


COUNSELOR EDUCATION PROGRAM

COUNSELING STUDENT HANDBOOK



Updated June 30, 2025

For Students Admitted for the 2025-2026 Academic Year

M.S.Ed. in Counseling

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

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W | Western Illinois
University

Catalog Year 25-26

Counselor Education Program (CNED)

Counseling Student Handbook

Congratulations and welcome to the Counselor Education Program! We are so happy to be part of your professional journey. Our job is to help you be successful in your academic and clinical pursuits. We look forward to working with you and seeing you become emerging professional clinical counselors and school counselors. The Handbook that follows provides important information to help you successfully navigate your journey in CNED. Again, WELCOME!!!

This Handbook is to serve as a supplement to the WIU [Graduate Catalog](#). It is your responsibility as a student or prospective student to become familiar with the contents of the Graduate Catalog under which you enter graduate work and the contents of this Counseling Student Handbook. **To confirm that you have received, read, and understood the responsibilities, policies, and procedures outlined in this Handbook, please sign the Agreement Contract at the end of this Handbook and submit it to the Department Office (3300 River Drive, RM 2427, Moline IL) so we can add it to your Program file.** Please note that the requirements from the Department of Counselor Education, College Student Personnel, and Social Work are subject to change at any time based on changes in the Program, Department, University, licensure, and/or accreditation standards. You may be required to adhere to some of these changes.

To help clarify terminology please note the following:

College: College of Education & Human Services (COEHS)

Department: Counselor Education, College Student Personnel, & Social Work

Program: Counselor Education (CNED: Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling)

Faculty Advisor: A CNED Faculty Member assigned to advise a specific student throughout the program

If you should have changes in your contact information (name, address, cell, home and/or work phone numbers) at any time during your program, please contact the Counselor Education Program at 309-762-1876 to update your file.

Sincerely,

Western Illinois University

Counselor Education Faculty

Note. The policies, procedures, and information in this Handbook are subject to change.

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INTRODUCTION

The faculty strive to provide a challenging and supportive environment that encourages personal growth and development. Courses and experiences conform to accepted practice in Counselor Education and are consistent with our accreditation by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Students may select from two nationally accredited program options: School Counseling or Clinical Mental Health Counseling. We hope that you find this Handbook useful as you advance through your program of study.

ACCREDITATIONS AND APPROVAL

1. Council for Accreditation for Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)
2. Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)
3. North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools
4. Higher Learning Commission (HLC)

OUR VISION

The Counselor Education Program at Western Illinois University – Quad Cities will be the leader in educational quality, opportunity, and affordability among its peers.

OUR MISSION

Counselors teaching Counselors: knowledge, development, inspiration and transformation. The Counselor Education Program prepares counseling professionals in school counseling and clinical mental health counseling.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

The curriculum, aligned with our mission:

1. Emphasizes applied and conceptual skills;
2. Affirms diversity of values, ideas, and persons; and
3. Promotes educational excellence and ethical commitment.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

School Counseling Program

Students preparing to work as school counselors will demonstrate the professional knowledge, skills, and practices necessary to promote academic, career, and personal/social development of all **K-12** students. See **CACREP Accreditation Manual 2024 Standards** for additional information at (<https://www.cacrep.org/>).

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program

Students preparing to work as clinical mental health counselors will demonstrate the professional knowledge, skills, and practices necessary to address a wide variety of circumstances within the clinical mental health counseling context. See **CACREP Accreditation Manual 2024 Standards** for additional information at (<https://www.cacrep.org/>).

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION POLICY (Required of all students) **Policies Regarding Criminal Background Investigations**

As a part of the admission process to the Counselor Education Program, all students are required to undergo a criminal background investigation. Students offered admission to the Department's Counselor Education Program are expected to comply with the Personnel Background Investigation Policy. **Students who do not comply with the policy will not be allowed to register and/or attend classes in the Counselor Education program.**

Additionally, many school/agencies require a criminal background check before considering students for clinical field experience and/or volunteer experience. **Neither the Department nor the Program are able to share background check information with outside agencies or institutions.** Students may be prohibited from completing fieldwork or coursework by placement sites if background investigations reveal certain criminal offenses, arrests, and/or convictions.

Some items on a criminal background check may prohibit an individual from completing the Counselor Education Program or obtaining licensure as a professional counselor or as a school counselor.

It is not the responsibility of the Counselor Education Program, Department of Counselor Education, College Student Personnel, & Social Work, the College of Education and Human Services, or Western Illinois University to guarantee that students pass criminal background checks. If a student fails a criminal background check, or if a site fails to place a student because of the results of a criminal background check, it is not the responsibility of the Program, Department, the College, or this University to locate an alternative site that does not require criminal background checks. The Program, Department, College, or University is not responsible for a student's inability to complete the program, obtain licensure or certification.

Please note: you will be asked to update your criminal background information at multiple points in your training. Field placement sites may also require an additional background check prior to accepting you as a volunteer or Practicum or Internship student. Students are responsible for the cost of all criminal background checks.

Questions regarding this policy and procedures should be directed to the Department Chairperson at (309) 762-1876.

Procedure for Criminal Background Investigations

1. Invited applicants will receive an email from the Department Chairperson regarding the online process for the background check.
2. Invited applicants complete the required background check from Approved Background Check Facility including securing required payment.
3. If there are no convictions and/or concerns you will not be notified by the Department Chairperson. Those with convictions and/or concerns will be required to meet with the Department Chairperson to discuss their results and possible implications.
4. Invited applicants will not be formally admitted into the Program until they have completed procedure step 2.
5. Additional background checks may be requested at the discretion of the Program, Department and/or field placement sites.

Upon the completion and receipt of criminal background investigation the following may occur:

1. In cases where the student's record is clear, a student's file will reflect that the investigation was completed and deemed satisfactory. No further action is required by the student.
2. If information that may negatively impact licensure/certification or field placements is noted:
 - a. Invited applicants will meet with the Department Chairperson to review and discuss the results of the background check. The handling of all information will be strictly confidential and will adhere to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
 - b. The Department Chairperson will discuss with you the potential difficulties that may occur from a positive background check and help you plan accordingly. You will sign a document indicating that this discussion was held and that your field placement site will be notified that there were conviction(s) on the background check.
 - c. If the information presents potential difficulty for licensure/certification, field placement, or the safety of faculty, staff, or other students, the Department Chairperson may meet, in conjunction with the Department Personnel Committee, (the DPC) for further review. Information regarding student rights and responsibilities can be found at the following site: <http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php>
3. All students (degree and non-degree), regardless of the initial criminal background investigation, will be required to complete a Field Experience Disclosure Form prior to clinical courses and field work experiences. The forms will be completed during the last week of the semester prior to enrolling in clinical courses and field work experiences. The disclosure status form will indicate whether or not a student's criminal background status has changed and what changes occurred. Non-degree students must also complete a full criminal background check (please see Department Chairperson and/or CNED website for Authorization Form) prior to taking clinical courses and field work experiences.
4. It is the responsibility of the student to immediately inform the Department Chair of any changes to the criminal background as soon as they occur while enrolled.

Counselor Education Program – Western Illinois University

Field/Clinical Experience Disclosure Form

Student Name: _____
(please print or type)

I understand that withholding information or giving false information may make me ineligible for admission to school/clinical field experience, or continuation in the Counselor Education Program. I certify that all information is true, correct, and complete. Falsification of any part of this document may result in automatic dismissal from the Counselor Education Program.

I affirm that since completing the initial background investigation for acceptance
(initial)
into the Department of Counselor Education, College Student Personnel, & Social Work's Counselor Education Program on _____ (date of initial background check) **I have not incurred any criminal charges, convictions from prior charges, sentences from prior charges, warrants of arrest, investigation for possible criminal charges, or other activities that may prevent me from engaging in school/clinical fieldwork or working with potential clients.**

OR

I have incurred the following changes since my initial background check that was
(initial) **conducted on** _____ :

Change 1: _____

Change 2: _____

Change 3: _____

Other pertinent information: _____

I am enrolling in the following course for the next term (circle appropriate course(s)):

CN 500

CN 544

CN 547

CN 581

CN 591

CN 592

CN 594

CN 596

CN 597

CN 598

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Counselor Education Program – Western Illinois University

Criminal Background Update Form

Student Name: _____
(please print or type)

I understand that withholding information or giving false information may make me ineligible for admission to school/clinical field experience, or continuation in the Counselor Education Program. I certify that all information is true, correct, and complete. Falsification of any part of this document may result in automatic dismissal from the Counselor Education Program.

**_____ I affirm that since completing the initial background investigation for acceptance
(initial) into the Department of Counselor Education, College Student Personnel, & Social Work's
Counselor Education Program on _____ (date of initial background check) I have not incurred any
criminal charges, convictions from prior charges, sentences from prior charges, warrants of
arrest, investigation for possible criminal charges, or other activities that may prevent me from
engaging in school/clinical fieldwork or working with potential clients.**

OR

**_____ I have incurred the following changes since my initial background check that was
(initial) conducted on _____ :**

Change 1: _____

Change 2: _____

Change 3: _____

Other pertinent information: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

CNED PROGRAM POLICIES

WIU E-mail

The WIU email address is the **only** way the University, the Department, and the CNED Program will communicate with students regarding schedules, registration times, grades, announcements, and other important information. As such, it is imperative that students activate their WIU ECOM email account in order to receive this important information. The directions for activation of your account are on the Program webpage or call the UTech Support Center at (309) 298-8324.

Counselor Education Program Listserv

All students will be added to the Counselor Education Program Listserv, which is used to communicate advocacy and public policy information, topic discussion, educational exchanges, and other relevant information. Additionally, this is a medium for the Department Chairperson, the CNED Program Coordinator, and CNED faculty to post upcoming schedules, changes, reminders, and important department/program announcements. Students are responsible for checking their WIU e-mail accounts on a regular basis (at least twice per week) and being aware of information presented through this means of communication.

Student Liability Insurance

All students are required to hold student liability insurance while enrolled in courses for the Counselor Education Program. Student liability insurance is a benefit of student membership in American Counseling Association and/or American School Counseling Association. Students must submit proof of liability insurance to the Program Coordinator within the first two weeks of the start of each academic year (August).

Criminal Background Update Form

All students are required to submit an updated Criminal Background Update Form within the first two weeks of each academic year (August) and when requested. This form does not require an additional background check, but verifies the ongoing status of your criminal background. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the Department Chairperson of any changes in your criminal history immediately.

Professional Comportment

Professional comportment is defined as the ability to relate to others in a respectful and supportive manner (Benner, 1991), and is critical to a Counselor's success in relating, communicating, and collaborating with colleagues, students, supervisors, and other members of the profession. Professional comportment is a highly professionalized standard to which the Counselor Education

Program recognizes and appreciates that personal style is often an important part of a person's identity and does not promote or condone censorship of personal style choices or expression. However, when one assumes the role of counselor, it is important to demonstrate awareness about how all aspects of personhood, including personal style, might impact others in a professional setting. Thus, we encourage students to make style choices that are congruent with their individuality while simultaneously upholding the core dispositions. Students are expected to dress in a manner appropriate to their working environment and assigned responsibilities. Faculty reserve the right to establish, identify, and enforce guidelines for dress and appearance. Students who work or train in clinical or school settings should consult with their supervisor, advisor, or faculty about attire specific to the environment. We do ask the following of all students:

- Please be aware that visible exposure of some parts of our bodies may be triggering to some clients, peers, or professional colleagues. We ask that you be mindful of clothing coverage and fit.
- Demonstrate sensitivity to trauma, sensory differences, and diverse client identities. Please remember that clothing, jewelry, or other forms of personal expression that overtly display a professional's personal belief systems may activate previous experiences of marginalization in some students, supervisors, and/or clients. This also includes strong personal fragrances, strongly scented grooming products, or essential oils.

Note that attire related to qualities like religion, gender identify and expression, cultural identity and disabilities are typically considered appropriate.

Picture

All students are required to upload a professional-looking picture for their online accounts. This photo should not include any background and be a portrait photo of yourself from the shoulders up.

Ethical Behavior Statement

All students are expected to adhere to the ethical standards of the American Counseling Association. An ethical violation is viewed by the faculty as a serious offense and may result in dismissal from the program. The Counselor Education Program uses the latest version of the ACA Code of Ethics. Additional ethical requirements are listed in individual course syllabi. It is the student's responsibility to be knowledgeable and act in accordance with these standards. See www.counseling.org

Class Attendance

All students are expected to attend classes in the manner in which they are offered. See https://www.wiu.edu/student_success/disability_resources/reasonableAndTypicalAccommodations.php for Attendance Accommodation consideration and requests.

Statement of Expectations

The Counselor Education Program is charged with the dual task of nurturing the development of counselors-in-training and ensuring quality client care. In order to fulfill these dual responsibilities faculty must evaluate students based on their academic, professional, and personal qualities. A student's progress in their program may be interrupted for failure to comply with academic standards or if a student's interpersonal or emotional status interferes with being able to provide ethical services to clients. For example, in order to ensure proper training and client care, a counselor-in-training must abide by relevant ethical codes and demonstrate professional knowledge, technical and interpersonal skills, professional attitudes, and professional character. These factors are evaluated based on one's academic performance and one's ability to convey warmth, genuineness, respect, and empathy in interactions with clients, classmates, staff, and faculty. Students should demonstrate the ability to accept and integrate feedback, be aware of their impact on others, and accept personal responsibility, and be able to express feelings effectively and appropriately (**including interactions using electronic, social media platforms, and AI**). Any student deemed by their instructor, supervisor, or other Program/Departmental personnel to be exhibiting inappropriate, disruptive, or offensive behavior during class or on field placement, holding side conversations, or exhibiting attitudes inconsistent with that of a counseling professional may be dismissed immediately from class and/or their field placement and may not return until remediation has been completed.

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating and plagiarism. Academic dishonesty at the graduate level is considered a serious offense and may result in dismissal from a graduate program. For a complete statement of the WIU Graduate School's Academic Dishonesty policy, please see <https://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>

See individual faculty syllabi for coursework policy regarding Artificial Intelligence.

What needs to be cited? (from the Kent State Counseling Handbook)

- Any fact, idea, or research finding that is not common knowledge needs to be properly cited.
- Facts that are readily available for verification (e.g., the capital of the United States is Washington, D.C.) do not need a citation.
- If you are unsure of whether something is common knowledge it is a good idea to go ahead and cite the source where you found it.

Grade Appeal Policy

Western Illinois University's Grade Appeal Policy can be found at
<https://www.wiu.edu/policies/gradeapp.php>

PERSONAL, PROFESSIONAL, AND ACADEMIC DISPOSITIONS

The Counselor Education Program believes that a professional counselor is strongly committed to the counseling profession and possesses personality characteristics that enable him/her to establish and ethically maintain a responsible therapeutic relationship that helps facilitate client growth.

CNED Program Dispositions include:

MAINTAIN GOOD MENTAL HEALTH

1. Student expresses a clear understanding and ability to manage own personal needs, values, strengths, areas of growth, feelings and motivations that may impinge upon effectiveness as a student.
2. Student demonstrates a constructive attitude towards feedback from faculty, supervisors, and other students, and incorporates feedback to make appropriate changes in behavior and attitude.
3. Student experiences self as a person of worth, dignity, and self-sufficiency.
4. Student remains aware of potential unrealistic expectations placed on self and on others and makes efforts to respond effectively.
5. Student develops an awareness of unresolved personal issues and the potential impact on others and shows a willingness to resolve those issues through counseling, when recommended or required.
6. Student maintains the mental maturity and courage to help clients (actual and practice) explore painful, sensitive, and difficulty issues.

REMAIN PROFESSIONALLY COMPETENT

1. Student understands personal and professional strengths and limitations.
2. Student practices self-discipline and presents a professional demeanor at all times.
3. Student effectively manages personal assets, such as knowledge, skills, energy, health, and time.
4. Student communicates and interacts with others in an appropriately assertive manner that demonstrates emotional awareness, emotional control, and mutual respect.
5. Student works collaboratively with professional and paraprofessional colleagues (including faculty, staff, and students).

PROFESSIONAL COMPORTMENT

1. Student dresses in appropriate attire specific to the environment.

ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

1. Student consistently adheres to all ethical standards of the American Counseling Association

and American School Counseling or American Mental Health Counselor Association.

STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS

1. Student solicits others' opinions and perspectives about own work. Invites constructive feedback and demonstrates interest in others' perspectives. Student shows strong evidence of incorporating feedback received to change own behavior.
2. Student directly requests feedback and positively acknowledges it. Student shows evidence of active incorporation of feedback into own views and behaviors. Student demonstrates a balanced willingness to give and receive feedback.
3. Student regularly and effectively incorporates feedback regarding impact of own words and behaviors and changes behavior positively.
4. Student is consistently willing and able to articulate full range of feelings. Student demonstrates willingness and accurate ability to acknowledge others' feelings.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

1. Student consistently adheres to the WIU Graduate School's Academic Dishonesty Policy, including cheating and plagiarizing.

ACADEMIC RETENTION

1. Student demonstrates a commitment to achievement and academic proficiency, including
2. attendance at all class meetings, active participation in class and turns in assignments on time.
3. Student demonstrates curiosity and interest in counseling. Student demonstrates creativity and initiative.
4. Student has not earned a grade of C, D, F or U.
5. Student has earned an A or B in all clinical courses taken thus far.
6. Student has a cumulative graduate GPA of 3.0 or higher.

ACADEMIC WORKLOAD

1. Student maintains an academic workload necessary for academic excellence and scholarly achievement.

Academic Workload for Graduate Students (Recommended):

Graduate students should be aware that academic excellence and scholastic achievement usually require a significant investment of time in study, research, and out-of-class projects. Students should expect that the academic workload at the graduate level per semester hour exceeds that of the undergraduate level per semester hour. Students should plan coursework accordingly with their academic advisor. Workload expectations are an estimate of the amount of work needed for

an average student to be successful in graduate coursework. Course grades are based on the quality of the work submitted, not on hours of effort. Workload expectations per semester hour do not vary with the method of delivery of the course or the length of the academic term.

In general, students should plan to devote between 4–6 hours outside of class for each hour in class. Thus, students with a 9–semester–hour course load should schedule between 36-54 hours weekly for completing outside-of-class reading, study, and homework assignments.

It is recommended that full-time students (taking 9 or more semester hours) not work more than 20 hours per week (on or off campus, including assistantship hours).

For 400G-level courses, workload expectations and learning objectives will differ for students enrolled for graduate credit vs. undergraduate credit.

Course Load if Working (Recommended):

Students who are employed (on or off campus, including assistantship hours) should discuss this with their advisor during coursework planning and consider reducing their course loads (semester hours), depending upon their study habits, learning abilities, time management skills, other commitments, and course work requirements. To determine the course load that is most appropriate for you, please refer to the recommendations indicated below:

- Working more than 40 hrs. per week: 3-4 semester hours
- Working 30-40 hrs. per week: 3-6 semester hours
- Working 13-20 hrs. per week: 6-9 semester hours

COUNSELOR EDUCATION PROGRAM CONTINUOUS REVIEW PROCEDURES

As trainers of professional counselors, the faculty of Counselor Education expects prospective counselors to be concerned about other people, to be emotionally stable and psychologically well-adjusted, to be effective in interpersonal relationships, and to be able to receive and give constructive feedback. Further, we expect students to be committed to personal growth and professional development through opportunities such as those provided in course work, group labs, supervision, self-selected readings, and personal therapy.

The Counselor Education Program believes that it is ethically imperative that counselors be willing to do in their own lives what they ask their clients to do. Therefore, the Faculty has an ethical obligation to students, the profession, and the eventual consumers of counseling services provided by our graduates, to monitor not only students' academic progress, but also the personal and professional dispositions of students which will impact their performance in the field.

The faculty believes that participating as a client in individual or group counseling can be both a growth experience for graduate students and a significant educational aspect of training to prepare mental health professionals. Experience as a client in personal counseling is, therefore, strongly recommended for students in our programs. In some circumstances, professional counseling may be a requirement of students in a degree program (see Professional Development Plans). Individual or group counseling should be conducted by a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (Illinois), a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Licensed Mental Health Counselor (Iowa), or a Licensed Clinical Psychologist. Personal counseling may be required by the Program/Department at any time for the student to continue in the Program. The student has the right to choose his/her own licensed professional from those listed above for this requirement.

Review Policy

Throughout the student's matriculation in the Counselor Education Program, a continuous process of advisement and assessment occurs. As a result of this process, both students and faculty members are provided many opportunities to assess the student's compatibility with the program and the student's progress towards completing a graduate degree. The faculty hopes that the result of this review process will produce a high level of congruence between the goals of the student and the objectives of the programs. The continuous review process occurs in the following formats.

1. Academic Evaluation

Each student is evaluated in the traditional manner through grades. Because several of the core classes require successful completion at an "A" or "B" level in order to be admitted to the next level of courses, students should consult the Graduate Catalog for specific pre-requisite information. The grade of incomplete "I" in a clinical course must be removed *prior* to enrollment in the next sequential clinical course. A student who receives the grade of "C" in a clinical course or ethics

course may re-enroll in the course one time and have the retake grade computed into the overall grade point average. Students receiving a grade of C or below in more than six (6) hours of coursework will be removed from the program.

2. Personal and Professional Dispositions Evaluation

Each student is evaluated by the faculty on a regular basis and provided with information about that evaluation through instructor response, personal interview, and formal, written notification. This evaluation provides students with an assessment of their progress, addressing strengths and weaknesses, encouraging improvement, and offering plans for remediation.

3. Annual Review

Once yearly, the Counselor Education faculty conducts a review of all counseling students admitted to the Counselor Education Program (as per CACREP). Academic progress is assessed; students' evaluation on the criteria for admission to the Program is reviewed; personal and professional dispositions are evaluated; viewpoints and information are shared; and recommendations are made at this review. Students are notified of progress (meets expectations, needs improvement, or not acceptable) in writing. Students whose progress is not acceptable in one or more objective/criteria are directed to meet with their advisors to discuss resolution of problem areas. Students may also be directed to meet with their advisors to discuss other areas of concern that need improvement.

See student evaluation and remediation requirements in: 2024 Standards Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (Section 2) and the ACA Code of Ethics of the American Counseling Association.

REMEDIATION AND RETENTION PROCEDURES

The student Remediation and Retention Policies of the Counselor Education Program enable the faculty to formally monitor student progress. If, at any time, a faculty member raises questions about a student's suitability for the program, believes that the student has failed to demonstrate the required skill level, or has knowledge of a serious incident of unethical behavior, the faculty member may request an interview and review of the student's retention in the program. Students also have an ethical responsibility to act upon a situation involving perceived concerning behavior on the part of their fellow students or instructors.

Remediation Policy and Procedures including the Professional Development Plan

1. When a faculty member has concerns regarding a student's academic, personal and/or professional dispositions, a meeting will be held with two members of the faculty, the student and the student's faculty advisor (or another faculty representative, as appropriate). During this meeting, all present will have an opportunity to address concerns. The three faculty members will constitute the Professional Development Plan committee.
2. At this meeting, a Professional Development Plan will be established to address areas of concern. The Professional Development Plan will be corrective rather than punitive, relevant to the specific areas of concern, and appropriate to the unique needs of the individual student. All Professional Development Plans will have a timeline in which expectations need to be met. Professional Development Plans will be signed by all members of the committee.
3. The Committee Chair will provide a written copy of the Professional Development Plan and a letter summarizing the meeting to the Department Chairperson. The student and the faculty advisor/representative will also receive copies of the letter and Professional Development Plan, with appropriate signatures.
4. The execution of the Professional Development Plan will be monitored by the Chair of the Professional Development Plan committee.
5. Upon expiration of the Professional Development Plan, the student, faculty advisor or representative and the concerned faculty member will meet to assess student progress. A letter will be sent to the Department Chair summarizing the meeting, outlining progress made and indicating what, if any, steps are to be taken to continue to monitor student progress. The student and faculty

advisor/representative will receive copies of this letter.

6. If the student has made satisfactory progress with Professional Development Plan, a letter of completion will be sent to the student from the Department Chair. If the student has not made satisfactory progress the Department Chair, in consultation with the full faculty, may choose to convene a Retention Committee for further assessment or make additional recommendations to the Professional Development Plan Committee.

Retention Policy and Procedures

The Student Review and Retention Policy enables the faculty to share information about student progress. If, at any time, a faculty member raises questions about a student's suitability for the program, believes that the student has failed to demonstrate the required skill level, despite attempts at remediation (e.g., personal therapy, or has knowledge of a serious incident of unethical behavior) the faculty member may request an interview and review of the student's retention in the program. The student also has an ethical responsibility to act upon a situation perceived involving unethical behavior on the part of their fellow students or instructors. When information is possessed that raises doubt as to the ethical behavior of professional colleagues, the Program advises students to speak first with the individual whose behavior is in question. If satisfactory resolution is not reached, then the student should speak with his/her/their faculty advisor or the Department Chairperson about the concern.

The Retention Process and Policy of the Department is as follows:

1. When a faculty member has determined that a student has breached conduct befitting a counseling graduate student, the faculty member meets with the student to inform him/her of problem areas that have come to the faculty member's attention. Suggestions for resolution of these problem areas are discussed, and the student's willingness to pursue change is assessed.

In the event that concerns are raised regarding the appropriateness of retaining the student in the Counselor Education Program based on perceived shortcomings, the Department Chairperson will assign the student's advisor to meet with the student about the concerns, resolution of the problem areas, and the student's willingness to change.

2. The faculty member may also write a letter to the Department Chairperson concerning the meeting with the student. If so, the student should also be notified, in writing, of this action.
3. If the Department Chairperson believes the student's issues to be serious enough, he/she/they appoints a Retention Committee to investigate the situation. A Retention Committee is composed of two current, regular Program faculty members and the student's advisor.
4. The student whose behavior is in question is notified, in writing, of the committee appointment. At this step the *Counselor Education Program Student Hearing Procedures* become effective. The student is provided a copy of these procedures. As soon as is reasonably practical, a hearing date will be set. The student will be notified of the date, time, and place by the Retention Committee chair.
5. If the student withdraws from the department or university, the Retention Committee will meet without the student's participation and will make a recommendation to the Department Chair on whether the student, if he/she/they reapplies, should be readmitted to the program.
6. When recommendations are made by the Retention Committee, the student's progress in successfully carrying out the recommendations is monitored by the Committee. Failure to comply with the recommendations or successfully carry out the recommendations may lead to dismissal from the Program.
7. If the student is not satisfied with the Retention Committee's decision, he/she/they may utilize the appeal procedures of the University (consult with the Department Chairperson).

Retention Hearing Procedures

1. The Counselor Education Program Retention Committee is appointed by the Department Chairperson to investigate concerns about students and whether students should be retained in the graduate program. The Retention Committee may conduct hearings as outlined in this document.
2. Members of the Retention Committee will serve as an impartial hearing panel, judging cases fairly and solely on the evidence presented. Its decisions and recommendations will be by a majority vote of the Retention Committee.
3. Retention Committee hearings will be closed to the public.
4. The presiding chairperson of the Retention Committee will exercise control over hearings.
5. The Committee need not observe formal rules of evidence and may exclude unduly repetitious or irrelevant evidence.
6. A single record of proceedings (Zoom recording) will be made of hearings. Such records will be the property of the University and will be used for deliberations and appeals. No other recordings, audio or video, will be permitted. The Zoom link will be saved and entered into the student file.
7. Participants in Retention Committee hearings are expected to treat all others with courtesy and respect. Any person who disrupts a hearing or fails to adhere to the procedural rulings of the Retention Committee Chairperson may be excluded from the proceedings.
8. A student will be provided advanced written notice at least five days before a Retention Committee hearing.
9. Should a student fail to appear at the hearing after proper notification, the hearing will be conducted in absentia. The Retention Committee will review available information and make appropriate determinations.

10. The Retention Committee may request the appearance of witnesses and/or solicit written materials relevant to the concern. Documentation should be provided to the Retention Committee chairperson and students at least three days before a hearing. Relevant information gathered after that time may be introduced and considered at the hearing, at the discretion of Retention Committee chairperson.
11. All information made available for examination by the Retention Committee will be made available to the student. The student may be in attendance throughout the hearing except during committee deliberations. The student may not ask questions or make comments directly to witnesses. Questions may be submitted in writing to the committee and the committee will determine relevance of any question.
12. An advisor may accompany a student to assist at the hearing. The role of an advisor will be limited to providing advice to and consultation with the student. Advisors will not participate in or disrupt the hearing process.
13. Each witness will be given 10 minutes to make an opening statement. Witnesses will be subject to questioning by the Retention Committee. Witnesses may submit a written statement to accompany their verbal statement. Prospective witnesses will be excluded from the hearing during the testimony of other witnesses.
14. The responding student will be afforded 20 minutes to address the situation and explain why he or she should be retained in the Program. The student may ask witnesses to appear before the committee and/or provide relevant materials in support. The names of witnesses and copies of relevant materials must be provided to the Retention Committee chairperson at least three days before the hearing.
15. The Retention Committee will render a decision as soon as is practicable, usually within three working days of the hearing. The Retention Committee will communicate the decision and/or recommendations in writing to the responding student and the Department Chairperson.

ADVISING AND DEGREE PLAN

Upon admission each student is assigned a faculty advisor. It is important for the student to maintain contact and work closely with his/her advisor to be sure of adequate progress through their program. The advisor helps the student to understand the intricacies of the Program and resolve difficulties that may arise. Any change of advisors requires the approval of the Department Chairperson.

Students should meet with their advisors as soon as possible after acceptance into the Counselor Education Program for assistance in completing a tentative course schedule and *Graduate Degree Plan*. Once completed, the *Graduate Degree Plan* is then forwarded with the advisor's approval to the Graduate Committee Chairperson for the Program. **All academic deficiencies must be removed before the student is admitted to candidacy and the student must have at least a 3.0 GPA on all graduate coursework. A degree will NOT be awarded to any student who earns grades of C or lower in more than six (6) semester hours of graduate work. If you do not follow your tentative course schedule, you must meet immediately with your advisor to update your tentative course schedule.**

Once a student's *Graduate Degree Plan* has been approved by the Graduate Council, changes can be made only by petition. The student should consult with her/his/their advisor regarding any petition to amend the *Graduate Degree Plan*. With the advisor's approval, petitions are forwarded to and processed by the Graduate Committee Chairperson for the Program. Your faculty advisor will provide you with your Degree Plan at the appropriate time.

Time to Complete Degree/Revalidation of Courses

The work required for a graduate degree (including transfer courses) must be completed within six (6) consecutive calendar years for master's and specialist students and eight (8) consecutive calendar years for doctoral students from the commencement of the first course taken. An extension of time may be granted, however outdated coursework must be revalidated. Students should contact their Faculty Advisor to begin the revalidation process. Evidence must show that such courses have been revalidated by examination or some other means as determined by the Department and the Program. Transfer courses must be revalidated by instructors from the credit-granting institution. Graduate courses with grades of "C" or lower may not be revalidated. Those outdated courses may be excluded from the calculation of grade point average with the approval of the Department, Program, and the School of Graduate Studies via petition.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The M.S.Ed. in Counseling degree has two options. Students may pursue a School Counseling option, which requires a minimum of 60 semester hours or may select a Clinical Mental Health Counseling option, which requires a minimum of 60 semester hours. Students should consult with their faculty advisor regarding proper sequencing of courses and specialization in either option.

School Counseling Option

I. Required Core Courses: 48 semester hours

- CN 500 Introduction to Counseling Skills (3)
- CN 515 Research and Program Evaluation (3)
- CN 519 Crisis and Trauma Counseling (3)
- CN 540 Marriage, Family, and Relationship Counseling (3)
- CN 541 Lifestyles and Career Development (3)
- CN 542 Assessment Techniques in Counseling (3)
- CN 545 Counseling Theories and Applications (3)
- CN 547 Techniques of Counseling: Pre-Practicum (3)
- CN 549 Professional, Legal, and Ethical Issues in Counseling (3)
- CN 552 Counseling/Helping in a Multicultural Society (3)
- CN 554 Counseling Across the Lifespan (3)
- CN 581 Group Counseling: Theories and Procedures (3)
- CN 592 Practicum: School Counseling (3)
- CN 595 School Counseling Internship I (3)
- CN 596 School Counseling Internship II (3)
- CN 600 Diagnosis (3)
- CN 655 Comprehensive Examination (0)

II. Required Directed Electives: 12 semester hours

- CN 514 Foundations and Professional Orientation to School Counseling (3)
- CN 516 Data Driven School Counseling Programs and Practices (3)
- CN 518 Advocacy, Leadership, and Consultation in Comprehensive School Counseling Programs (3)
- CN 544 Counseling Techniques for Children and Adolescents: Literacy and Play (3)

TOTAL PROGRAM: 60 semester hours

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Option

I. Required Core Courses: 48 semester hours

- CN 500 Introduction to Counseling Skills (3)
- CN 515 Research and Program Evaluation (3)
- CN 519 Crisis and Trauma Counseling (3)
- CN 540 Marriage, Family, and Relationship Counseling (3)
- CN 541 Lifestyles and Career Development (3)
- CN 542 Assessment Techniques in Counseling (3)

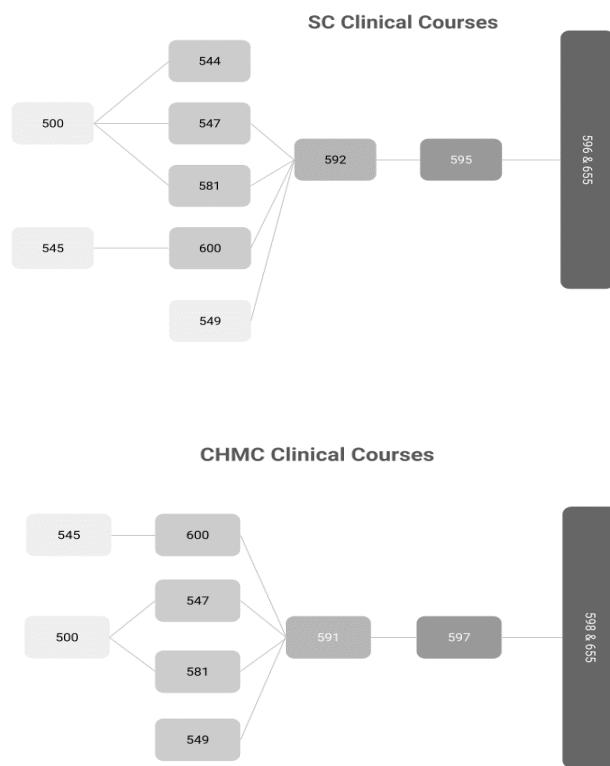
CN 545 Counseling Theories and Applications (3)
 CN 547 Techniques of Counseling: Pre-Practicum (3)
 CN 549 Professional, Legal, and Ethical Issues in Counseling (3)
 CN 552 Counseling/Helping in a Multicultural Society (3)
 CN 554 Counseling Across the Lifespan (3)
 CN 581 Group Counseling: Theories and Procedures (3)
 CN 591 Clinical Mental Health Counseling Practicum (3)
 CN 597 Clinical Mental Health Counseling Internship I (3)
 CN 598 Clinical Mental Health Counseling Internship II (3)
 CN 600 Diagnosis (3)
 CN 655 Comprehensive Examination (0)

II. Required Directed Electives: 12 semester hours

CN 520 Foundations and Professional Orientation to Clinical Mental Health Counseling (3)
 CN 521 Standards of Care and Management in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (3)
 CN 551 Counseling for Addictions (3)
 CN 604 Psychopathology and Psychopharmacology (3)

TOTAL PROGRAM: 60 semester hours

Clinical Course Sequence (subject to change)



CURRICULUM

Counselor Education courses are designed to address the eight core areas as outlined by CACREP. Several courses have prerequisites or enrollment guidelines, so students should consult the Graduate Catalog for these details. **NOTE: Students need to keep/save the Graduate Catalog for the year they are admitted to the Program for future reference.** Students should be aware of the sequential nature of several courses to maximize learning and skill-building. Faculty Advisors help students plan their course sequence so all prerequisites are met. If students deviate from this plan, they risk not being able to take a course when desired because the prerequisites are not met. This can delay program completion. **Curricular requirements are subject to change. Reference your Graduate Catalog for 2025-2026 courses.**

FIELD BASED EXPERIENCES

Arrangements for field-based experiences are made by the student with assistance from the Clinical Coordinator. Sites are to be consistent with the Program emphasis of the student and include appropriate on-site supervision personnel. Sites may include elementary or secondary schools, mental health centers, addiction treatment centers, and special community agencies, (i.e., domestic violence centers, hospitals, or gerontology programs).

Counselor Education faculty are not able to write letters of recommendation for field-based experiences. Students will not be permitted to enroll in Internship until they have satisfactorily met the requirements for Practicum and are ready to work more independently, as is required in Internship.

Students will not successfully complete Internship until they have satisfactorily met the requirements and are ready to function independently as a professional counselor as assessed by the Internship Instructor.

The Counselor Education programs require an updated Field Experience Disclosure Form prior to placement for both practicum and internship. Depending on the information obtained in the criminal background check, students may be denied placement in a field site by that site and/or may not be eligible for certification or licensure. Please see your Faculty Advisor if you have concerns about the criminal background check. Information regarding the Criminal Background Check Policy can be found on the Program website and earlier in this Handbook.

COMPLETION OF CLINICAL COURSES

Clinical courses require a grade of an “A” or “B” for satisfactory completion. Students who receive a grade of “C” will be allowed to retake skills courses once. Failure to make a grade of “B” or higher at the completion of the retake will result in removal from the Counselor Education Program.

Throughout Counselor Education training, counselors-in-training must demonstrate:

- Attitude of openness and receptivity to individual and group supervision;
- Non- defensiveness with regard to supervisor direction;
- Use of pre-session, post-session personal preparation/review process; and
- Awareness and compliance with established ethical guidelines concerning client-counselor relationships, supervisor-supervisee relationships.

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

Litigation involving practitioners in mental health professions has increased dramatically in the last decade or so. Clearly, the best way to avoid involvement in litigation is to adhere to professional ethical standards, as well as to demonstrate high standards of personal and professional conduct. Professional liability insurance is a necessity.

Students as professionals-in-training are required to obtain professional liability insurance before beginning the clinical sequence. The American Counseling Association endorses HPSO as their Counselors Professional Liability Insurance. Please contact HPSO at www.hpso.com or 800.982.9491 for further information. Students who are members of ASCA may also receive liability insurance through that organization. See <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/Membership/Proof-of-Insurance> for further information.

EXIT REQUIREMENTS AND GRADUATION

Application for Graduation

Candidates for graduation must complete the Application for Graduation form and submit to the School of Graduate Studies at least eight weeks before the end of the student’s final term. This form is available from the School of Graduate Studies or on-line at www.wiu.edu/grad

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM POLICIES

The comprehensive examination (i.e., comps) is an exit examination required of all Master's degree counseling students. It is taken while students are enrolled in their final semester. In order to be eligible for the comprehensive examination, students must have completed all the core courses, have an overall average of 'B' or better, and be a student in good standing (i.e., not on probation or in remediation).

Core courses include the following:

Content Area	WIU CORE Course Equivalent
Human growth and development	CN 554 Counseling Across the Lifespan
Social and cultural diversity	CN 552 Counseling/Helping in Multicultural Society
Helping relationships	CN 545 Counseling Theories and Applications <u>and</u> CN 500 Introduction to Counseling Skills
Group work	CN 581 Group Counseling: Theories and Procedures
Career development	CN 541 Lifestyles and Career Development
Assessment	CN 542 Assessment Techniques in Counseling
Research and program evaluation	CN 515 Research and Program Evaluation
Professional orientation and ethical practice	CN 549 Professional, Legal, and Ethical Issues

Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE)

The Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE) is used as the Program's comprehensive exam. The CPCE is researched, developed, and distributed by both the Research and Assessment Corporation for Counseling (RACC) and the Center for Credentialing and Education (CCE), two affiliate corporations of the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC). It is a highly valid and reliable way to make judgments about a student's progress toward mastery of the subject matter of professional counseling.

Benefits of Using the CPCE

1. Allows master's programs with a comprehensive exam to better meet psychometric standards.
2. Gives program an objective view of the knowledge level of their students.
3. Allows programs to examine student functioning in various curricular areas.
4. Promotes longitudinal self-study.
5. Compares a program's results to national data.
6. Stimulates integration of knowledge learned in separate courses.
7. Gives students comparative strength/weakness feedback.

Administration and Evaluation

The purpose of the examination is to determine whether students have attained the level of knowledge in the field of counseling that can ensure minimal competence in the field. Student will be provided with the relevant registration information and deadline for taking the CPCE by the Program Coordinator and/or Office Manager. Deadline for taking the CPCE is typically before Spring Break.

Cost of the exam: Students are responsible for the cost of the CPCE.

After each examination, upon obtaining the results from the CPCE examination office, the Program's comprehensive examination committee establishes cut off points for passing and failure. Typical cut points are *1.5 SD* below the National Mean for Exit Exams for the Total Score.

Students who fall below the cut point for the Total Score on the CPCE must adhere to the following:

1. If the total Score on the CPCE is below the cut point and you failed 3 or less of the content areas (cut point for content areas are established using the same procedures as the Total Score cut point) you may complete an essay examination (developed by the content area faculty expert) for each of the content areas you failed (up to 3) prior to the end of the that same semester. You must pass all the essay examinations in order to advance toward degree candidacy. Students who do not pass all the essay examinations may retake the CPCE once during a future schedule exam date. You must pass the retake in order to advance toward degree candidacy. Students who do not pass the retake may petition the Program's comprehensive examination committee and request a 3rd opportunity to take the CPCE. With the committee's approval, students will first be required to retake the associated core courses related to the area(s) that were not successfully passed during the retake prior to this administration. Students who do not pass this administration of the CPCE will be dismissed from the Program/Department and will not be awarded a degree in Counseling.

2. If the Total Score on the CPCE is below the cut point and you failed 4 or more of the content areas (cut points for content areas are established using the same procedures as the Total Score cut point) you may retake the CPCE once during a future scheduled exam date. You must pass the retake in order to advance toward degree candidacy. Students who do not pass the retake may petition the Program's comprehensive examination committee and request a 3rd opportunity. With the committee's approval, students will first be required to retake the associated core courses related to the area(s) that were not successfully passed during the retake prior to this administration. Students who do not pass this

administration of the CPCE will be dismissed from the Program/Department and will not be awarded a degree in Counseling.

Note: Regardless of the results, students must complete all degree requirements, including successful passage of the CPCE within a 6-year time frame. Multiple failures may result in automatic dismissal due to time limitations. “The work required for a graduate degree must be completed within six (6) consecutive calendar years for master’s students, including transfer courses. Students may petition the Graduate Council for an extension of time for outdated courses. Evidence must show that such courses have been revalidated by examination or some other means as determined by the Program. Transfer courses must be revalidated by instructors from the credit-granting institution. Graduate courses with grades of C or lower may not be revalidated” (see Academic Guidelines and Graduate School Policies).

Students will be provided with their results by the Department Chair or Program Coordinator. Any student wishing to appeal the determination on the comprehensive examination must comply with the same procedures for grade appeal outlined in the University Catalog and the Counseling Student Handbook.

Preparing for the CPCE

The CPCE will cover the eight Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) common-core areas as defined by their *Standards for Preparation*:

1. PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATION AND ETHICAL PRACTICE - studies that provide an understanding of all aspects of professional functioning.
2. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY - studies that provide an understanding of the cultural context of relationships, issues, and trends in a multicultural society.
3. HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT - studies that provide an understanding of the nature and needs of persons at all developmental levels and in multicultural contexts.
4. CAREER DEVELOPMENT - studies that provide an understanding of career development and related life factors.
5. HELPING RELATIONSHIPS - studies that provide an understanding of the counseling process in a multicultural society.

6. GROUP WORK - studies that provide both theoretical and experiential understandings of group purpose, development, dynamics, theories, methods, skills, and other group approaches in a multicultural society.
7. ASSESSMENT - studies that provide an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation in a multicultural society.
8. RESEARCH AND PROGRAM EVALUATION - studies that provide an understanding of research methods, statistical analysis, needs assessment, and program evaluation.

The content addressed in the CPCE is covered in the core courses students complete in your master's degree program at WIU. As a result, a review of core course materials with a focus on information that might be included in multiple-choice questions is the best way to prepare for the exam. Students may obtain information regarding study guides at the following web site: <http://www.nbcc.org> Please note that neither NBCC nor Western Illinois University endorse any study materials for these exams.

The CPCE consists of 160 multiple choice items with 20 items per CACREP area. Of the 20 items per section, 17 will be scored; the remaining three will be pretest items that are not identified to the student. The purpose of imbedded pre-testing is to generate actual score performance data on items. This allows CCE to select items for future test construction that have the most desirable psychometric attributes.

Scores for each section and a total score will be reported for each student. The CCE will provide statistics on the Program's students as well as national data. Each institution is responsible for determining a minimum criterion score for their students. A demographic questionnaire will be included on the answer sheet for research purposes. Students are allowed four hours to complete the examination. Study groups to help you prepare for the CPCE are encouraged.

NOTE: Please make sure that you have taken and passed all **core courses** listed in your graduate catalog prior to the term that you plan to take the exit exam. Students may not take the exit exam if this requirement and others listed are not fully satisfied.

Commencement and Conferring of Degrees

Degrees are conferred in December, May, and August. Commencement exercises are held in May and December on the main campus (Macomb, IL). Students wishing to attend commencement exercises must indicate this on the application for graduation. ALL graduating students must apply for graduation through Graduate Studies by the deadline in order for degrees to be conferred.

Program and Campus Celebrations/Awards may be scheduled to acknowledge student accomplishments.

CERTIFICATION AND LICENSURE

Graduates of WIU Department of Counselor Education, College Student Personnel, & Social Work's Counselor Education Program are strongly encouraged to seek national certification and state licensure. Many state licensure boards including Illinois and Iowa, require a licensure examination in addition to academic and supervised experience. Students should contact individual state professional counselor licensure boards about licensure and certification matters. **Students are responsible for all costs associated with these and other professional examinations related to certification and licensure.**

National certification is obtained through the **National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC)**, offering certification as a National Certified Counselor (NCC). The NBCC also offers specialty certifications in school, gerontological, career, and addictions counseling. Many states, including Illinois, use the NBCC examination as one of their licensure requirements. Students must be enrolled in internship to qualify to sit for the examination before degree completion. We encourage students to sit for this exam shortly after their exit exam. Please contact <https://home.pearsonvue.com/nbcc> for useful information.

School Counseling Basic Skills and Content Examination Requirements

As we are an Illinois school, all school counseling students are expected to adhere to these requirements regardless of state of residence or state of employment. **NOTE: The School Counselor Content Exam is a State of Illinois requirement for school counseling degree/certification seeking students.**

Prior to beginning Internship, all School Counseling students must TAKE and PASS the School Counselor Content Exam.

To register for the Content Exam please see the following website: <http://www.icts.nesinc.com> Please remember that you are required to pass this exam prior to the start of the semester you take Internship regardless of which state you are a resident of or have your field placement/employment.

Students are encouraged to take this exam during or immediately prior to Practicum semester.

Endorsement Policy

The Program curriculums are specifically and carefully designed to prepare counselors who are competent to enter work in professional settings. Further, specialized preparation is essential for graduates to become effective and fully functioning professionals. Therefore, endorsements for Counselor Education graduates can be given only for professional positions and position levels appropriate to the respective program completed by graduates.

Graduates of the School Counseling option will only be endorsed for counseling positions in K-12 schools. Students will only be endorsed for provisional school counseling certifications/licensure (temporary certification/licensure) when they have completed **ALL** coursework except Practicum and Internship, as mandated by the states of Illinois and Iowa. Graduates of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling option will only be endorsed for agency/clinical positions upon completion of that degree.

Students must complete a Request for Recommendation form for each letter of recommendation or reference they are requesting for positions. These can be found at:

<https://www.wiu.edu/registrar/forms/Request%20for%20Letter%20of%20Recommendation.pdf>

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Students and graduates are encouraged to join and to become active in professional organizations, such as American Counseling Association (ACA), ACA divisions, Illinois or Iowa Counseling Associations, and/or state divisions. Application forms are available online (start with www.counseling.org). Student liability insurance is a benefit of membership to ACA and ASCA. Student liability insurance is required of all students throughout training.

Student and Professional Organizations

In addition to a number of student organizations available to WIU- Quad Cities students, the Counselor Education program sponsors the following program-focused organization:

Western Illinois University-Quad Cities (WIU-QC) Counseling Association (student)

The WIU-QC Counseling Association promotes counselor development through education and community involvement. The Executive Council consists of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Social Director. The Counseling Association's Social Committee, led by the Social Director, organizes and promotes educational and social events at the WIU campus and in the community.

All students enrolled at the WIU-QC campus are eligible to become a member of the Association. If you are interested in becoming an Executive Council member or an active member in this association, please contact the faculty advisor for the Counseling Association at cned@wiu.edu or let your Faculty Advisor know of your interest.

Student Life at the Quad Cities and Macomb Campus:

- Student Life Home: https://www.wiu.edu/qc/student_life/
- Student Activities: <https://wiu.presence.io/>
- Student Services: https://www.wiu.edu/qc/student_life/student_services/
- Career Center: <https://www.wiu.edu/careers/>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Inactive Status

Students are able to move to “inactive” status for a period of no more than 1 year. After one year, the individual will have to reapply to the Program and is subject to the same process as new applicants.

This applies regardless of how far along the student is in their respective counseling Program specialization and how many credit hours they have earned. To initiate the inactive status, students must write a letter to the Department Chair stating they wish to be inactive. Additional instructions will follow.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is available as graduate assistantships, scholarships, and low-interest loans. Graduate assistantships are academic-merit-based award programs, which provide students with work opportunities in a job closely related to their academic field of study. Students with full-time graduate assistantships will receive a stipend and a waiver of tuition. There are Program, Department, and externally funded assistantships available. Students may contact the School of Graduate Studies regarding assistantships in areas other than Counselor Education. Graduate assistantship applications are available at http://www.wiu.edu/graduate_studies/prospective_students/gainfo.php

Students applying for an assistantship in Counselor Education must also provide an application letter, resume, and three professional letters of recommendation to the Program. Selection of assistantships is completed during spring semester or shortly after. Students must be enrolled full time to qualify for an assistantship. Please contact the Office Manager for further information at (309) 762-1876.

Students may contact [wiu.edu/qc/financial_aid/](http://www.wiu.edu/qc/financial_aid/) regarding the various forms of financial assistance. For more information contact Financial Aid Advisor at 309-762-2446.

WIU- Quad Cities Financial Aid can assist you with the following:

- Questions regarding your Financial Aid status
- Questions you may have about your Financial Aid forms
- Readjusting your Financial Aid award due to *unusual or special circumstances*
- Understanding the different loan options

Faculty do not advise students in Financial Aid matters.

APPENDIX

HELPFUL HINTS

Academic

1. Ask lots of questions. You are here to learn.
2. Be flexible and open to new and various ideas, perspectives, lifestyles, clients, and types of problems, as well as other issues and concerns.
3. In practicum and clinical courses, don't be afraid to make mistakes, take risks, and try out new things. In addition, it is not helpful to compare yourself to your peers. Each individual's journey is unique with different personal and professional experiences.
4. Keep up with your reading in class; if you're not on top of this, you can easily fall behind.
5. Make appointments with professors so they can get to know you and you can get to know them. Later you may need them for letters of recommendation.
6. Expand your horizons by taking electives in areas that interest you as well as those with which you're unfamiliar.
7. You can learn a lot by observing others doing counseling. Observe counseling sessions by watching counseling tapes from the counseling department library or media library.
8. Keep your syllabi from each course taken as well as the Graduate Catalog. You may later need to furnish employers, licensing boards, and other graduate programs with information on the content of courses you have taken in your master's program.
9. Subscribe to professional journals and read them as well as other counseling related materials. In addition, you can write an article with a professor who has an area of interest that is similar to yours and then submit the article for publication in a journal.
10. Attend professional conferences both to stay current in your professional knowledge as well as to network with other mental health professionals.
11. Begin to prepare your vita or resume by keeping a list of your special skills and experiences.
12. Read your syllabi carefully and review again at midterm and final.
13. While other students try to be helpful and give advice, remember your faculty advisor should be your primary source for advising related to scheduling, course rotation, and graduation.

Non-Academic

1. Keep a journal while you are in the program to document your feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and experiences in the program and trace your progress in areas such as personal growth and theory development.
2. Take advantage of personal growth experiences in your course work. The more you learn about yourself, the better counselor you'll be.
3. Make friends in the program to lean on for support, to have fun with outside of class, and to "blow off steam" together. With these friends you can explore your beliefs about counseling, theories, nature of people, and other topics.
4. Keep connections with family and friends outside the Program and Department. They can also be a valuable source of support.
5. Graduate school can result in substantial personal growth that may interfere with personal relationships. The best way to counteract potential difficulties is to keep spouses and significant others apprised of your growth and, when possible, invite them to join you in growth activities. In addition, it is helpful to prepare them for your level of time commitment. Write out a schedule and leave it with them so they know where to contact you.
6. Maintain a balanced lifestyle. Have a hobby and involve yourself in physical activity. For instance, some of your professors enjoy golf or jogging; others enjoy recreational reading.
7. It behooves a mental health professional to model the behaviors we espouse. Therefore, during times of stress, seek support including personal counseling.
8. Keep perspective. Commit to only as much as you can do well. Laugh and enjoy yourself.
9. Believe in yourself!

Several elements of the Helpful Hints are printed with permission from the Master's Student Handbook Program in Counseling, University of North Texas.

REMINDERS

This Handbook is to serve as a supplement to the WIU [Graduate Catalog](#). It is your responsibility as a student or prospective student to become familiar with the contents of the Graduate Catalog under which you enter graduate work and the contents of this Counseling Student Handbook.

To confirm that you have received, read, and understood the responsibilities, policies, and procedures outlined in this Handbook, please sign the Agreement Contract at the end of this Handbook and submit it to the Department Office (3300 River Drive, RM 2427, Moline IL) so we can add it to your Program file.

Please note that the requirements from the Counselor Education Program are subject to change at any time based on changes in the Program, Department, University, licensure, and/or accreditation standards. You may be required to adhere to some of these changes.

If you should have changes in your contact information (name, address, cell, home and/or work phone numbers) at any time during your program, please contact the Counselor Education Program at 309-762-1876 to update your file and notify the Registrar's Office at R-Office@wiu.edu

We're glad you are here!

Sincerely,

*Western Illinois University
Counselor Education Faculty and Staff*

Note. The policies, procedures, and information in this Handbook are subject to change.

COUNSELING PROGRAM FACULTY AND STAFF

CNED Program CORE Teaching Faculty



Rebecca McLean, Ph.D., L.C.P.C, N.C.C., A.C.S.
Professor
The University of Akron



Leslie W. O'Ryan, Ed.D., L.C.P.C., N.C.C.
Professor
University of South Dakota



Carrie Alexander-Albritton, Ph.D., L.C.P.C, N.C.C., C.A.D.C.
Professor
Idaho State University



Matthew J. Beck, Ph.D. L.C.P.C., N.C.C., A.C.S.
Associate Professor
University of Iowa

CNED Program Adjunct Teaching Faculty

The Counselor Education Program values the expertise and real-world experience that adjunct teaching faculty bring to the classroom. As seasoned practitioners and leaders in the field, our adjunct instructors enhance the educational experience by integrating current clinical practices, diverse perspectives, and specialized knowledge into the curriculum. Their involvement helps bridge the gap between theory and practice, preparing students to meet the evolving needs of the counseling profession with competence and confidence. The CNED Program is committed to fostering meaningful collaboration between full-time and adjunct faculty to ensure a high-quality, dynamic, and relevant learning environment for all students.

CNED/CSP/SW Department Chairperson
Dr. Jeff Hancks

CNED/CSP/SW Department Staff
Coming Soon! - Office Manager

See https://www.wiu.edu/coehs/cnedesp/faculty/cned_fac_staff.php for additional information about faculty and staff.

Questions?

Call: (309) 762-1876 or

Email: CNED@wiu.edu

**Western Illinois University
MODEL RELEASE FORM**



I, _____, do hereby give Western Illinois University its assigns, licensees, and legal representatives the irrevocable right to use my name (or any fictional name), picture, portrait, photograph, and/or video image in all forms and media (including the Internet) by Western Illinois University, and I waive any right to inspect or approve the finished version(s), including written copy that may be created in connection therewith. I am an adult. I have read this release and am fully familiar with its contents.

Model Signature: _____

Local Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Major: _____

Year in School: _____

Have you ever been convicted of a felony, misdemeanor or ordinance violation?

YES _____ NO _____

If yes, please provide the following:

Charge you were convicted of: _____

County and State the case was in: _____

Year of the case: _____

Brief description of the facts of the case. ** _____

** This information is kept confidential; however, if you have been convicted of any of the above mentioned, the University reserves the right to not use your image and name as a featured profile student.

University Relations

1 University Circle • Sherman Hall 302 • Macomb, IL 61455

Phone (309) 298-1993 Fax (309) 298-1606

U-Relations@wiu.edu • wiu.edu

COUNSELOR EDUCATION PROGRAM AGREEMENT CONTRACT

I, _____ (student name) have received and read the Counseling Student Handbook from Western Illinois University's Counselor Education Program. I understand the policies and procedures as stated in the Handbook. I agree to fulfill the requirements as stated and to abide by the policies set forth herein.

I further agree that the Faculty of the Counselor Education Program at Western Illinois University has the right and responsibility to monitor my academic progress, my ethical behavior, and my personal and professional dispositions.

I further assume full responsibility for meeting the requirements of the School of Graduate Studies and the College of Education and Human Services as outlined in the WIU Graduate Catalog. I recognize that the requirements from the Counselor Education Program are subject to change at any time based on changes in Program, Department, College, University, IDHE, and/or accreditation and licensure standards and that in certain circumstances I will be subject to these changes.

I am aware that neither Western Illinois University nor the Counselor Education Program will provide or pay for my legal counsel in the event I am sued for malpractice while doing my counseling practicum and internship or other related laboratory experiences. Nor will the University pay damages or other costs incurred by me in the event I am found liable. I hereby agree to provide proof of malpractice insurance and notification of any changes in my insurance coverage in my clinical courses. I will hold Western Illinois University harmless in the event I am sued and found liable.

If in the opinion of the faculty, any and/or all of the above stated points are in question, I agree to abide by the faculty's decision as to whether or not I will continue in the Counselor Education Program.

Signature

Date

Please sign and date this form. Bring it with you when you attend the required new student orientation meeting.

This form is to be turned in and will be added to your student file.

Thank you!