

**2010-2011 STUDENT HANDBOOK:**

**MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE  
VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY**

***CONCENTRATIONS IN:***

***CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING  
COMMUNITY COUNSELING***

***JOINT LAW-PSYCHOLOGY (JD/MA)  
JOINT LAW-COUNSELING (JD/CMHC)***

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### **I. Mission statement**

The Community Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling concentrations apply psychological and educational concepts and techniques to benefit individuals, families, and communities. These programs are geared for academically and personally qualified students who evidence the capability and motivation to succeed in the helping professions. The programs are national in scope and students from throughout the USA and Canada as well as overseas have been matriculates.

The Community Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling concentrations have somewhat different purposes and sets of requirements. Applicants generally apply to and are accepted into the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program. Depending on their career objectives, a few may subsequently select the Community Counseling program. Throughout this handbook, the two concentrations will be referred to collectively as the counseling programs (or simply the programs), except when references to a specific program are appropriate.

The Counseling programs are designed to provide advanced education and professional training in:

- Human Development
- Biological and Learned Bases of Behavior
- Social and Cultural Foundations of Counseling
- Counseling Theory and Practice
- Group Processes
- Lifestyle and Career Development
- Appraisal
- Research and Program Evaluation
- Professional Roles and Ethics
- Mental Health Counseling Foundations
- Contextual Dimensions of Counseling
- Practical/clinical Skills for Counseling

Students declare their specific concentration when completing the candidacy form early in their academic career. The concentration in Clinical Mental Health Counseling is particularly appropriate for persons who plan to seek licensure in Indiana (or states with similar statutes) as a clinical mental health counselor. In fact, professional licensure in Indiana and many other states exists only at this 60-credit level. The concentration in Community Counseling may be particularly appropriate for persons who intend to pursue doctoral work in counseling or psychology, those who plan to work in a community setting but do not plan to pursue licensure, and international students who may not require a 60-hour degree to practice in their home countries.

The joint programs in law and psychology or counseling intend to train individuals working in

legal fields with appropriate knowledge and skills related to mental health work. The JD/CMHC program also offers the possibility of seeking licensure as a Clinical Mental Health Counselor.

## II. Program philosophy

Instruction in clinical mental health counseling is founded upon commitment to the belief that individuals are capable, responsible, and valuable and that human service professionals should work to create conditions in which individuals, groups, and organizations value human beings and act accordingly. As reflective decision-makers, human service professionals value human potential and purposefully design policies, processes, and programs that facilitate the realization of that potential.

This commitment is reflected throughout each of the counseling program courses in a variety of ways. For example, the professional-in-training learns that practice is first and foremost a helping relationship that has as its foundation the dignity and respect of the parties involved. Further, diverse professional activities such as counseling assessment, consultation, and advocacy are characterized as problem-solving processes that involve a variety of key decision points. Numerous models are provided for students to consider when attempting to determine effective practice. Substantial skills development opportunities are provided to facilitate the transfer of conceptual knowledge to applied situations and settings.

## III. Program objectives

The **Community Counseling Program** is committed to stimulating the professional and personal growth of individuals who plan to work in community settings where psychological issues are a focus of interest. The following broad goals have been established for students:

- to increase knowledge of counseling theories and techniques;
- to enhance ability to apply theory and techniques to diverse human problems in varied counseling settings;
- to encourage acquisition of the knowledge and skills necessary for dealing effectively with gender, social, and cultural issues; and
- to stimulate commitment to service designed to meet the needs of self, others, and society

Generally the Community Counseling program is not suitable for those planning to seek licensure as a professional counselor but may provide preparation for advanced graduate study.

The **Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) Program** provides students with training in the prevention, assessment, and treatment of individuals dealing with mental health problems. Individual, group, and family therapy are focused upon in this specialization. The curriculum is based upon the academic requirements for licensure in Clinical Mental Health Counseling in the State of Indiana.

In addition to the above broad goals, the clinical mental health program has four further objectives.

- to provide a broad background in fields specifically connected with clinical mental health counseling;
- to encourage ethical application of scientific knowledge and an investigative approach to the understanding of psychopathology and the practice of clinical assessment and intervention;
- to prepare students for clinical practice through extensive course work in counseling theory and process and through intensive involvement in supervised practice; and
- to develop a professional counseling identity through pursuit of appropriate certification, licensure, organizational affiliation, and ethical conduct

#### **IV. Program staff**

Staff for the program consists of full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty members in the Psychology Department.

##### Core Faculty

Mandy Morrill-Richards, Ed.D.	Assistant Professor of Psychology
Jim Nelson, Ph.D.	Associate Professor of Psychology
David Simpson, Ph.D.	Assistant Professor of Psychology Director of Graduate Counseling and Psychology Programs

##### Other Permanent/Primary Faculty:

Jeanne Brown, Ph.D.	Part-time Assistant Professor of Psychology Counseling Training Coordinator
Stewart Cooper, Ph.D.	Part-time Professor of Psychology Director of Counseling Services
Stanley Hughes, Ph.D.	Assistant Professor of Psychology Psychology-Law Program Liaison

##### Supporting Faculty and Staff

Daniel Arkkelin, Ph.D.	Professor of Psychology Chair of Psychology Department
Kieth Carlson, Ph.D.	Associate Professor of Psychology
David Rowland, Ph.D.	Professor of Psychology Dean, Graduate School
Angela Vernon, Ph.D.	Assistant Professor of Psychology
Jennifer Winquist, Ph.D.	Associate Professor of Psychology
Terri Hendle	Psychology Department Office Manager

## **V. Program structure**

Policy for the counseling programs is set by the faculty. The Graduate Council sets general policies for University graduate programs, while specific policies for the counseling programs are set at meetings of Psychology Department faculty. Representatives from the graduate and undergraduate student body in counseling and psychology consult with departmental faculty and give advice on issues affecting the programs. The Graduate Council or other committees or individuals at the University must also approve some program policies.

### **A. Program Director**

The *Director of Counseling and Psychology Graduate Programs* (hereafter referred to as the Program Director) serves as the chief administrator for the programs. The major responsibilities of the Program Director are as follows:

1. Serves as liaison between students and faculty on the one hand and administrators, the Graduate Council, and the community on the other.
2. Recommends to the department curricular, program, and policy proposals related to counseling programs.
3. Serves as a member of the admissions committee.
4. Facilitates resolution of student-faculty problems and is responsible for communicating student concerns to the departmental faculty.
5. Coordinates student evaluations; coordinates the development of remedial programs and makes recommendations for termination of students.
6. Coordinates the assistantship and traineeship program, in consultation with the Admissions Coordinator

Other administrators with responsibilities for oversight of the programs include the Chairperson of the Psychology Department and the Deans of the Graduate School and the College of Arts and Sciences.

### **B. Admission Coordinator**

The *Admissions Coordinator* or *Director of Admissions* is responsible for welcoming new students into the program. Their duties include:

1. Responding to inquiries from prospective students and providing information about the program
2. Liaison with the Graduate School about admissions issues and decisions
3. Serving as chairperson of the admissions committee
4. Coordinating the process of application review
5. Coordinating and/or conducting the process of applicant interviews and campus visits
6. Facilitating initial registration of new students

### **C. Counselor Training Coordinator**

The *Counselor Training Coordinator* or *Training Director* administers the practicum and internship program for the department. Major responsibilities include:

1. Providing information to students about the internship program
2. Certifying that students are ready to begin training and register for practicum
3. Coordinating assessment of students in the practicum and internship program, and recommending remedial programs for students with difficulties
4. Approving all registrations for all practicum and internship courses
5. Liaison with internal and external groups offering practicum or internship opportunities for graduate students
6. Approval of training sites
7. Attend program faculty meetings and provide input about training issues
8. Coordinating and training practicum/internship instructors
9. Teaching practicum/internship courses
10. Assist in the planning, organization, and implementation of the annual meeting of site-supervisors and University counseling faculty

### **D. Student Representatives**

The *Graduate Student Representatives* provide student input into the administration of the counseling programs. Each incoming class elects a representative during the Fall semester; other representatives may be elected or chosen as needed to insure student input into the decision-making process. The representatives may meet with the Program Director to discuss concerns, be invited to attend selected psychology faculty meetings, and perform a variety of tasks that help make the programs a positive experience for students. At least one representative will also serve on the Graduate Student Advisory Council of the University. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss their ideas or concerns with their representatives so that these may be brought to the attention of the Program Director. Individuals who are interested in serving as representatives are encouraged to volunteer their candidacy for this important position. Of course, any student may also discuss concerns they might have regarding the counseling program directly with the Program Director.

## **VI. Academic advising**

Upon admission, students are assigned an academic advisor to help them clarify their career goals, identify relevant resources, and develop a course of study. Students or advisors may request a change in advising relationships at any time. The Program Director, in consultation with the Chair of the department, assigns academic advisors. Deviations from stated degree requirements must be approved by the student's academic adviser, the Program Director, and the Graduate School Dean.

The departmental liaison with the School of Law generally serves as the academic advisor for

students in the JD/MA and JD/CMHC programs.

## **VII. Registration**

Students should register well in advance of the start of classes each semester in order to assure that space is available for them in the courses that they desire, as well as to make certain that there will be sufficient numbers of students enrolled in a particular course to offer that course. Low enrollment may lead to the cancellation of specific courses. Students must obtain their academic adviser's approval of their course selections prior to registering for classes.

Registration for your first semester of courses is completed manually in coordination with either the Director of Admissions or an assigned advisor. After this initial registration, a DataVU account will be created for you that will permit online registration for courses. The procedure is follows:

1. See your academic advisor, who will assist you in the selection of courses. The advisor will then release the pre-registration advising hold on your account.
2. Sign on to DataVU at <https://datavu.valpo.edu> and go through the registration process.
3. Reconfirm your registration in DataVU prior to the beginning of classes.

*Please follow all registration steps carefully. After you have registered and again just before classes begin, it is wise and recommended to log in again to verify enrollment in the classes you want.*

Some classes require special permission for registration. These include any practicum and internship classes, which must be approved by the Counseling Training Coordinator, and the Group Counseling class, which requires the approval of the instructor and the Program Director.

## **VIII. Application for candidacy**

After completing 9 credit hours students must, in consultation with their adviser, complete an application for candidacy form. The intention of the application for candidacy process is to ensure that students have thought in detail about their program with their adviser. This "program evaluation" form is available on DataVU. This form must be approved by the student's adviser and by the Dean of the Graduate School.

## **IX. Application for the degree; application for diploma and graduation**

Students should apply for the M.A. degree and their diploma at the beginning of their second-to-last semester (i.e., the semester prior to the semester in which the student intends to graduate). The degree application form is the program evaluation form available in DataVU (the same form that was used to apply for candidacy). Instructions for completing the applications can be found on the Graduate School website. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the forms

are correctly submitted in a timely manner, and to seek advising if deficiencies are apparent.

In some circumstances it is possible to participate in a graduation ceremony even if some program requirements have not been completed. Details for this process and an application form can be found on the Graduate School website.

## X. Community Counseling and CMHC Curriculum

Each student commits (via the candidacy form; see Section VIII of this handbook) to the CMHC program or the Community Counseling program after completing 9 credits of work. Admission to the specific program and transfer between these programs requires the approval of the Program Director. Students expecting to use the Master of Arts degree to meet requirements for certification or licensure will need to plan carefully their program of study to meet applicable requirements. Depending on the laws and regulations of the state/jurisdiction issuing the license, students may need to complete additional credit hours, complete additional types/hours of field training, take specific courses that are offered as electives, etc. The program is not necessarily designed to meet licensure/certification requirements of every state or organization. **It is the student's responsibility to make sure that they are successfully completing the licensure/certification requirements (including clinical experience requirements, supervision requirements, coursework requirements, etc.) established by the jurisdiction in which the student ultimately intends to pursue professional licensure/certification, as requirements may vary significantly from state to state.** For instance, while Indiana does not require coursework in substance abuse or family counseling, advanced licensure requirements in Illinois now specify that individuals must have 3 semester hour courses in both of these areas. During their first semester in the program, students should obtain a copy of the certification/licensure laws and regulations from the state(s)/jurisdiction(s) where they plan to practice and should then plan their course of study appropriately. Students should also meet with their academic advisor to discuss a course of study that may suitably prepare them for the licensure process. **Students should retain course syllabi as well as documentation from their practicum and internship classes for possible use in applying for licensure/certification.**

The Concentration in Community Counseling is a 48 semester hour program. Five core courses (15 credit hours), six advanced courses (18 credit hours), experiential training (counseling practicum and internship; 9 credit hours), and specialty elective credits (6 credit hours) comprise the curriculum. The experiential training requires that a total of 700 clock hours be completed at field training sites; with permission of the Program Director and Counseling Training Coordinator, students may elect to complete an advanced internship to reach a total of 1,000 clock hours, or may substitute a Psychology practicum in place of a Counseling practicum or internship. Curriculum requirements are listed below.

The Concentration in Clinical Mental Health Counseling is a 60 semester hour program. Five core courses (15 credit hours), seven advanced courses (21 credit hours), experiential training (counseling practicum, internship, and advanced internship; 12 credit hours), and specialty elective courses (12 credit hours) comprise the curriculum. The experiential training requires that a total of 1,000 clock hours be completed at field training sites. Psychology practicum

experiences may **not** be used to meet counseling training requirements. Students in the CMHC program must also complete 4 semesters of the 0-credit Counseling Proseminar (COUN 694). Specific curriculum requirements are listed in the University Catalog, and are outlined in the Course of Study Planning Sheets included in Appendix B.

## **XI. Certificate Programs**

### **A. Certificate In Business Management (12 credits)**

Graduate students enrolled in the 48-credit Counseling program or 60-credit Clinical Mental Health Counseling program may also choose to pursue a Certificate in Business Management. This certificate would be particularly useful to students who are interested in agency administration or providing counseling-related services for/through organizations. CMHC students could complete the certificate by taking only 6 credits beyond the 60 credits required for their CMHC degree because 6 of the 12 credits required for the certificate (i.e., COUN 550, COUN 651, and COUN 652) could be taken as electives within the CMHC program. Students in the 48-credit Counseling program would need to take 9 additional credits to complete the certificate. Interested students would need to co-enroll in the certificate program by the final semester of their degree program in order to be eligible for certificate completion.

COUN 550, 651 and 652 provide background in leadership and management skills and are required for the Certificate in Business Management: The other 6 credits required for the Certificate in Business Management may be selected from among the following courses:

- MBA 501 Managerial Economics (2 credits)
- MBA 504 Business Law (2 credits)
- MBA 510 Financial Accounting (2 credits)
- MBA 520 Financial Management (2 credits)
- MBA 530 Marketing Management (2 credits)
- MBA 650 Creating High Performance Organizations (2 credits)

### **B. Gerontological Studies**

Graduate students in the counseling programs may undertake advanced work in Gerontological Studies. A general outline of the program may be found under the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies section of the Graduate Catalog. Additional details of this program may be obtained from your academic advisor.

## **XII. Law-Psychology And Law-CMHC Curriculum**

Valparaiso University offers two joint degree programs with the School of Law, the JD/MA in Psychology and the JD/MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. The purpose of the JD/MA program is to give individual interested in legal careers a solid background in psychological research and practice. The JD/CMHC program involves additional training and will allow the individual to apply for licensure in Indiana and states with similar licensing laws. Curricular requirements for these programs are given in the University Catalog and in Course of Study Planning Sheets included in Appendix C.

### **XIII. Academic Expectations**

#### **A. General expectations and attendance**

Graduate coursework in counseling or psychology at Valparaiso University is offered as part of programs for professional training and preparation. As such, the classes need to be treated as if they were part of your professional work. You need to set for yourself the highest standards of performance and participation.

Graduate courses, particularly those related to counseling, have substantial discussion, demonstration and participation components that are essential to the learning process. Because of this, class attendance is vital. The faculty realizes that illness as well as work obligations, family demands and inclement weather may at times necessitate a class absence or an occasional tardiness. However, a pattern of tardiness or absences is problematic for your academic pursuits just as it is for your professional obligations. As a general rule, more than two absences from a class will result in some grade penalty, and more than four absences (1/3 of the class in a once-per-week course) will receive an unsatisfactory grade. If it appears you will need to miss more than four classes, consult with the instructor about the advisability of withdrawing from the course. Specific policies for absence are set by the individual instructor for each course, and can be found in the class syllabus.

#### **B. Withdrawal and incomplete grades**

Sometimes a student may find that it is impossible for them to fulfill course requirements in a timely manner. Often this happens because of unexpected health problems or personal difficulties. The University has three options for dealing with this situation: incomplete grades, withdrawal from a course, and withdrawal from the University.

The *grade of Incomplete (I)* is an option when the student has completed most of the work for the course but is unable to finish everything by the end of the semester. A grade of Incomplete gives the student an additional semester to complete work for the class and receive regular credit.

Extensions beyond this extra semester are usually not allowed. The grade of Incomplete is generally not appropriate in situations where there are many missed classes or large amounts of uncompleted work.

The *grade of Withdrawal (W)* should be used when a student has early and sustained difficulties with attendance and/or completing assignments. A grade of Withdrawal means you will have to retake the course at a later time, but it does allow you to escape an unsatisfactory or failing grade in the class. Please note that this grade is issued by the graduate school, not the instructor, and requires that you complete appropriate paperwork—the instructor cannot do this for you. In order to ensure permission for a withdrawal you must apply for it by a mid-semester deadline that is set by the Graduate School. Application for withdrawal after this deadline requires a petition that may or may not be granted. Depending on the date of withdrawal, you may receive partial refund of tuition monies.

A decision to *withdraw from the University* for the semester is appropriate when a person has a

major health or personal crisis that affects their performance in several courses. You receive grades of Withdrawal in all registered courses. This allows you time to deal with personal matters and then re-enter your program without penalty.

It is the responsibility of the student to approach the instructor about the possibility of an incomplete grade or course withdrawal, and to complete all paperwork that is necessary with the Graduate School.

### **C. Independent Study**

Students may desire to explore areas of study beyond the standard curriculum. In such cases an independent study may be appropriate. The Graduate School has specific policies regarding independent study. With the permission of the chairperson of the psychology department and of the Graduate Dean, a student may earn up to six of the minimum credits required for a degree by means of independent study and research projects. In order to apply for permission to undertake an independent study project, a student must have satisfactorily completed at least twelve semester hours of their approved master's degree program. Regularly scheduled graduate classes (or undergraduate-only courses) may not be taken as a graduate level independent study unless (1) it is approved by the Program Director and the counseling faculty and, (2) a petition has been submitted and approved by the Graduate Council prior to registration (please note that approval of an independent study to replace a regularly scheduled class is rare). The Dean of the Graduate School must approve all independent studies and research projects prior to registration. Additional information about the policies regulating independent study can be found in the Graduate Catalog.

### **D. Personal disclosure in classes**

Success as a professional counselor depends upon personal development as well as mastery of necessary academic material and technical skills. In order to facilitate personal development, several courses involve some level of personal disclosure in practice exercises or as directly related to the content of the class. For instance, the Group Counseling class includes significant use of a personal/professional experiential process group that provides essential experience in learning about groups while also providing a mechanism for examining personal issues related to the effective delivery of mental health counseling services and enhanced collaboration with colleagues. The specifics of what any individual shares in courses is a matter of personal choice and level of disclosure is not associated with academic grades in any courses.

Any concerns about personal disclosure should be directed to the instructor or the Program Director.

## **XIV. Experiential training**

Experiential training is perhaps the single most important element of a counseling training program. The knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired through academic coursework may be severely tested by the demands of "real world" counseling situations. Policy for experiential

training is set by the faculty and administered by the Counselor Training Coordinator (CTC) who provides mentorship and supervision. Detailed information is found in the Field Placement Handbook which will be provided at the pre-practicum meeting held in the Spring Semester.

### Entering the Field Placement Sequence

Experiential training is completed toward the end of the student's academic program, when pre-practicum requirements have been satisfied. These requirements are as follows:

1. *Complete course prerequisites.* Before enrolling in the practicum, students must complete each of the core program courses with no grade lower than a “B-“:

- COUN 635 Intro to Psychopathology (Fall)
- COUN 642 Advanced Psychopathology (Spring)
- COUN 660 Helping Relationships: Counseling Theories (Fall; prerequisite for 662)
- COUN 662 Helping Relationships: Counseling Processes (Spring)
- COUN 693 Professional Issues and Ethics in Counseling (Spring)

2. *Informational meeting.* All students planning to do a field placement are **required** to attend a group informational meeting held early in the Spring Semester that outlines the goals and procedures of the practicum and internship program, as well as the steps the individual will have to take to be approved for field placement.

3. *Complete a pre-practicum interview with the CTC.* Students wishing to enroll in practicum must contact the CTC, who will conduct a pre-practicum review of skills, academic knowledge, goals and attitudes. In addition, program faculty members who have had you in classes will be consulted for their opinions about your readiness to begin field placement. The interview should take place when you anticipate completing necessary prerequisite courses, and in the semester prior to the time you hope to begin your field placement. Completion of the interview and approval from the CTC are mandatory before you can register for field experience courses. Deadlines for interviews are as follows.

<u>Planned Initial Semester for Practicum</u>	<u>Deadline for Prepracticum Review</u>
Summer Sessions	March 1
Fall Semester	March 1
Spring Semester	November 1

4. *Arrange for an initial field experience site.* Students work out a plan for the field training experiences in consultation with the CTC and must contact the CTC to obtain approval prior to registering for any of the field training courses. Students are responsible for finding their own practicum/internship sites and are encouraged to keep the CTC informed of the progress of their site search. The CTC maintains a list of approved sites. However, you may investigate other site possibilities which will need to be approved by the CTC.

If a student is interested in obtaining experiential training at her/his current work site, the placement must involve different responsibilities from those normally performed. Such placements are subject to the approval of the CTC and the Program Director. For those electing to pursue a placement at their site of employment, it is expected that they will have their training supervised by an individual who is not their immediate work supervisor.

**5. Obtain personal professional liability insurance. Students are required to obtain personal professional liability insurance from a Professional Counseling provider prior to beginning any practicum or internship and must maintain coverage throughout their experience. Students must provide proof of that insurance to the CTC prior to beginning the field experience.** While most agencies and organizations carry malpractice coverage, it typically covers them (the organization) and does not extend to individual liability. **Liability insurance is included with Student Membership in the American Counseling Association** [contact ACA via website at <http://www.counseling.org> or via phone (800) 347-6647]. Reasonable rates may also be available through the American Mental Health Counseling Association (800) 326-2642, or other mental health related professional organizations.

### *Field Placement Sequence*

COUN 685. Counseling Practicum, 120 hours, 40 hours must be direct contact with clients (10 hours must be in the provision of Group Counseling). Involves exposure to a variety of professional counseling activities.

COUN 686. Counseling Internship I, 300 hours, 120 direct contact hours. Involves exposure to a variety of professional counseling activities. Increasing student responsibility for clients.

COUN 687. Counseling Internship II, 300 hours, 120 direct contact hours. Involves exposure to a variety of professional counseling activities. Increasing student responsibility for clients.

COUN 688. Advanced Counseling Internship, 300 hours, 120 direct contact hours. Involves exposure to advanced counseling activities. For CMHC Students.

### *Licensure*

**It is the student's responsibility to make sure that she/he is successfully completing the licensure/certification requirements (including clinical experience requirements, supervision requirements, coursework requirements, etc.) established by the jurisdiction in which the student ultimately intends to pursue professional licensure/certification. Licensure information for all states can be found through the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC; [www.nbcc.org](http://www.nbcc.org)). Students should keep (1) all written records of their field training experiences, (2) syllabi for all courses, and (3) a copy of the Graduate Catalog for use in applying for licensure/certification.**

## **XV. Thesis**

Students hoping to do a Masters thesis should begin planning with a thesis advisor early in their program. The process of designing and conducting the thesis is done in conjunction with registration in *COUN 698 Masters Research Proposal* and *COUN 699 Masters Research and Thesis*. *PSY 602 Research Methods* should be completed before enrolling in COUN 698, and students are encouraged to begin thesis planning before enrolling in either course. Students must be enrolled for thesis credits during each semester of their work, but a maximum of 9 credits (3 credits for 698 and 3-6 credits for 699) can be applied to degree requirements.

The specific procedure is as follows:

(a) Select a general topic area for your project AND a faculty member who will serve as chair for your thesis committee and assist you with your project. Your chairperson should have some special interest and expertise in the area of your project, so choose a topic area that fits both your interests and those of your faculty chairperson.

(b) With the assistance of your committee chairperson, select two other individuals to serve on your thesis committee. Prospective committee members include doctoral level counseling or psychology faculty, doctoral level Counseling center staff, or other doctoral level professionals with appropriate background.

(c) With the guidance of your Chairperson, write a proposal prospectus (brief literature review, brief proposed methods, where you propose to collect your data and expected results). Generally you should try to propose a project that does NOT involve collection of data from off-campus sources. If you wish to do a project off campus, you will need to submit documentation of initial approval from you data site(s) and a realistic time table for collection.

(d) Enroll in COUN 698, completing all needed paperwork and prepare a formal thesis proposal, which is defended before the committee (since scholarship is a public endeavor, any member of the University community may also attend).

(e) If the proposal is approved by the committee, enroll in COUN 699. Students may not register until they present the Program Director with a copy of their proposal signed by all committee members.

(f) Most thesis proposals will involve the collection of data from human participants or animal subjects. If this is the case, submit an Institutional Review Board proposal for approval. If you plan to collect data from students enrolled in General Psychology classes, submit a request for access to subject pool participants.

(g) Conduct the research and write up the results in the form of a thesis, which is defended before the committee. If approved, the student must submit two final revised copies to the committee Chair and two final revised copies to the Graduate School before being awarded a satisfactory grade. Committee signatures must appear on all copies.

## **XVI. Professional development**

One of the central aims of the counseling programs is to help students develop a professional identity as a *mental health counselor*. To facilitate this, CMHC students are required to enroll in four semesters of COUN 694 Counseling Proseminar. Professional identity issues are also incorporated into many of the classes required by the counseling programs. **Furthermore, students are required to join a professional counseling organization when they enroll in COUN 693 Professional Issues and Ethics.** These include the American Counseling Association (ACA; [www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org)), American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA; [www.amhca.org](http://www.amhca.org)), the Indiana Mental Health Counselors Association (IMHCA; [www.imhca.com](http://www.imhca.com)), or the Indiana Counseling Association (ICA; [www.indianacounseling.org](http://www.indianacounseling.org)). Student membership in these organizations is very reasonably priced and provides access to newsletters, special websites, and journals. Some of the organizations also provide free professional liability insurance (*which you are required to obtain prior to beginning experiential coursework*). Attendance at professional conferences is also strongly encouraged.

## **XVII. Ethics and Professionalism**

Central to the mission of the counseling programs is the development of student awareness of, and commitment to, the ethical conduct required of professionals engaging in counseling activities. Accordingly, students are expected to be familiar with, and adhere to, the standards set forth by the Codes of Ethics of the American Counseling Association and the American Mental Health Counselors Association. These include standards for: competence, confidentiality, client consent, avoidance of misrepresentation, reporting abuse, and appropriate conduct toward clients and fellow professionals. COUN 693 Professional Issues and Ethics in Counseling, a required course for all students, provides the opportunity to explore these standards at length. It is also important for students to be mindful of appropriate professional behaviors, including: arriving on time and leaving on time in clinical (and academic) settings, professional communication, professional dress, and other issues that are important as a professional mental health counselor.

Ethical conduct in the program also requires strict adherence to standards of academic integrity. This includes (1) adherence to the University Honor Code as outlined in the Graduate Catalog, and (2) avoidance of plagiarism, which is the use of the words, facts, ideas, or opinions of someone else without a specific acknowledgment of their source. It is the attempt - deliberate or unintentional - to pass off as one's own work what in fact has been borrowed.

Every professional encounters ethical challenges in their work. The key to avoiding problems is consultation with others in difficult situations. Students are strongly encouraged to consult with faculty and supervisors when they find themselves in situations where academic expectations and ethical choices are difficult.

Violation of professional ethics in academic work or professional training (e.g. practicum and internship training) may result in the termination of a student from the program. In the event an ethics violation is suspected, a committee comprised of the student's advisor, the Program Director, and at least one other faculty member will conduct an investigation. Upon findings

substantiating the violation, the matter will be referred to the Chair of the Department and the Dean of the Graduate School for a final decision regarding retention in the program. Students must also maintain compliance with legal standards for practice. Conviction for violation of the law may result in a student's termination from the program where such conviction is relevant to the student's fitness to continue the program and/or practice as a professional counselor. Students should be aware that conviction for certain legal offenses might prevent them from being able to obtain a license to practice as a professional counselor.

Program faculty are also acutely aware of their ethical obligations to students in the program and to individuals in the community served by our students and graduates. There are three areas of possible ethical challenges between faculty and students. The first has to do with avoiding harm or exploitation from the multiple relationships that are inherent in every graduate program, such as when faculty serve in both a teaching and advising capacity. The second concerns maintaining appropriate professional boundaries, so faculty may decline to participate in some off campus activities with students (e.g. attendance at parties or other events). The third involves the prohibition against sexual relationships between faculty or site supervisors and students. Students who feel uncomfortable in interactions with a faculty member because of any of these issues are encouraged to speak to the involved faculty member and/or to discuss the situation with the Program Director or other administrative official.

### **XVIII. Certification and licensure**

Some states/jurisdictions may require that licensed mental health professionals earn degrees from programs with certain certifications or accreditations (e.g., CACREP). Students interested in particular forms of employment in particular states should immediately contact the licensure boards in those states and discuss findings with their academic advisor. Some information regarding certification and licensure is available on the American Counseling Association's website ([www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org)) or through NBCC ([www.nbcc.org](http://www.nbcc.org)) but students should contact the licensure board or credentialing organization for the jurisdiction in which they are interested in practicing to obtain the actual licensing/certification requirements for that jurisdiction. **It is the student's responsibility to make sure that she/he is successfully completing the licensure/certification requirements (including clinical experience requirements, supervision requirements, coursework requirements, etc.) established by the jurisdiction in which the student ultimately intends to pursue professional licensure/certification.**

### **XIX. Recommendations for credentialing and employment**

Recommendations for credentialing and employment may be provided by the faculty, the Counselor Training Coordinator, the Program Director, and/or on-site supervisors. Such recommendations are typically based on (1) academic performance and progress, (2) development of core therapeutic attitudes and skills, and (3) adherence to ethical and professional standards. Additionally, the student's success in forming effective interpersonal relationships in individual and small-group contexts, along with their openness to self-examination and personal and professional self-development, may be factors that impact such

recommendations. Out of courtesy, those whom you approach to write recommendations or complete forms should be provided ample time to respond to these requests.

## **XX. Student evaluation, retention and termination**

In line with profession standards recommended by ACA, the academic performance of students is evaluated each semester the student is enrolled in the program. Criteria for evaluations are based on the current clinical training and research literature and include (1) academic performance and progress, (2) development of core therapeutic attitudes and skills, and (3) adherence to ethical and professional standards. In the event that the faculty believes the student is not progressing in a satisfactory manner, the results of this evaluation will be conveyed to the student in writing, along with suggestions for improvement (a copy will be retained by the Program Director). The intent of the evaluation is to provide students with information to help them in their professional development.

Typically, students are retained in their program as long as they meet Graduate School academic requirements, adhere to ethical and professional standards, and have satisfactory student evaluations. However, students are expected to make reasonable and consistent progress toward the completion of their degree requirements. Students who are not making "reasonable and consistent progress" may be dropped from their program if it becomes apparent that they will be unable to complete it within the allotted 5-year time frame.

It is the hope of the faculty that every student who enrolls in the program will successfully complete the program. However, students may be required to take additional action in the case of a negative evaluation. A written plan for remediation may be presented to a student by the Program Director on behalf of program faculty. Failure to correct the problems identified in the evaluation and remedial plan may lead to a recommendation that the student take a leave of absence or be dismissed from the program.

## **XXI. Student academic fair practices for graduate students**

Valparaiso University is a scholarly community whose aim is to create an environment for humane learning. Toward this end, students and faculty, working together in close relationship, pursue not only knowledge but also wisdom. In their mutual devotion to intellectual discovery and professional development, each stimulates the other. The prerequisite for the continuing success of this endeavor is academic freedom—the freedom to teach and to learn. As full members of the college community, therefore, students, like faculty, are encouraged to develop their capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for the truth. The rights, freedoms, and responsibilities of students outlined below are essential for the realization of this goal.

The vitality of academic freedom depends on appropriate conditions in the classroom, on the campus, at applied training sites, and in the larger community. The responsibility to secure and maintain these conditions is shared by the students, faculty, and administration.

The Graduate Catalog gives specifics on student rights and responsibilities, as well as grievance procedures. This is also accessible online at the Graduate School website.

## **XXII. Resolution of problems**

The Department works hard to promote healthy student-faculty relationships. However, problems may occur. **It is expected that most problems between students or between a student and a faculty member will be resolved between the concerned individuals.** If the difficulty is not resolved after consultation between the concerned parties, the Program Director may be consulted and asked to help resolve the issue. If problems remain, the Chair of the department or the Dean of the Graduate School may be consulted.

## **XXIII. Personal counseling for graduate students**

Personal counseling can be a helpful component in the professional development of a mental health counselor. A list of professionals who have indicated they would be willing to provide services for students, sometimes for a reduced fee, is given in Appendix A.

## **XXIV. Electronic communications**

Faculty members, the Program Director, and other university staff members frequently use students' VU email addresses to communicate with students. Therefore, students are expected to check their VU email account on a frequent basis. This account is provided free of charge and can be accessed from off-campus via the internet. If a student prefers to use some other email address, she/he must arrange for email from their VU account to be forwarded to their preferred email address.

In addition to the importance of email communication within the counseling program, many classes also involve online components. These are typically accessed through the Blackboard course management system. Students should become familiar with this system and how their instructors intend to utilize it in their courses.

Workshops are available through the Information Technology department on campus for students who need to sharpen their computer skills.