

# **CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING**

## **STUDENT HANDBOOK**

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Dear Counseling Students:

It is my pleasure to welcome you to our program on behalf of the Counselor Education faculty at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Washington DC campus. We are delighted that you have chosen our CMHC program for your graduate studies.

The *CMHC Student Handbook* has been created to facilitate your orientation to the Master's in Arts Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program. We present information that describes our program, courses, requirements, and policies as of August 2017. It is ***your responsibility*** to be sure that you have the most current information. Therefore, it is essential to work closely with your faculty advisor as you plan your graduate program, enroll in courses, and make arrangements for Clinical Internship placements, and graduation.

Although an abundant amount of information is contained within this handbook, it may not provide answers to all of your questions. In addition to talking with your advisor and other faculty members, you may access the TCSPP web at [www.thechicagoschool.edu/washington-dc/](http://www.thechicagoschool.edu/washington-dc/).

We are glad you are here! You are about to engage in the exciting process of becoming a professional counselor with a focus on clinical mental health. As you will see in the following pages of this handbook, the process and experiences offered at the Washington DC campus of The Chicago School are planned to ensure a comprehensive personal and professional educational experience. We are looking forward to accompanying you on your journey. Please contact us if we can offer additional information.

Best of luck, let's begin!

Sincerely,

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**Mission and Objectives of the Clinical Mental Health Program at the  
Washington D.C. Campus of the Chicago School of Professional Psychology**

## **Mission**

The Clinical Mental Health Program at the Washington D.C. Campus of the Chicago School of Professional Psychology prepares professional counselors who work to empower economically, socially, and culturally diverse clients in agencies, community programs, and private practice. Through rigorous and quality coursework and clinical experiences, graduates develop competencies that reflect the highest ethical and professional mental health counseling standards for enhancing the emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and relational well-being of individuals, couples, families, and groups across the lifespan.

## **Program Objectives**

Graduates of the program will:

1. show a commitment to their identity as counselors through membership and activities in professional organizations, and through ethical behavior in their work with clients and other professionals
2. will demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and practices to deliver culturally appropriate counseling services, advocate for clients, and understand how to influence policy to enhance the practice of clinical mental health counseling.
3. will demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and practices of culturally appropriate diagnosis, treatment, referral, and prevention of mental and emotional disorders
4. will demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and practices of culturally appropriate and holistic clinical evaluation and assessment of normalcy and psychopathology.
5. will demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and practices of culturally appropriate diagnosis of both psychopathology and normal developmental challenges, including appropriate use of diagnosis during trauma-causing events.
6. will competently and critically evaluate clinical mental health counseling research, demonstrate understanding of evidence-based treatments and outcome evaluation, and apply appropriate models of program evaluation.

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## **Overview**

The Chicago School's Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) Master's program prepares students for a career offering mental health services in a variety of settings, helping diverse clients through issues such as depression, anxiety, grief, low self-esteem, stress, relationship difficulties, and suicidal impulses.

## **Admissions Policies and Procedures**

Designed to prepare students to become licensed practitioners in the D.C. metro area, The Chicago School's M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program focuses on a strength-based approach to counseling as a mental health generalist for a wide range of clients, including children and adolescents, adults, and families and couples.

The master's in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program is designed to meet the core standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) core standards and incorporates the eight content areas outlined by the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC).\*

\* This program is in the process of applying for CACREP accreditation; it is not yet accredited by CACREP.

## **Program Information**

Program information, to include program overviews, program learning outcomes, and course descriptions can be found in the [Programs of Study](#) pages in the 2017-2018 Academic Catalog and Student Handbook.

### ***TCSPP Policies***

Academic Policies and Procedures can be found [here](#). Examples of policies listed here are Attendance, Grading Policies, Satisfactory Academic Progress, Student Status, and Transfer of Credit and Course Waiver.

Financial Aid and Student Account Policies can be found [here](#).

Student Rights and Responsibilities can be found [here](#).

Student Services, Health and Safety can be found [here](#).

## **OVERVIEW OF THE M.A. CMHC PROGRAM**

### **Comprehensive Student Assessment Plan**

The program faculty systematically assesses each student's progress throughout the program by examining student learning in relation to a combination of knowledge and skills. The process also includes a systematic assessment of each student's professional dispositions throughout the program. Program faculty monitors and assesses student learning and performance using a comprehensive assessment plan. Assessment begins with application to the program and continues until students successfully pass the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE) and graduate. The assessment process takes into account grades, overall GPA, professional skills, and professional dispositions.

The key in our assessment is the use of our Dispositional Rating Rubrics. We believe the practice of counseling is an art and science where the personhood of the counselor is a critical variable in the counseling relationship. As part of those student requirements, faculty will regularly monitor not only students' academic progress but also selected personal characteristics that will affect their performance in the program and in the professional field. A developmental, systematic assessment of each student's progress is conducted within classes and field experiences by full-time faculty with input invited from adjunct and affiliate program faculty as well as internship supervisors. Our comprehensive plan assesses student learning over multiple points in time using the following benchmarks.

<b>Admission</b>	<b>Early</b>	<b>Mid</b>	<b>Late</b>	<b>Exit</b>	<b>Post-grad</b>
Undergraduate/Previous Graduate GPA References Experience Professional Goals Personal Statement Interview	CM500, CM507, CM528 with grade B or better  Staffing of Students: Dispositional Rating	Completion of Prerequisites with grade B or better before admission to Practicum  Staffing of Students: Key Performance Indicators and Dispositional Rating	CM605 – Counseling Practicum with Grade of B or better before entering Internship I  CM615 – Internship I with Grade of B or better before entering Internship II  Practicum and Internship Evaluations  Key Performance Indicators  Dispositional Rating	CPCE  Key Performance Indicator  Dispositional Rating  Internship II Capstone Assignment	Graduate Survey

**Early – Counseling Skills and Professional Dispositions**

Students work closely with their advisers to craft their plan of studies and receive feedback on their progress. Students are advised to take CM500 Introduction to the Counseling Profession and Ethics, CM507 Theories of Counseling and Psychotherapy, and CM528 Helping Relationships & Skill Development in Counseling at the beginning of their studies. These courses are used to assess counseling knowledge and skills as well as personal and interpersonal growth. In addition to assigning grades for course performance, the program faculty members complete a dispositional assessment on every student. These assessments are reviewed in faculty student staffings and shared with the students through their adviser, providing in depth feedback and recommendations.

**Mid/Late**

Before students are admitted to practicum they must complete prerequisite courses with a grade of B or better. Faculty use student staffings to discuss student readiness for practicum. Faculty

use information from practicum supervisors, individual, and group supervision to evaluate practicum performance. Students must complete practicum (CM605) with a B or better before being admitted to Internship I. Students who are judged as not ready for internship are flagged and remediation plans are developed accordingly. Students must complete Internship I with a B or better before being admitted to Internship II. In addition, the faculty complete a dispositional assessment on every student. Also an initial assessment of student performance on the Key Performance Indicators is conducted. These assessments are reviewed in faculty student staffings and shared with the students through their adviser, providing in depth feedback and recommendations.

As part of Practicum and Internship evaluation, supervisors complete a dispositional assessment on every practicum student/intern. These assessments are reviewed in faculty student staffings and shared with the students through their adviser and/or supervisor, providing in depth feedback and recommendations.

### **Exit**

Students must complete and pass a capstone assignment as part of Internship II. This assignment entails conceptualization, diagnose of, and treatment planning for a current client. In addition, an audio/video must be presented during the capstone to the CMHC program faculty.

In addition, the faculty completes a final dispositional assessment on every student. Also a final assessment of student performance on the Key Performance Indicators is conducted. These assessments are reviewed in faculty student staffings and shared with the students through their adviser, providing final in depth feedback and recommendations

Students must pass the CPCE for program completion. The CPCE gives program faculty an objective view of the knowledge level of students as they graduate from the program.

### **Post-Graduation**

The program faculty conduct systematic follow-up studies of graduates to assess program effectiveness. These data are used to inform faculty meetings and retreats for strategic planning purposes

## Suggested Sequences for M.A. CMHC Students:

Curriculum Checklist  
Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC)  
Full Time Fall Start

Student Name:			Advisor:		
Year 1			Year 2		
Fall	Credits	Date Completed	Fall	Credits	Date Completed
CM 528 <a href="#">Helping Relationships &amp; Skill Development in Counseling</a>	3		CM 605 Practicum	3	
CM 507 <a href="#">Theories of Counseling and Psychotherapy</a>	3		CM 564 Career Development & Counseling	3	
CM 521 <a href="#">Lifespan Development</a>	3		CM 585 Addictions & Substance Abuse	3	
CM 500 <a href="#">Introduction to the Counseling Profession and Ethics</a>	3		CM 514 Diagnosis of Mental Health Issues	3	
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>12</b>		<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>12</b>	
Spring	Credits	Date Completed	Spring	Credits	Date Completed
CM 550 <a href="#">Diversity and Multiculturalism</a>	3		CM 615 Internship I	3	
CM 592 Clinical Mental Health Counseling	3		CM 578 Methods of Research & Program Evaluation	3	
CM 543 <a href="#">Group Theories and Processes of Counseling</a>	3		CM 530 Advanced Tx planning & Psychopharmacology	3	
CM 571 Assessment of Individuals	3		CM Elective	3	
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>12</b>		<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>12</b>	
Summer	Credits	Date Completed	Summer	Credits	Date Completed
CM 536 <a href="#">Couples &amp; Family Counseling</a>	3		CM 619 Internship II	3	
CM 598 <a href="#">Psychopathology</a>	3		CM Elective	3	
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>6</b>	
<b>TOTAL CUMULATIVE CREDITS: 60</b>					

### OVERVIEW OF PRACTICUM AND INTERNSHIP

Typically, students complete their practicum and internship at the same site. During the fourteen-week practicum course, students complete a supervised practicum experience at an approved site with an approved clinical supervisor for a minimum of 100 hours. The practicum course is comprised of the on-site clinical counseling supervised experience, and students must participate in group supervision, which meets weekly throughout the entirety of the semester, as well as coursework. Students will practice foundational counseling skills and, over time, integrate more advanced skills through practice in classes, supervised recorded sessions, and direct service at their sites. Moreover, the practicum experience often focuses on the personal qualities needed to develop genuine and effective counseling relationships with a wide range of clientele. As such, students learn self-assessment skills as well as how to understand clients' worldviews.

After successfully completing the practicum course, students will enroll in Internship I. During the fourteen-week Internship I course, students complete the next level of supervised internship experience at an approved site with an approved clinical supervisor, for a minimum of 300 hours, to further develop their individual and group counseling skills. The Internship I course is comprised of the on-site clinical counseling supervised experience, and students must participate

in site and group supervision, which meets weekly throughout the semester, as well as coursework.

Following successful completion of Internship I, students will enroll in Internship II. During the fourteen-week Internship II course, students complete a more advanced level of supervised Internship experience at an approved site with an approved clinical supervisor, for a minimum of 300 hours, to further develop their individual and group counseling skills. The Internship II course is comprised of the on-site clinical counseling supervised experience, and students must participate in site and group supervision, which meets weekly throughout the semester, as well as coursework. The internship is intended to reflect the comprehensive work experience of a clinical mental health counselor, and students will participate in the full range of roles and responsibilities available at their sites.

More detailed information on the clinical training experience in the CMHC program can be found in the CMHC DC Practicum and Internship Manual.

### **Comprehensive Examinations**

Students' in the CMHC program take the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE). The CPCE is designed to ensure that all Counseling students demonstrate a proficient working knowledge of the foundational counseling competencies prior to graduation. The information tested by the exam covers the counseling program competencies. All students are required to obtain a passing score on the CPCE before they will be permitted to graduate.

### **Faculty Endorsement**

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling program at the Chicago School- DC is designed to prepare counselors for licensure, certification, and employment in appropriate professional work settings. Clinical Mental Health Counseling students who complete all program of study requirements and receive a passing score on the CPCE may be endorsed for licensure and certification. Endorsements or recommendations for employment in specific work settings will be given only in circumstances in which the graduate's program of study, clinical experience, and skill level are appropriate to the work setting and the specific position. Regardless of training qualifications, clinical experience, or skill level, students or graduates who are believed to be impaired in any way that will interfere with the endorsement for certification, licensure, or employment will not receive such endorsement.

### **Matriculation Requirements**

Academic Good Standing is the minimum and necessary level of academic performance required of all students at TCSPP.

1. A graduate student is considered in good academic standing if the student has earned a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above. An undergraduate student is considered in good academic standing if the student has earned a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or above.
  - a. The student must maintain the minimum cumulative grade point average to remain in this status.
  - b. The cumulative GPA is reviewed at the end of every semester/term.
2. Graduate and undergraduate students are meeting the pace requirement for their admitted program.
  - a. Students must progress to ensure academic program completion within the maximum timeframe.
  - b. Pace or, rate of progress, is measured at the end of every semester/term.
  - c. Pace is calculated as a period of time during which a student attempts 1.5 times the number of credit hours required to complete the program.
  - d. For instance, if the published length of a program is 60 units, then the student must complete his or her program by the time he or she reaches 90 attempted units ( $60 \text{ units} \times 150\% = 90 \text{ units}$ ). Therefore, in order for students to complete their program within the maximum timeframe, students must complete a minimum of 66% of all units attempted ( $60 \text{ units} \div 90 \text{ units} = 66\%$ ).
  - e. All units attempted or transferred in from another college are considered, even for periods in which the student did not receive financial aid.
3. Graduate and undergraduate students are not on Academic Warning or Academic Probation.

## **Program Expectations**

### ***Course Grading and Performance Feedback***

TCSPP Grading Policies can be found [here](#).

TCSPP Grade Change Policy can be found [here](#).

TCSPP Grade Appeal Policy can be found [here](#).

## **ADDITIONAL GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **APA Style**

The M.A. Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program requires that the most recent edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual be used as a guide in the preparation of papers.

### **Application for Graduation**

Students must complete all of their program requirements before their degree can be conferred. Academic program requirements include but are not limited to coursework, clinical training (practicum/internship), and a capstone project.

A candidate's degree progress and eligibility for conferral is assessed by the Office of the Registrar. All students must file the Petition for Degree Conferral form by the given deadline in order to be considered for degree conferral. For more information, please visit the Office of the Registrar's website at <https://my.thechicagoschool.edu/community/studentresources/studentaffairs/Pages/Office-of-Registrar.aspx>.

### **Program/Faculty/Student Communication**

Students are responsible for updating any changes in their names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses. In order for faculty to maintain contact with students, each student must have a school e-mail account. Students who have a preferred personal e-mail account should forward their school e-mail to that account or be sure to check their school e-mail accounts on a frequent and regular basis. All important notices and program matters will be sent to students via their school e-mail address, which is served as the official means of communication for the school.

### **Orientation**

Each semester the Counselor Education Department invites selected applicants to a New Student Orientation. At the orientation the new students are instructed on how to access the student handbook on-line, given an overview of students' ethical and professional obligations as well as personal growth expectations as counselors-in-training. In addition, licensure/certification requirements are reviewed.

### **Disability Accommodations**

The Chicago School complies with all laws and regulations regarding the access of disabled individuals to education and works to insure that no qualified student with disability is denied the benefits of, or excluded from participation in, any school program or activity. Disabled students may request reasonable accommodations including but not limited to adaptations in the way specific course requirements are accomplished, the use of auxiliary equipment are support staff, and other modifications including testing procedures. This request must be accompanied by appropriate documentation that establishes that the student has the specific disability and that supports the accommodation(s) requested. The school resources the right to select the specific aids and services it provides, as long as it deems they will be effective for the student and do not fundamentally alter the program or academic standards. Such aids and services are determined on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the student who has identified the need for accommodation. Please see the Director of Student Services regarding requests for accommodation.

## **Professional Associations**

Professional associations are vital to the productive professional life of counselors. Faculty members expect students to join appropriate associations. Membership dues are usually less for students, and members receive professional newsletters, journals, announcements of professional activities, updates about federal legislation and policies that have an impact on counseling services and on professional counselors, and opportunities to network. In addition, members are offered professional liability insurance at reduced rates.

The American Counseling Association (ACA) 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. Application forms for the American Counseling Association (ACA) can be obtained through ACA. ACA also has a number of divisions that focus on specialty areas (e.g., counselor education and supervision, group counseling, mental health, school, assessment, creativity in counseling, spirituality). You may access information about ACA and its divisions via the Internet at: <http://www.counseling.org>.

The American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA) is the national organization for licensed clinical mental health counselors. The organization provides the backbone of skills and resources needed for clinical mental health counselors. You may access information about AMHCA via the Internet at <http://www.amhca.org/>.

## **ETHICAL CONDUCT**

### **Faculty Evaluation of Students' Fitness and Performance**

Students who enter the M.A. Clinical Mental Health Program at The Chicago School will be evaluated throughout their graduate program both for the benefit of students and to ensure that graduates of the program are prepared to participate as counseling professionals. The following dispositions will be evaluated and rated throughout the program:

***Professional Ethics*** – Student adheres to the ACA Ethical Standards (2014)

***Professionalism*** – Student behaves in a professional manner towards supervisors, peers, and clients (e.g. including appropriate dress, conduct, attitude, and boundaries)

***Sensitivity to Social and Cultural Diversity*** – Student demonstrates awareness, appreciation, and respect of cultural differences (e.g. race/ethnicity, spirituality, sexual orientation, SES, etc.).

Actively works to remove known and potential personal biases

***Engaged/Motivated to Learn and Grow*** – Student actively engages in learning and developing his or her counseling knowledge, skills, and dispositions (e.g., takes initiative and seeks/uses growth opportunities)

***Flexibility and Adaptability*** – Student demonstrates flexibility with changing circumstances, unexpected events and new situations (e.g., changes within the academic environment, changing clinical site expectations)

***Emotional Stability and Self-control*** – Student exhibits emotional stability (i.e. congruence between mood, affect, and behavior) and self-control in relationships with instructors, supervisors, peers, and clients

***General Self-Awareness and Understanding*** – Student demonstrates an awareness of his or her own belief system, values, needs and limitations, and the effect of these dynamics on his or her general interactions with others

***Self-Reflection*** – Student consistently engages in self-reflective practice (e.g. without guidance and challenges him/herself to achieve at the highest level of clinical and professional practice)

***Instructor/Supervisor Feedback*** – Student responds non-defensively and incorporates supervisory feedback to alter skills, behavior, and/or counselor dispositions

***Peer Feedback*** – Student appropriately provides constructive feedback to peers and utilizes peer feedback for their own growth and development

***Self-Care***- Student demonstrates an awareness of his/her own wellbeing and utilizes appropriate self-care strategies (e.g. personal counseling, health promoting activities, etc.)

***Attendance***- Student attends all class meetings and clinical practice activities in their entirety; is fully engaged, participatory and prompt

***Task Completion*** – Student completes all assigned tasks in an ethical and effective fashion (e.g. individual and group counseling supervision, individual and group reports and assignments)

***Seeks Support/Consultation***- Student demonstrates an awareness of the need for support and/or consultation and supervision and actively seeks support and/or consultation and supervision

***Knowledge of & Adherence to Policies***- Student understands and adheres to program, course, school, and site policies and procedures

### **Student Retention, Remediation and Dismissal Policies**

A student is required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward the completion of a degree, certificate, or credential program while attending TCSPP. This SAP policy meets federal and accrediting agency regulations governing student eligibility for financial aid.

SAP is measured qualitatively (grade-based) and quantitatively (time-based). The qualitative measure is cumulative grade point average (CGPA). The quantitative measure is the percentage of attempted units that are successfully completed which is referred to as pace, or rate of

progress. A student must complete the required units for the program of study within the maximum allowable units attempted (150% of the required units), referred to as the maximum time frame (MTF). For further information on SAP standards, evaluation, probation and dismissal, please visit The Chicago School Student Handbook Policies and Procedures section online at <http://catalog.thechicagoschool.edu/content.php?catoid=67&navoid=4351>.

## **STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF FACULTY**

Students can expect faculty to:

- Adhere to the ACA Code of Ethics
- To reply to emails within a reasonable time frame, (usually two working days or 48 hours, barring travel and/or unforeseen circumstances).
- Make time to meet with students. Dropping by the office and not finding faculty does not mean they are not available. It is important to also try to contact faculty through email and attempt to make an appointment. Please remember that in addition to teaching, faculty members are conducting research, meeting with colleagues, providing service at the international, national, state levels, and so on. Because students are on “block” schedules, barring emergencies, it may take some time to coordinate schedules and find a mutually agreed upon meeting time. However, please do NOT apologize for seeking assistance or consultation. Meeting with students is one of the responsibilities of a faculty member.
- Be prepared for class.
- Set high standards for academic performance, professional behavior and personal development.
- Provide support for students to achieve these standards.
- Respect students as individuals and as developing counselors.
- Be involved in regional and national professional organizations, thus contributing to the programs’ and individual’s regional and national visibility.