisors can assist students in understanding and satisfying departmental and university requirements. However, they are not responsible for informing students of published regulations, such as those in the Graduate School catalog, nor, except as explicitly provided in the catalog, do they have the authority to modify those requirements (see the current [NIU Graduate School](#) catalog).

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are encouraged to attend classes regularly, but individual instructors determine attendance policies for their own classes. The university recognizes that on occasion examinations or other scheduled academic activities may conflict with the religious observances of some members of the academic community, and accordingly encourages the instructional and administrative staff to make reasonable accommodations to minimize the resulting difficulties for individuals concerned. Students faced with such conflicts should notify the appropriate instructor or administrative area as much in advance of the examination or other activity creating the conflict as possible. Students believing that they have been unreasonably denied an educational benefit due to their religious beliefs or practices may bring the matter to the attention of the department chair for resolution. If for any reason this route would not be appropriate, the matter may be brought to the college dean or dean's designee.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Good academic work must be based on honesty. The attempt of any student to present as their own work that which they have not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense. Students are considered to have cheated, for example, if they copy the work of another or use unauthorized notes or other aids during an examination, or turn in as their own a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else. Students are guilty of plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines or other sources without identifying and acknowledging those sources or if they paraphrase ideas from such sources without acknowledging them. Students guilty of, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university.

A faculty member has original jurisdiction over any instances of academic misconduct that occur in a course which the faculty member is teaching. The student shall be given the opportunity to resolve the matter in meetings with the faculty member and the department chair. If the facts of the incident are not disputed by the student, the faculty member may elect to resolve the matter at that level by levying a sanction no greater than an F for that course. The faculty member shall notify the student in writing whenever such action is taken, and the Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct shall receive a copy of the Academic Misconduct Incident Report indicating final disposition of the case, which will be placed in the student's judicial file. In all matters where the charge of academic misconduct is disputed by the student or if the faculty member feels a sanction greater than an F in the course is appropriate (such as repeated offenses or flagrant violations), the faculty member shall refer the matter to the Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct, making use of the Academic Misconduct Incident Report. Additional sanctions greater than an F in a course can be levied only through the system of due process established and overseen by the Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct or through the university's research misconduct procedures noted below. Suspension or dismissal from the university for academic misconduct will result in a notation of that action on the transcript of a graduate-level student.

The university has adopted additional policies and procedures for dealing with research misconduct among its students, faculty and staff. The guidelines, entitled Research Integrity at Northern Illinois University, are available in department offices, in the [office of the dean of the Graduate School](#), and [online](#), and pertain to the intentional commission of any of the following acts: falsification of data, improper assignment of authorship, claiming another person's work as one's own, unprofessional manipulation of experiments or of research procedures, and misappropriation of research funds.

If a graduate student fails to maintain the standards of academic or professional integrity expected in their discipline or program, the student's admission to the program may be terminated on recommendation of the student's major department. A

statement on students' rights to the products of research is available in department offices, in [office of the dean of the Graduate School](#), and [online](#) (NIU graduate catalog, 2016-2017).

GRADING SYSTEM

The [Graduate School](#) grading system applies to all graduate students taking courses for graduate credit. The graduate 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.

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

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

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 their 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 their 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 their 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 ombudsperson, department offices, college offices and the [office of the dean of the Graduate School](#), and [online](#). Appeal procedures should be consulted before appealing a grade (NIU graduate catalog, 2016-2017).

RETENTION, REMEDIATION AND DISMISSAL

RETENTION POLICY

The faculty in the counseling program is confident that each student admitted has the potential to be successful in graduate study. Success in coursework, clinical practice, candidacy exams and the demonstration of the core dispositions are examples of continuation standards within the program. Such successes facilitate students' progress toward completing a degree in the counseling program. However, admission into the counseling program does not guarantee success. Faculty expect students to fully engage in all aspects of the learning environment, showing openness to new experiences and risk taking necessary to develop as a person and professional counselor. The student's major advisor plays an integral role in giving feedback to a student thus providing opportunities for continued growth and development. Personal counseling services are available at NIU's [Counseling and Consultation Services](#) as well as in the community. Students are encouraged to take advantage of personal counseling when requested.

REMEDIATION

Students will be given specific feedback on the nature of their impediment(s) as well as steps to remove this/these barrier(s) to progress toward professional competency when appropriate. In many instances a remediation plan (RP) will be crafted to provide clear and specific ways the student can improve and continue to progress in the program. However, in more extreme cases (e.g., student poses a potential harm to self or others), faculty may choose to remove the student from the program without an RP. In such cases, faculty will meet to discuss the student's failure to meet continuation standards (i.e., retention requirements) and determine whether the student should remain in the program.

The RP represents a formal agreement between the CES program and a student who is under remediation. Upon receipt of the RP, the student will review the plan and provide their signature indicating an understanding of the requirements expected and has agreed to meet those requirements. A student who chooses not to sign the RP should understand this will initiate a faculty meeting to discuss the student's failure to meet continuation standards, and a vote for dismissal will be entertained, guided

by Graduate School policy. The CAHE department chair will inform the student of the appeals process.

DISMISSAL POLICY

Student disposition dismissal

The department of counseling faculty members have a professional responsibility to serve as gatekeepers for the counseling profession (ACA, 2014, Section F.6.b.). Counseling is a discipline that requires active and complex gatekeeping to protect the public welfare of our communities. In particular, gatekeeping refers to the responsibility of all counselors, counselor educators and student counselors, to intervene with counselor trainees, supervisees, professional colleagues and supervisors who engage in behavior that could threaten the welfare of those receiving counseling services. The American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics (2014) specifically states that counselors must act to rectify the problematic condition through appropriate organizational and professional channels (ACA, 2014, Section F.5.).

Faculty, site supervisors and doctoral students systematically discuss and evaluate students' progress in the program. When impediments are identified, the student will be informed verbally and in writing. The NIU counseling program's disposition statement is used as a framework for evaluating student dispositions.

- I. Impact
 - a. 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 personal environment.
- II. 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 (meets deadlines, attends class).
- III. Ethics
 - a. Accepts responsibility for personal actions and behaviors.
 - b. Attends to ethical and legal responsibilities including the ACA Code of Ethics and NIU's Student Code of Conduct policy.
 - c. Discloses any unethical or unlawful activity from the time the students application to the program to the end of their program.
 - d. Demonstrates honesty, integrity, fairness, confidentiality and respect for others.

If others (i.e., faculty, doctoral level supervisors and site supervisors) have made similar observations, the program coordinator, major advisor and/or other faculty will initiate a meeting with the student to discuss the apparent impediment to progress toward professional competence. Remedies and expected behavior changes will be discussed and outlined in a written document (remediation plan).

Student dismissal for academic dishonesty

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating and plagiarism. For the complete academic integrity statement, please refer to the current NIU graduate catalog on the [Graduate School website](#), Student Resources menu. Examples of ethical violations include, but are not limited to, the improper use of technology, failure to secure informed consent, breach of confidentiality, professional ethics violation, recycling assignments, falsifying documents and not complying to class assignment protocols. Lack of professional comportment includes, but is not limited to, a lack of engagement in course requirements, issues within interpersonal relationships with peers, doctoral students and faculty, and inappropriate use of power with clients and other students. The faculty believe the enactment of the core dispositions embodies the values of the counseling profession and deficiencies in these areas could lead to dismissal. All students are encouraged to seek counseling and attend to their mental health. A student's unwillingness to attend to intra- or inter-personal impediments contributing to impairment may lead to dismissal.

Dismissal of a master's student can be initiated for a variety of circumstances including, but not limited to, the following:

- Dismissal will occur when students violate the criteria established by the NIU Graduate School for [satisfactory academic standing](#) (See Withdraw or Dismissal in the graduate catalog).
- Dismissal for failure to meet continuation standards related to academic and clinical competency will occur when a student earns a B- or below in any course on the students program of study. The Department of Counseling follows the [Appeal Process detailed in the Appeals and Dismissals section of the NIU Graduate Catalog](#).

Due to the nature of the program, students can be dismissed for professional competence concerns (i.e., unrelated to success with course assignments and grades). The American Counseling Association Code of Ethics (2014) requires counselor educators provide remediation and/or dismissal from counseling programs when “they become aware of limitations that might impede performance” or when students are unable to demonstrate “they can provide competent counseling services to a range of diverse clients (6.f.b).” As stated above, gatekeeping is an ethical mandate for counselor educators and designed to protect counselors in training and their current and future clients. Professional competence concerns that could lead to dismissal include, but are not limited to, impairment as described by Frame and Stevens-Smith (1995), academic dishonesty, ethical violations, lack of professional comportment,

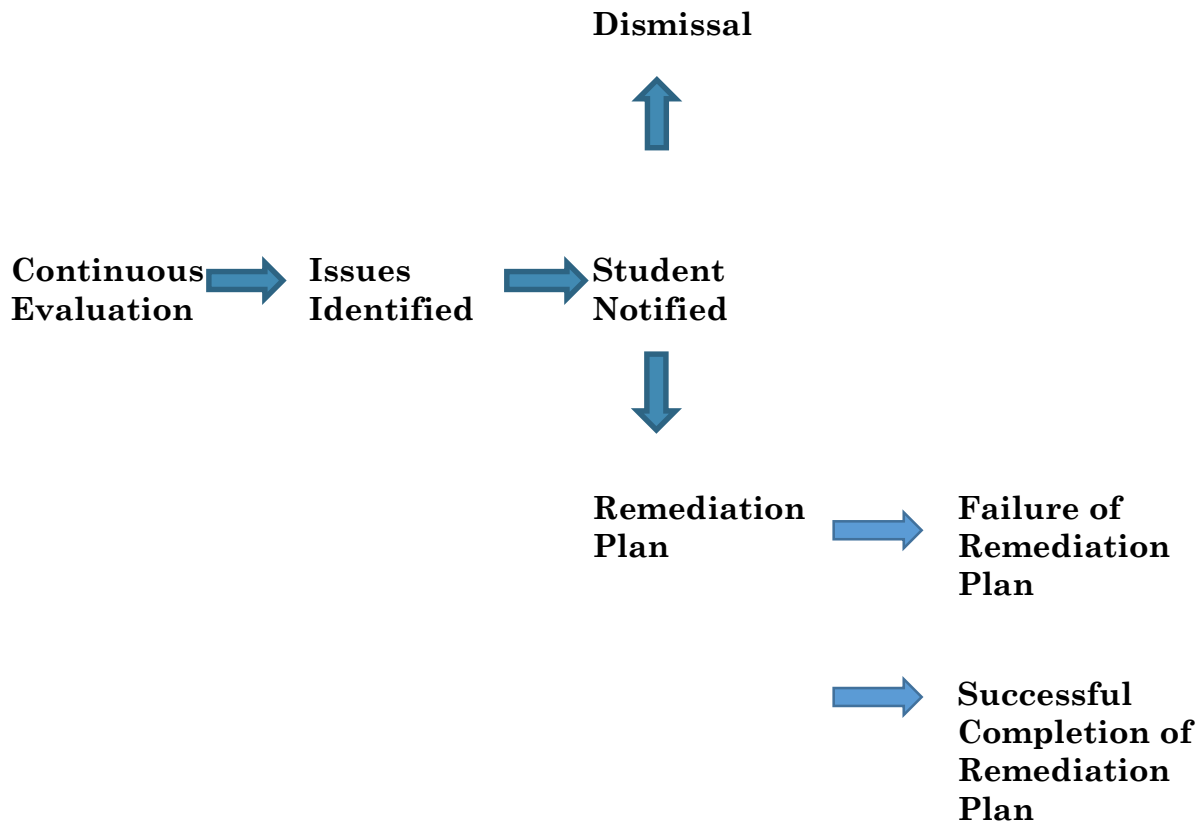
personal attitudes or value systems that conflict with effective counseling relationships.

In all cases of dismissal, the student will be notified in writing.

In addition to the ACA Code of Ethics, the department of counseling adheres to NIU policies with regard to [student conduct](#), [academic integrity](#) and [ethical compliance](#).

DISMISSAL PROCESS

The student evaluation process is continuous from the start of the program through graduation.



TIME LIMITATION

All master's students must complete their program within **six consecutive** years of starting their first semester as a student. If all courses are not completed within this timeframe, students may have to retake courses for credit or demonstrate current knowledge of the subject matter as requested by the professor. If these steps are not taken, any outdated coursework must be deleted from the student's file and other coursework must be substituted in the program of courses. Transfer courses falling outside the limitation of time cannot be used in a graduate program.

DISABILITY STATEMENT (ADA COMPLIANCE)

NIU 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](#).

TRANSFER CREDIT

With the approval of the student's department and the office of the dean of the [Graduate School](#), some graduate courses taken at other accredited (U.S.) or recognized (foreign) institutions may be accepted toward meeting the credit-hour requirements of a graduate degree at NIU. The student must have earned graduate credit in the course according to the institution at which the course was taken (so, for example, courses in which undergraduate credit, medical school credit or other professional post-baccalaureate credit was earned cannot be accepted in transfer).

No transfer credit accepted from another institution may be in correspondence courses. Typically, correspondence courses are noted as such on a transcript. They are defined as courses in which interaction between the instructor and the student is neither regular nor substantive and in which interaction is primarily initiated by the student. Most often, correspondence courses are self-paced.

A grade of B- or better must have been earned in each graduate course accepted in transfer toward meeting NIU graduate degree requirements, and the overall GPA in all graduate transfer courses thus accepted must be 3.0 or higher. Courses for which grades of S, Pass, Credit or the like have been earned will be accepted in transfer only if the Graduate School can officially verify that the student's performance was at a level equivalent to a grade of B or better.

To receive consideration for graduate work done elsewhere, the student must submit to the Graduate School an official transcript showing the coursework in question.

Transfer credit is considered to be accepted toward meeting degree requirements only at the time a student is cleared to graduate from the program.

In transfer, three quarter hours are considered to be equivalent to two semester hours. Therefore, if the graduate credit earned in a course accepted in transfer from another institution was reported in quarter hours, the transfer credit will be granted at the ratio of two semester hours per three quarter hours.

Students should consult the “Requirements for Graduate Degrees” section of this catalog for more specific information on limitations on transfer credit and the combined total of transfer and other courses applicable to individual degree programs (NIU graduate catalog, 2016-2017).

FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid is available in the form of graduate assistantships, scholarships, fellowships and certain grants. Graduate assistantships are limited, but first priority for assignment of departmental positions goes to doctoral students. Students with graduate assistantships receive a tuition waiver for all courses EXCEPT the six credit hours of internship. Students are also responsible for all student fees and health insurance (if applicable). More information can be found in the graduate assistantship section of this handbook.

Graduate assistantships

[The Graduate Student and Assistantship Recruitment Program \(GSARP\)](#) is a collaborative effort between the Division of Student Affairs and the Counseling and Higher Education (CAHE) department in the College of Education. This partnership provides students with a vigorous academic program and a hands-on practical experience to develop successful and effective Student Affairs practitioners. Participation in GSARP provides students with an opportunity to learn about the benefits of becoming a graduate assistant within the Division of Student Affairs or one of the several partnering departments. There are two separate GSARP events. Read below to determine which event is most applicable to you.

Students are strongly encouraged to seek out graduate assistantships available throughout campus. [NIU's Graduate School](#) provides information for positions outside of department. Students cannot hold a graduate assistantship and regular NIU employment, such as a Supportive Professional Staff position, concurrently.

Finding a graduate assistantship requires time and planning. Most offices interview for graduate assistant positions in the spring semester to fill fall semester positions.

The number of graduate assistantships for counseling students within the CAHE department is extremely limited. Additional places to inquire for open positions include the Student Housing Offices in Neptune Hall East, Gender and Sexuality Resource Center, CHANCE program, Office of the Ombudsperson, Career Services, and the Disability Resource Center to name a few.

Scholarships and fellowships

Eligible students may wish to consider applying for a Rhoten A. Smith assistantship. The Rhoten A. Smith Assistantship Program has been established at NIU 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. For more information, please go visit the [fellowships website](#).

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.

Applications for graduate assistantships are available at the CAHE office, Gabel Hall, Room 200.

ENDORSEMENT POLICY

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR LICENSE

In order to be licensed as a school counselor in the public schools of the state of Illinois, a person must be of good character, in sound health, a citizen of the United States and at least 19 years of age. The Illinois licensure law also requires that an individual complete an approved preparation program at a recognized institution.

The university's licensure officer is responsible for reviewing the record of each graduate of an approved counselor education program and for recommending or withholding recommendation of that individual for certification by entitlement and endorsement. Licensure is not an automatic procedure. In order to qualify for licensure, each student in an entitlement program must complete an application for licensure and provide evidence of having completed the general requirements; courses in professional education appropriate to the program being followed, including a minimum of 600 clock hours of approved school counseling experience.

The following licensure is available at the graduate level only and are approved by the Illinois State Board of Education: School Service Personnel – School Counselor.

Questions about these endorsement programs should be addressed to the appropriate department. Also, see the [educator licensure entitlement information](#).

LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR

In order to be a licensed professional counselor in the state of Illinois, a person must be of good character. The Illinois licensure law also requires that an individual complete an approved preparation program at a recognized institution.

The university's licensure officer is responsible for reviewing the record of each graduate of an approved counselor education program and for recommending or withholding recommendation of that individual for certification by entitlement and endorsement. Licensure is not an automatic procedure. In order to qualify for licensure, each student in an entitlement program must complete an application for licensure and provide evidence of having completed the general requirements; courses in professional education appropriate to the program, including a minimum of 600 clock hours of approved clinical counseling experience. For more information, please see the [Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation - LPC](#).

For students already meeting the requirement for terminal licensure, licensed clinical professional counselor (LCPC), please contact the [Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation - LCPC](#). For direct assistance, please see your advisor or chair.

Letters of recommendation

In most cases, it is an honor for faculty and staff in the counseling program to write letters of recommendation for their students, but faculty and staff also have the right to refuse. Please see the individual faculty or staff member regarding their specific policy. Please keep in mind that just as you have the right to request a recommendation from faculty or staff, they have the right to refuse. Before assuming a faculty or staff member will write the letter, please secure their permission. Please give the faculty or staff member adequate time to draft the letter, typically a minimum of two weeks.

When asking for a letter of recommendation, please provide the following:

- The name or title of the position or award you are applying for.
- Required and preferred qualifications for the position/award.
- Contact information associated with the position/award.
- Your current résumé or curriculum vita.

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, doctoral students develop as leaders, grow their personal and professional networks and contribute to the development of counselors and the counselor profession. Upon graduation, doctoral alumni can stay connected through the [NIU counseling alumni listserv](#).

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, visit the [NIU Counseling Association Huskie Link webpage](#) or email: niuca001@gmail.com.

CHI SIGMA IOTA

Rho Alpha Kappa is NIUs' chapter of Chi Sigma Iota, the international honor society of professional counseling and for professional counselors.

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* was established Jan. 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.

To be eligible for membership, a student must meet the following eligibility standards:

1. Completion of at least nine 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](#) and submit a \$40 fee to Chi Sigma Iota.
2. Turn in a copy of the application to the chapter advisor, Gabel 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 NIU. 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 Black Counselors Association Huskie Link website](#)

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 LGBTQ+ at intersections of their identities.

NATIONAL AND STATE COUNSELING ORGANIZATIONS

The following professional counseling organizations offer opportunities that are valuable at any stage in your counselor development. Membership is available to both students and professionals.

[AMERICAN COUNSELING ASSOCIATION \(ACA\)](#)

The American Counseling Association is a not-for-profit, professional and educational organization that is dedicated to the growth and enhancement of the counseling profession. Founded in 1952, ACA is the world's largest association exclusively representing professional counselors in various practice settings.

By providing leadership training, publications, continuing education opportunities and advocacy services to nearly 45,000 members, ACA helps counseling professionals develop their skills and expand their knowledge base.

ACA has been instrumental in setting professional and ethical standards for the counseling profession. The association has made considerable strides in accreditation, licensure and national certification. It also represents the interests of the profession before congress and federal agencies, and strives to promote recognition of professional counselors to the public and the media.

There are several [ACA divisions and branches](#) including the [Illinois Counseling Association](#), which is the state chapter of the ACA.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of students to know and observe all regulations and procedures relating to the program they are pursuing, as well as those of the university and [Graduate School](#). In no case will a regulation be waived or an exception granted because students plead ignorance of or contend that they were not informed of the regulations or procedures. Questions on regulations and their interpretation pertaining to studies at the graduate level should be addressed to the office of the dean of the Graduate School.

Students planning to graduate should familiarize themselves with the dates relating to application for graduation and other pertinent deadlines ([see the Graduate School Calendar](#)). It is necessary to apply for graduation by the specified deadline in order to graduate in a particular term, whether the student plans to attend the commencement ceremonies, if any.

Students must satisfy the degree requirements of the catalog in force during the term for which they have been admitted to and begin coursework in the degree program; or they may, with the consent of their advisors, meet graduation requirements by complying with the degree requirements of a later catalog. Students readmitted to a degree program must meet degree requirements of the catalog in force at the time of the later admission (or of a subsequent catalog, as provided above). Aside from degree requirements, all students are subject to the regulations and policies stated in the catalog currently in force. Exceptions to regulations and requirements contained in the Graduate Catalog require the written approval of the office of the dean of the [Graduate School](#), unless otherwise stated in the catalog.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY FOR OBTAINING CURRENT UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

It is the responsibility of students to know and observe all regulations and procedures relating to the program they are pursuing, as well as those of the university and [Graduate School](#). In no case will a regulation be waived or an exception granted because students plead ignorance of or contend that they were not informed of the regulations or procedures. Questions on regulations and their interpretation pertaining to studies at the graduate level should be addressed to the office of the dean of the Graduate School (NIU Graduate catalog, 2018-2019).

FINAL COMMENTS

We encourage you to refer back to this handbook as you make your way through the program. Remember that your program committee is designated to help through the process of obtaining your degree. It is important that you contact them throughout your coursework with the various questions and concerns you may have. Again, congratulations on this important first step to becoming a professional counselor educator and clinical supervisor.

APPENDIX A: STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY FORM

Attestation to program policies and procedures

As a student of the counseling master's program in the Department of Counseling and Higher Education at NIU, I understand that I am responsible for the information presented in the Master's in Counseling Student Handbook. I have reviewed these materials carefully and accept its outlined responsibilities. If I have questions concerning these materials, I will ask for clarification from a faculty member, my program advisor or my program committee.

Student acknowledgement of rights and responsibilities

I have read the Master's in Counseling Student Handbook. I understand that I am responsible for all the information contained herein. I accept that adequate academic performance is only one portion of my evaluation process for successful completion of the M.S.Ed. in counseling as a professional preparation program. I accept the responsibilities and understand the potential consequences of unsuccessful and/or below expectation evaluation of my academic work and professional dispositions as listed above and in the Master's in Counseling Student 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

Date

(Original signed form will be filed in student record.)

APPENDIX B: COUNSELING 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.

II. 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).

III. 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.

APPENDIX C: 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 be 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 the NIU volunteer packet, including confirmation of completing mandated reporter training and CBC authorization.
- Forms are available in the Community Counseling Training Center in Graham 416.
- 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 keep a copy for your own records.
- 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. All records are reviewed by the CAHE department chair.