



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
& HUMAN PERFORMANCE

Student Handbook

Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (EDCM) Master's Program

Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling

Texas A&M University-Kingsville

Effective Fall 2025

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Introduction to Clinical Mental Health Counseling

The Master of Science Degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (EDCM) program offers students the opportunity to earn a degree that meets accreditation standards for the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the nation's foremost Counseling Accreditation agency. The 60-semester-hour degree with three choices of emphases in School Counseling, Rural Mental Health, and Sandtray Therapy serves the needs to provide graduates with the necessary coursework to become Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC) in Texas and to promote academic excellence, scholarly research, and equality in professional counseling.

Program Mission

Our mission is to prepare competent counselors in the areas of professional counseling to work with culturally diverse populations and to provide these graduates with the educational and experiential tools to acquire positions in a wide variety of mental health settings. Our mission correlates with the University and Department's mission of "preparing competent counselors in the areas of professional counseling to work with culturally diverse populations and to provide these graduates with the experiential tools to acquire positions in a wide variety of mental health settings and global society."

Academic Unit

This program is housed in Rhode Hall of the Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling within the College of Education and Human Performance on the Texas A&M University-Kingsville campus. The Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling Faculty office locates on the first floor of Rhode Hall in the area of the department office, Rhode Hall room #100.

Program Objectives

- (1) **Professional Counseling: Foundations and Ethical Practice**
- (2) Students demonstrate a strong identity and an understanding of ethical practice in clinical mental health, foundations, and history in professional counseling.
- (3) **Professional Counseling: Contextual Dimensions**
- (4) Students demonstrate an understanding of professional counseling contextual factors, including credentialing, cultural factors, and record keeping.
- (5) **Professional Counseling: Practice**
- (6) Students demonstrate an understanding of professional counseling practice, including theories, techniques, assessments, interventions, and advocacy in professional counseling.
- (7) **Social and Cultural Diversity**
- (8) Students demonstrate multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary for competency in working with a diverse population.
- (9) **Human Growth and Development**

- (10) Students are able to demonstrate an understanding of development across the lifespan and the impacts on normal and abnormal functioning.
- (11) **Career Development**
- (12) Students demonstrate understanding and application of career development theory to help individuals with career planning and decisions.
- (13) **Counseling and Helping Relationships**
- (14) Students demonstrate the knowledge and skills of theories and techniques necessary to engage in an effective and therapeutic helping relationship.
- (15) **Group Counseling and Group Work**
- (16) Students demonstrate competency in preparing and facilitating group counseling.
- (17) **Assessment and Testing**
- (18) Students demonstrate the ability to identify effective assessment strategies in order to facilitate treatment planning.
- (19) **Research and Program Evaluation**
- (20) Students demonstrate an understanding of quantitative and qualitative research methods as well as program evaluation to inform evidence-based practice.

Admission Requirements

To be accepted into the program, the applicant must submit the following documents:

- A bachelor's degree
- A transcript with a minimum overall 3.0 GPA in undergraduate coursework
- A transcript with a minimum overall 3.0 GPA in graduate coursework for transfer students (a final course grade of B and above for transfer credits)
- A purpose statement
- A resume

The application must be made through [ApplyTexas.org](https://apply.texas.org).

Transfer Credits

Our program accepts up to 15 hours of counseling credits from graduate-level transfer students if the course's final grade is above B. Students must email the faculty advisor and/or program coordinator all the syllabi for the transfer credits for an evaluation. The faculty advisor will examine if the syllabi meet the CACREP standards.

Counseling Program Faculty

Name & Position	Earn Degrees	Courses Taught in the Program	Research Interests/Specialty Areas
Steve Bain D.Min., LPC-S, NCC Tenured Professor	D.Min. in Counseling, Luther Rice College/Seminary in Lithonia, Georgia, 1992 M.S. in Counseling and Personnel Services,	Teaching full-time at TAMUK since 2009 • Community Rural Mental Health Counseling	• rural mental health • graduate student success • grief and loss

Name & Position	Earn Degrees	Courses Taught in the Program	Research Interests/Specialty Areas
Core Faculty Faculty Advisor	Memphis State University, 1988 B.S. in History, University of North Alabama, Florence, 1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership & Advocacy in Rural Communities • Group Counseling • Techniques • Intro to Counseling & Ethical Practice • Ethics & Legal Issues • Field Practicum • Research in Counseling • Human Growth & Development • Career Counseling • Crisis Counseling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-injury among children and adolescents • psychological impact on weight management surgery clients and student retention factors
Kristopher Garza Ph.D., LPC-S, NCC Tenured Associate Professor Core Faculty Faculty Advisor	Ph.D. in Counselor Education, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (CACREP-accredited program), 2015 M.S., Counseling, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, 2012 B.S. in Exercise Science, Texas A&M University-Kingsville, 2011	Teaching full-time at TAMUK since 2012 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field Practicum • Internship • Human Growth & Development • Ethics and Legal Issues • Career Counseling • Counseling Techniques • Group Counseling • Counseling Techniques • Community Rural Mental Health Counseling • Leadership & Advocacy in Rural Communities • Research in Counseling • Multicultural Counseling • Marriage and Family Counseling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rural mental health • counseling supervision • first-generation college students • self-efficacy and resilience among adolescents and college students • retention factors in academia • stress management • career counseling • multicultural issues
Ya-Wen Melissa Liang Ph.D., LPC-S, NCC, Certified Humanistic Sandtray Therapist Tenured Associate Professor Sandtray Therapy Transcribed Certificate Program Coordinator	Ph.D. in Counselor Education, Sam Houston State University (CACREP-accredited program), 2015 ME.d. in Counseling, University of North Texas (CACREP-accredited program), 2010 B.A. in English Literature, Providence University, Taiwan, 1995 Business Administration, ChihLee 5-Year-College, Taiwan, 1992	Teaching full-time at TAMUK since 2016 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theories of Counseling • Basic Sandtray Therapy • Advanced Sandtray Therapy • Diagnosis and Psychopharmacology • Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling • Field Practicum • Assessment in Counseling • Research in Counseling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acculturation • supervision • sandtray therapy • holistic mental wellness • Asian populations • social justice • minorities • cancer support • COVID-19 wellness • multicultural counseling • correctional counseling • rural mental health • college student success • counseling specialty includes: dual diagnoses, anger management,

Name & Position	Earn Degrees	Courses Taught in the Program	Research Interests/Specialty Areas
<p>Chapter Faculty Advisor (CFA) of the Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) for the Tau Alpha Kappa Chapter</p> <p>Core Faculty</p> <p>Faculty Advisor</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Counseling and Ethical Practice • Leadership and Advocacy in Rural Communities • Multicultural Counseling • Group Counseling Techniques • Ethics and Legal Issues • Counseling Techniques • Career Counseling 	<p>addictions, relationships, co-dependent relationships, work stress, adjustment issues, CPS care, adjudicated youth, adolescents, anxiety, bipolar, depression, family/couple/marriage counseling, caregiver stress, acculturation, PTSD, Alzheimer's issues</p>
<p>Jinnelle V. Powell</p> <p>PhD, LPC-S, EMDR Trainer & Consultant</p> <p>Assistant Professor of Counselor Education Rural Mental Health Emphasis (Tenure Track)</p> <p>CACREP Liaison</p> <p>CMHC Program Coordinator</p> <p>Core Faculty</p> <p>Faculty Advisor</p>	<p>Ph.D. in Counselor Education, Walden University (CACREP Accredited), 2024</p> <p>M.S. Community and Mental Health Counseling, Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi, Texas (CACREP Accredited), 2011</p> <p>B.A. Sociology, Texas A&M University – Kingsville, 2008</p>	<p>Teaching full-time at TAMUK since 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counseling Techniques • Research in Counseling • Assessment in Counseling • Theories of Counseling • Field Practicum • Rural Mental Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Mental Health • Minority Stress, Well-Being, and Relational Health of Counseling Students • Trauma informed teaching and practice • Efficacy of Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) Treatment • Effective practices of counseling supervision
<p>Evelyn K. Fitzgerald</p> <p>Ph.D., LPC-S, RPT-S, LCDC</p> <p>Clinical Assistant Professor</p> <p>Clinical Coordinator</p>	<p>Ph.D. in Counselor Education, Sam Houston State University (CACREP-accredited program), 2013</p> <p>M.Ed. in Counseling, Sam Houston State University. 1997</p> <p>B.A. in Psychology, University of Houston, 1992</p>	<p>Teaching full-time at TAMUK since 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counseling Techniques • Field Practicum for Counselors • Internship • Basic Sandtray Therapy • Advanced Sandtray Therapy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supervision • play therapy • wellness and self-care in the prevention of vicarious trauma in counselors-in-training

Name & Position	Earn Degrees	Courses Taught in the Program	Research Interests/Specialty Areas
Core Faculty Faculty Advisor			
<p>Lorena Rosenbaum</p> <p>PhD, LPC-S</p> <p>Lecturer</p> <p>Core Faculty</p>	<p>Ph.D. in Counselor Education, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (CACREP-accredited program), 2015</p> <p>M.S. Counseling, Texas A&M University Kingsville, 2012</p> <p>B.S. in Exercise Science, Texas A&M University - Kingsville, 2011</p>	<p>Teaching as adjunct faculty at TAMUK since 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field Practicum • Internship • Research in Counseling • Intro to Counseling & Ethical Practice • Theories of Counseling • Counseling Techniques • Ethics & Legal Issues • Abnormal Behavior • Group Counseling Techniques • Assessment in Counseling • Human Growth & Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at-risk youth • adults, and rural communities • motivational interviewing • wellness • retention and advocacy

Degree Plan

M.S. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (EDCM) Degree Plan

Department of Educational Leadership & Counseling, Texas A&M University – Kingsville

☐ Clinical Mental Health Counseling (60 Hours, CACREP-accredited)

- ☐ CMHC 60 Hours with School Counseling emphasis
- ☐ CMHC 60 Hours with Rural Mental Health emphasis
- ☐ CMHC 60 Hours with Sandtray Therapy emphasis

☐ Initial Plan ☐ Revised Plan ☐ Final Plan Date: _____
 Name: _____ Student ID #: _____
 Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
 Phone (Home): _____ Work: _____
 Student Email: _____ Personal Email: _____

MAJOR: Counseling Core (54 credit hours) and Elective Courses (6 credit hours)

Semester Year	Core Requirements (54 Hours, 18 courses)	Semester Year	Emphasis/Elective Courses (6 Hours, Only 2 elective courses are required) You are welcome to take over 2 electives. Summer Electives are 5 weeks in length. Spring & Fall Electives are 16 weeks in length.
	EDCG 5310 Intro to Counseling and Ethical Practice (3)		EDCG 5358 School Counseling Techniques - Summer only
	EDCG 5311 Theories of Counseling (3)		EDCG 5354 Program Development for School Counselors - Summer only
	EDCG 5339 Human Growth & Development (3)		EDCG 5360 Community/Rural Mental Health Counseling (RMH emphasis)
	EDCG 5312 Counseling Techniques (3)		EDCG 5362 Leadership & Advocacy in Rural Communities (RMH emphasis)
	EDCG 5315 Ethics and Legal Issues (3)		EDCG 5343 Basic Sandtray therapy (Sandtray Therapy emphasis) - Summer I only
	EDCG 5324 Assessment in Counseling (3)		EDCG 5344 Advanced Sandtray Therapy (Sandtray Therapy emphasis) - Summer II only
	EDCG 5347 Multicultural Counseling (3)		EDCG 5341 Sp. Topics: _____
	EDCG 5323 Group Counseling Techniques		
	EDCG 5329 Research in Counseling		
	EDCG 5321 Abnormal Human Behavior (3)		
	EDCG 5345 Diagnosis & Psychopharmacology (3)		
	EDCG 5357 Field Practicum for Counselors (3)		
	EDCG 5350 Marriage, Couple, & Family Counseling (3)		
	EDCG 5355 Career Counseling (3)		
	EDCG 5366 Internship I (3) Fall & Spring Only		
	EDCG 5322 Addictions Counseling (3)		
	EDCG 5364 Crisis Counseling (3)		
	EDCG 5368 Internship II (3) Fall & Spring Only		

Sixty (60) semester hours must be completed for LPC licensure. The student needs to submit page 5 of the Practicum Application form to the Practicum/Internship Coordinator to seek approval before enrolling in the Practicum class. The student needs to pass the comprehensive exam (offered during the semester of taking Practicum course) before graduation. If not passing, the student has the 2nd opportunity to pass it while taking Internship I and the 3rd opportunity to pass it while taking Internship II.

A master's degree student must complete all requirements within seven years of initial registration for that degree. All work must be coordinated through the advisor. All "I" grades must be removed within 12 months. Independent Study requests must meet strict guidelines for approval.

Advisor's Signature

Student's Signature

Course Requirements and Prerequisites

Students must complete EDCG 5310 (Professional Development and Ethics) and EDCG 5311 (Theories of Counseling) in the program's first semester.

Course		Prerequisites
EDCG 5323	Group Counseling Techniques	EDCG 5310, EDCG 5311, EDCG 5312
EDCG 5344	Advanced Sandtray Therapy	EDCG 5343 Basic Sandtray therapy
EDCG 5357	Practicum	Completion of at least 24 credit hours
EDCG 5366	Internship I	EDCG 5357 Practicum
EDCG 5368	Internship II	EDCG 5366 Internship I

Policies and Procedures

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. This legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodations of their disability. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as early as possible at (361) 593-3024. DRC is located in the Student Health and Wellness building at 1210 N. Retama St. Refer to the https://www.tamuk.edu/dean/dean_files/studenthandbook.pdf

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to read, understand, and abide by the University's policy on Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Procedures. The policy is published in the *Student Handbook* [Policy, Rules and Procedures | Texas A&M University Kingsville \(tamuk.edu\)](#).

Professional Dispositions

Professional Dispositions are assessed by each of your faculty members each semester and in each course you are enrolled in. They are scored and reviewed by the TAMUK Counselor Education Council for Accreditation of Counseling Education and Related Programs (CACREP) committee on a semester basis. Each disposition below is scored as either Met (1) or Unmet (0). [Remediation and support planning](#) are dependent on the issues related to an "unmet" score. It is vital that professional counselors are prepared to enter the profession and practice independently. Alignment with each disposition below ensures learners' readiness for entering the profession.

Engagement

Learner attends scheduled meetings and/or responds to emails from their course instructor, advisor, and other university professionals in a timely manner. Learner engages in classroom assignments in a timely manner, and if applicable, contributes to academic settings and promotes peers' learning.

Accountability

Learner accepts their contributions to their academic performance, skill development, and identified deficiencies. When identified either by themselves or an evaluator, the learner takes action to improve their professional effectiveness.

Relationships

Learner demonstrates the ability to behave in a professional manner with others, which includes navigating differences.

Awareness and Openness to Others

Learner is mindful of and attentive to the feelings, experiences, and perceptions of others honoring the autonomy of others. Learner evaluates how personal beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviors affect others and uses sound judgment to assess situations properly.

Objectivity

Learner exhibits contextual and cultural competency by valuing the fundamental rights, dignity, and worth of all people. This encompasses respect for age, culture, disability, ethnicity, race, religion/spirituality, gender, sexual orientation, marital/partnership status, language preference, socioeconomic status, veteran status, immigration status, or any basis as defined by potential clients' experience.

Discipline

Learner demonstrates emotional regulation which includes the ability to control personal stress, self-disclosure, and excessive emotional reactions that interfere with professional functioning.

Growth

Learner demonstrates the ability to engage in self-examination, challenge their assumptions, and integrate feedback to reach an acceptable level of competency.

Communication

Learner exhibits a respectful tone and uses open, honest, and accurate statements in dealing with others.

Congruence

Learner demonstrates understanding and implementation of relevant ethical codes, accreditation standards, and institutional policy within their professional behavior across settings.

Academic Misconduct

You are expected to adhere to the highest academic standards of behavior and personal conduct in this course and all other courses. Students who engage in academic misconduct are subject to university disciplinary procedures. Make sure you are familiar with the *TAMUK Student Handbook* (https://www.tamuk.edu/dean/dean_files/studenthandbook.pdf), especially *Section 10: Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Procedures* and *Section 11: Nonacademic Misconduct Disciplinary Procedures*. You are expected to practice academic honesty in every aspect of this course and all other courses. Please make certain that you are familiar with the *TAMUK Student Handbook*, as students who engage in academic misconduct are subject to University disciplinary procedures. Forms of academic dishonesty include:

1. Cheating: deception in which the student misrepresents that he/she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he/she has not mastered; giving or receiving aid unauthorized by the professor on assignments or examinations.
2. Aid of academic dishonesty: Intentionally facilitating any act of academic dishonesty. Tampering with grades or taking part in obtaining or distributing any part of a scheduled test.
3. Fabrication: use of invented information or falsified research.
4. Plagiarism: unacknowledged quotation, and/or paraphrase of someone else's work, ideas, or data as one's own in work submitted for credit. Failure to identify information or essays from the internet and submitting them as one's own work also constitutes plagiarism. Please be aware that the University subscribes to the Turnitin plagiarism detection service. Your paper may be submitted to this service at the discretion of the instructor.
5. Lying: deliberate falsification with the intent to deceive in written or verbal form as it applies to an academic submission.
6. Bribery: providing, offering or taking rewards in exchange for a grade, an assignment, or the aid of academic dishonesty.
7. Threat: an attempt to intimidate a student, staff or faculty member for the purpose of receiving an unearned grade or in an effort to prevent reporting of an Honor Code violation.

Please be aware that the University subscribes to the Turnitin plagiarism detection service. Your paper may be submitted to this service at the discretion of the instructor.

Other Forms of Academic Misconduct Included But Are Not Limited To:

1. Failure to follow published departmental guidelines, professor's syllabi, and other posted academic policies in place for the orderly and efficient instruction of classes, including laboratories, and use of academic resource or equipment.
2. Unauthorized possession of examinations, reserved library materials, laboratory materials or other course related materials.
3. Failure to follow the instructor or proctor's test-taking instructions, including but not limited to not setting aside notes, books or study guides while the test is in progress, failing to sit in designated locations and/or leaving the classroom/test site without permission during a test.
4. Prevention of the convening, continuation or orderly conduct of any class, lab or class activity. Engaging in conduct that interferes with or disrupts university teaching, research or class activities such as making loud and distracting noises, repeatedly answering cell phones/text messaging or allowing pagers to beep, exhibiting erratic or irrational behavior, persisting in speaking without being recognized, repeatedly leaving and entering the classroom or test site without authorization, and making physical threats or verbal insults to the faculty member, or other students and staff.
5. Falsification of student transcript or other academic records; or unauthorized access to academic computer records.
6. Nondisclosure or misrepresentation in filling out applications of other university records.
7. Any action which may be deemed as unprofessional or inappropriate in the professional community of the discipline being studied.

Nonacademic Misconduct Disciplinary Procedures

An individual engaging in disruptive behavior may be subject to disciplinary action. Such incidents will be adjudicated by the Dean of Students under nonacademic procedures. Ongoing behaviors or single behaviors considered distracting (e.g., coming late to class, performing a repetitive act that is annoying, sleeping or reading a newspaper in class, etc.) will be addressed by the faculty member initially either generally or individually. Cases in which such annoying behavior becomes excessive and the student refuses to respond to the faculty member's efforts can be referred to the Dean of Students. In the case of seriously disruptive behavior in a classroom, the instructor may first request compliance from the student and if it is not received, an instructor has the authority to ask the student to leave the classroom. If the student fails to leave after being directed to do so, assistance may be obtained from other university personnel, including the University Police Department. An individual engaging in such disruptive behavior is subject to disciplinary action. Such incidents will be adjudicated by the Dean of Students under nonacademic procedures to determine if the student should be allowed to return to the classroom.

Harassment and Discrimination

Texas A&M University-Kingsville does not tolerate discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, gender, gender identify or sexual orientation (or any other illegal basis) and investigative processes are available for any reports that indicate sexual harassment, sex-based misconduct, harassment, or discrimination may have occurred by a respondent that has enrolled at or is employed with the university. Sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking based on sex are types of sex discrimination. Such sexual misconduct is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Any member of the university community violating this policy will be subject to disciplinary action. A person who believes they have been the victim of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking based on sex or unlawful discrimination of a protected class may pursue either the informal or the formal complaint resolution processes. Reports may be initiated with the Office of Compliance at (361) 593-4758, with the complainant's immediate supervisor, a department head, a supervisory employee, any faculty or staff, or the Dean of Students at (361) 593-3606. Regardless of who the incident is reported to, the Compliance Office will be notified of the report so that they can reach out to the complainant to discuss supportive measures and administrative processes that may be available.

Please note, all faculty and staff are mandated reporters, except for counselors at Student Health and Wellness. Counselors at Student Health and Wellness are confidential reporters and will not disclose any identifiable information regarding an incident that is made known to them. However, they may be able to provide information on where supportive measures can be obtained and administrative processes initiated. A mandated reporter (any faculty and staff) is required to report any incident that is made known to them, while they are working within their job description, to the Office of Compliance, Lewis Hall, Suite 130, 361-593-4758, titleix@tamuk.edu. This includes incidents that have occurred on or off-campus. For those who wish to remain anonymous and are not reporting a mandated report, anonymous reporting is available at <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/19681/index.html>.

Six-drop Policy

The following provision does not apply to students with Texas public college or university credits prior to Fall 2007. The Texas Senate Bill 1231 specifies the number of course drops allowed to a student without penalty. After a student has dropped six courses, a grade of QF will normally be recorded for each subsequent drop. Additional information on Senate Bill 1231 is available at the Registrar's Office at (361) 593-2811 and at [Academic Procedure: Drop Policy](#).

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodations of their disability. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as early as

possible in the term at (361) 593-3024. DRC is located in the Student Health and Wellness building at 1210 N. Retama St.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Protocols

Please refer to the syllabus for “AI” writing tools.

Prohibited use of AI tools

AI tools (such as ChatGPT) are not permitted for any stage or phase of work in this particular class. If you use these tools, your actions will be considered a violation of the University’s academic misconduct policy and may lead to disciplinary procedures.

Limited use of AI tools

During this class, there may be opportunities to make use of AI tools (such as ChatGPT). You will be informed as to when, where, and how these tools are permitted, along with guidance for attribution. Any use outside of this permission will be considered a violation of the University’s academic misconduct policy and may lead to disciplinary procedures.

Broad use of AI tools

AI tools (such as ChatGPT) are welcome in this class, provided that you properly cite when and how you use the tool. Using an AI tool to generate content without proper attribution qualifies as a violation of the University’s academic misconduct policy and may lead to disciplinary procedures.

Matriculation Requirements

Academic Standing Policy

A minimum grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale is required in the approved degree plan for the graduate program or graduate certificate after Fall 2025. Grades of “C”, “D”, or “F” earned after Fall 2025 do not apply toward a graduate degree. A final course grade of “C” *earned at TAMUK before Summer 2025 is accepted* toward a graduate degree. Courses may be repeated for credit, in which case the last grade of the record is the official grade.

Grades

Only grades of “A” or “B” will be accepted toward this degree beginning Fall 2025. A final course grade of “C” *earned at TAMUK before Summer 2025 is accepted* toward a graduate degree. Candidates for the Master of Science degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling must earn at least 60 semester credit hours and maintain a minimum overall GPA of 3.0. A grade point average of 3.0 or better on all graduate work on the approved degree plan is required for graduation. If a course is retaken, the last grade will be counted toward graduation and computation of the overall grade point average. A course in which an “F” is received is considered a course completed, and the course must be retaken at the same institution.

Comprehension Exam

Students must demonstrate proficiency in counseling knowledge by passing the comprehensive exam. Students must complete and pass the comprehensive exam before applying for graduation. Students are required to register and take the comprehensive exam during the semester that they take Practicum and will have two more attempts to pass the exam during their internship I and II semesters. Registration instructions are sent out to all students taking Practicum and those who need to retake the exam during their internships. The examination covers the following eight content areas corresponding to the associated courses in our program: 1) human growth and development-EDCG 5339, 2) social and cultural diversity-EDCG 5347, 3) helping relationships-EDCG 5311 & EDCG 5312, 4) group work-EDCG 5323, 5) career development-EDCG 5355, 6) assessment-EDCG 5324, 7) research and program evaluation-EDCG 5329, and 8) professional orientation and ethical practice-EDCG 5310 & EDCG 5315.

Course Longevity

A master's degree student must complete all requirements for each specific graduate degree within seven years of initial registration for that degree. Graduate credits older than those stipulated are not applicable toward a graduate degree without written approval from the Graduate Dean.

Repetition of a Course

If a student repeats a course that may not be taken for additional credit, it is the university's policy to count as part of a student's cumulative grade point average only the last grade received in the course, whether passing or failing, other than a grade of Q. However, for purposes of grade point average calculation on coursework for graduation, grades stand as recorded unless the same course is repeated at this university.

Students who have received their first bachelor's degree cannot repeat courses that were used to earn the first degree for purposes of grade point average calculation.

It is the responsibility of the student, after repeating a course, to file a special request form in the Office of the Registrar, so that the adjustment in the grade point average, when applicable, can be entered on the permanent record.

Withdrawing from a Class

After mid-semester, dropping courses is not recommended unless there are extenuating circumstances. Your course instructor has the option of assigning you a "Q" or even an "F", so be sure that dropping the class is the best decision. In some cases, you may be able to obtain an "Incomplete" if some unexpected emergency or illness prevents you from completing the final requirements of the course, but you will have to complete those requirements soon thereafter.

Once you have made the decision to drop and have made arrangements with your course instructor, you will need to visit with your faculty advisor and complete a drop form. Both the

course instructor and your faculty advisor must sign the form. The Office of the Registrar will then process your drop request.

Important Note: if you have obtained funding through the Financial Aid Department, and register for a class but then fail to attend, you will be "flagged" by the university and required to pay back your funding.

Withdrawing from the University

Sometimes life brings the unexpected. If it becomes necessary for you to drop all of your classes during the semester, you must notify the Office of the Registrar and process a Withdrawal Form. If the withdrawal is before the mid semester point, then you will automatically receive a grade of "Q" in each course. If you do not process the withdrawal, you will receive a grade of F in each course, so take the time to do it right. Those grades will follow you around forever.

Expectations of Students

A graduate student must exhibit a normal and reasonable rate of scholastic progress. If in the opinion of the student's committee and the graduate dean, the student has made an unsatisfactory rate of progress, the student may be dismissed from a specific program, even with a grade record that falls within guidelines.

Enrollment in this Master's degree of Science in the CMHC program is limited to graduate students preparing for licensed Professional Counselors and/or School Counselors; thus, class participation is expected as just one component of professional responsibility. All students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Students are to treat faculty and students with respect. At all times, students are expected to demonstrate personal characteristics consistent with the characteristics of professional counselors and engage in ethical behavior as defined in the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics, the Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council, and the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors Rules.

As future counselors, students will consistently demonstrate their professionalism. If a student misses more than four classes of any courses, the student will automatically lose one letter final grade for the course. If students would like to appeal the loss of a letter grade, students must provide an explanation and proof associated with all absences and the case will be presented to the general faculty for consideration.

Students are expected to earn a grade of "B" or above after Fall 2025 and a grade of "C" or above before Summer 2025 to pass all 60 credit hours of courses and achieve the academic requirements to earn a Master's degree in CMHC. Students are expected to demonstrate an attitude of reflection and thoughtfulness about professional growth and instructions, including the following:

1. Students completing the program will demonstrate an understanding of students' development, including diversity and student achievement.

- a. Students will review and be able to classify, distinguish, explain, and demonstrate knowledge of diversity and multiculturalism.
 - b. Students will demonstrate an understanding of student development based on theoretical knowledge of development and counseling techniques.
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of planning, implementing, and evaluating a developmental CMHC program and providing effective counseling services and student assessments.
3. Students will demonstrate competency in collaboration with parents, schools, and communities, and applications of appropriate ethical standards and decision-making strategies
4. Students completing the program will demonstrate an understanding of and ability to evaluate research, critique research articles, and present research proposals.

Liability Awareness

Students taking clinical courses, such as but not limited to Group Counseling, Practicum, and Internship courses, as helping professionals, must have their own adequate liability coverage for themselves during the training period. Texas A&M University-Kingsville does not provide legal protection for students in the event of legal problems arising in the Group Counseling, Sandtray Therapy, Practicum, or Internship settings. Students must have a liability insurance coverage in the minimum amount of \$1,000,000 incident/\$1,000,000 aggregate when taking group counseling, practicum, and internship courses. Students in training will choose their own insurance company. Sources that will ensure students include:

- ACA Insurance Trust, Inc. www.hpsso.com
- Texas Counseling Association www.txca.org
- Healthcare Providers Service Organization (HPSO) www.hpsso.com

Appropriate Dress and Conduct

Students in clinical classes, such as Group Counseling, Sandtray Therapy, Practicum, and Internship, should dress appropriately at the counseling clinic, counseling center, and their sites while seeing clients. Students should use discretion in maintaining an appropriate dress.

Academic Appeal Policy

After being reported to the Registrar, grades other than “I” may not be changed unless an error has been made by the instructor. Students should review their end-of-semester final grades closely to ensure accuracy. If an error or discrepancy should occur, the student should contact the course instructor and the Office of the Registrar immediately for the resolution of the discrepancy. It is recommended that those changes occur no later than the beginning of the next semester. Under no circumstances will grades be changed after one calendar year. Additional information is available in Section 19: Final Grade Appeal Process of the TAMUK Student Handbook (https://www.tamuk.edu/dean/dean_files/studenthandbook.pdf).

Policies: Retention, Remediation, and Dismissal from the Program

Retention and Remediation

At TAMUK, remediation is viewed as an opportunity to identify areas for growth and support of counseling students.

When faculty members have concerns about any of the Professional Disposition criteria outlined in the handbook, the student may be placed on a Support Plan. To continue matriculation through the program, students will be asked to review and sign the related document that outlines concerns and expectations. Remediation refers to targeted instruction or support provided to help a learner meet expected competencies or correct academic or skill deficits. For example, a counseling student might receive remediation to strengthen clinical skills, professional behavior, or ethical decision-making that fall below program standards.

Support and Resources for Success

Becoming a professional counselor is more than academic performance and includes [professional dispositions as outlined in the Handbook](#). As such, based on student performance and engagement in the program, the faculty/staff deems it necessary for students to have additional guidance and resources to remain or be successful in the program and as a future professional counselor. When this occurs, a Support Plan will be created that outlines goals, as well as specific ways and strategies that students can engage in to be successful in the program and as future professional counselors.

This can include several actions which include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Writing a reflection paper related to the area of needed support
- 2) Retaking a course
- 3) Individual counseling
- 4) Extra skills training
- 5) Additional supervision
- 6) Video presentations or skills demonstrations
- 7) Delayed start to field experience courses

Remediation Steps

- 1) Faculty or staff complete a dispositions concern form with recommendations for student support.
- 2) The assigned remediation appointee reviews the concerns and assigns a plan for the student to complete.
- 3) The student completes the plan and submits evidence of plan completion to the assigned remediation appointee.
- 4) The student may be asked to meet with the Program Coordinator, CACREP Liaison, Department Chair, advisor, faculty, and/or related staff who have observed the student as needing support. During this meeting, specific concerns related to Professional

Dispositions criteria will be discussed, and the student will have the opportunity to share context related to the concerns outlined.

5) A student who does not complete their plan satisfactorily may be subject to dismissal from the program.

Probation and Dismissal

A graduate student who fails to achieve and maintain an overall 3.0 grade point average during any semester of enrollment will be placed on academic probation. A student who fails to achieve a 3.0 overall grade point average by the end of the next semester of enrollment will be placed on academic suspension. After the academic suspension is served, the student may not return to the program or may re-enroll only upon the approval of the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies. Failure to achieve an overall 3.0 grade point average during any subsequent semester of enrollment will result in dismissal, and the student will not be allowed to pursue further study in the program. Courses taken from other institutions will not be transferable if taken during a period of suspension from Texas A&M University-Kingsville. Students on academic suspension from another institution will not be admitted to Texas A&M University-Kingsville until their specific period of suspension expires. Students who fail to meet the professional expectations of the field for which they are preparing may be suspended from further study in that program by the department administering that program.

In addition to the appraisal of graduate student GAP, students' academic performance, ethical behaviors, counselor development, and clinical performance are assessed throughout courses in the Counseling program by the program faculty and site supervisor(s). The Counseling program faculty and site supervisor(s) serve as gatekeepers to ensure students' counseling competency for delivering professional counseling services and protecting client welfare. If any behaviors or dispositions hamper the student's academic performance, clinical skill development, or professional counselor identity, the assigned faculty advisor, course instructor, site supervisor, practicum/internship coordinator, or program coordinator can request to meet with the student to discuss dispositions. Faculty and/or the site supervisor are responsible for working with the student to facilitate a development plan to help the student overcome academic, clinical, or ethical challenges. The student and the faculty advisor, course instructor, site supervisor, practicum/internship coordinator, or program coordinator should both sign on the agreed development plan. Students are responsible for enhancing the area(s) of growth or conquering professional impairment within the agreed time frame.

If additional concerns arise, or the student is not observed as meeting expectations, or if they are not demonstrating a fit for the profession, additional steps may be necessary to include formal recommendation for dismissal.

Reinstatement

The graduate student who is dismissed for any reason may request reinstatement through the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies. The student will be screened by the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies in consultation with the program coordinator from the academic area in which the student desires to study.

Graduation

Filing for Graduation

The candidate must file for graduation in the Office of the College of Graduate Studies. It is the student's responsibility to submit to the Office of the Registrar the proper documentation showing the completion. Graduate degree candidates must obtain clearance and complete a Degree Candidacy form at the Graduate Office. Clearance to graduate follows the recommendation by the official graduate coordinator/faculty advisor(s) and Department Chairperson to the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies. Students may apply for candidacy with the graduate dean six months in advance of the day of graduation by presenting a signed, final degree plan.

Application and all required forms are posted on the College of Graduate Studies website: [Graduation Information | Texas A&M University Kingsville \(tamuk.edu\)](https://www.tamuk.edu/education/departments/counseling/advising.html)

A student must be in good standing with the College of Graduate Studies in order to complete graduation requirements within seven years of initial registration.

Steps for Completion of Graduation

Step 1. Meet with your Program Faculty Advisor.

<https://www.tamuk.edu/education/departments/counseling/advising.html>

To ensure your success in meeting graduation requirements, you must meet with your advisor PRIOR to applying for graduation. If you are receiving two degrees from two different colleges, you must meet with both advisors.

Step 2. Application for Graduation

After reviewing your final degree plan with your faculty advisor, you may complete the online application for graduation. [Graduation Application Guide](#)

Step 3. Review Information

Review the information on your application regarding commencement.

- Need a Name Change? Contact the Office of the Registrar prior to the deadline.
- Need a Major, Minor, and/or Concentration Change? Contact your Advisor.
- Need a Diploma Address Update? Make changes via Blue and Gold through [JNET](#).

Conditions Applicable to Graduate Degrees

Final Degree Plan

Once a final degree plan in Degree Works has been submitted to the Office of the Registrar for candidacy check-out, the final degree plan cannot be changed during the semester of candidacy without the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies' review and written permission.

Comprehensive Examination

Each graduate student must demonstrate proficiency in the major subject (and supporting field area if it includes nine semester hours or more) by passing the comprehensive exam approved by the appropriate graduate coordinator(s) and administered by the student's program committee. Students are encouraged to take their first comprehensive examination during their first semester of practicum class.

Application for Degree

Graduate degrees are conferred at the close of each regular semester and second summer session. Candidates for advanced degrees who expect to complete their work must first seek approval from their faculty academic adviser and then program coordinator to apply for graduation with the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies, submit a final degree plan/transcript, and complete an application for candidacy in the Office of the Registrar. It is the student's responsibility to be informed and meet graduation deadlines which are published in the Academic Calendar in an earlier section of this Catalog and in the Class Schedule each semester. A student cannot graduate with an *I*, *S*, *U*, or *F* notation on their academic record in the last semester prior to graduation.

Commencement

The degree is conferred at the commencement following the fulfillment of all requirements. The candidate is expected to be present.

Credentialing

The introduction of procedures regarding credentialing is introduced in the practicum class and again in the internship I and II classes. A student who graduates from this program will be eligible to apply for an LPC Associate and/or School Counselor. In Texas, certification is required to counsel in the public school; licensure is required to counsel outside the public school or religious setting. The applicant with a criminal history who seeks professional credentials should contact the appropriate Board prior to enrollment in the program to determine eligibility for certification and/or licensure.

- The State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) for School Counselors: <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/leadership/state-board-for-educator-certification>
- Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors: <https://bhec.texas.gov/texas-state-board-of-examiners-of-professional-counselors/>
- National Board for Certified Counselors: <https://nbcc.org/>

LPC Associate and LPC

During the practicum and internship classes, students are introduced that a license is needed to work as a counselor in Texas. Licenses are granted by the State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors. To qualify to become a licensed professional counselor in Texas, the following must be met:

- An applicant must pass the National Counseling Exam (NCE) or National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Exam (NCMHCE)
 - <https://www.nbcc.org/exams/nce>
 - <https://www.nbcc.org/exams/ncmhce>
- An applicant must complete the Texas Jurisprudence Exam at https://www.dshs.texas.gov/counselor/lpc_Jurisprudence.shtm
- An LPC Associate applicant must obtain a graduate degree in counseling from an accredited school meeting the credit limit.
- An LPC Associate must meet supervised clinical experience requirements of 3,000 hours of postgraduate professional counseling, 50% of which must involve direct client contacts. This must also include a minimum of four hours of supervision per month and be completed in not less than 18 months.

National Counselor Exam/National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Exam

Taking the NCE or NCMHCE is not required for graduation from our CMHC program. See a full list of study guide materials at <https://www.nbcc.org/exams/examprep>

Both the NCE and NCMHCE cover the following content areas:

- Human growth and development
- Social and cultural diversity
- Helping relationships
- Group work
- Career development
- Assessment
- Research and program evaluation
- Professional orientation and ethical practice

Credentialing Endorsement Policy

Students in the Counseling program are responsible for presenting and preserving proof of clinical documentation including direct client hours, indirect hours, supervision hours, accumulated experiences, client contacts, professional services, liability insurance, site supervisor credentialing, site supervisor contact information, site supervisor training, and other required training. Students who offer telehealth counseling under the supervision of the site supervisor(s) are required to present and preserve proof of completion of telehealth services. Clinical documentation is required for all clinical courses such as group counseling, practicum, and internship courses. All direct client hours with the specified dates are required to be endorsed by the site supervisor(s) and the student. Faculty cannot verify clinical experience without clinical records. The TAMUK Counseling program is not responsible for keeping records of student clinical documentation beyond graduation except for verifying the official transcript. Students are responsible for maintaining proof of all clinical documentation beyond graduation to meet the state licensure application requirements or other jurisdictions.

Upon the request from the licensing board and written authorization from the student or graduate, the practicum/internship coordinator will verify the completion of training and required clinical hours. The clinical verification/endorsement letter/form will be signed by the practicum/internship coordinator and sent to the licensing board upon the request of the licensing board and written authorization from the student. Students can order the official transcript via the Office of the Registrar [https://www.tamuk.edu/registrar/RGAD_RESOURCES/Transcripts.html].

Employment

Employment Endorsement Policy

Upon the request from the potential employer and written authorization from the student or graduate, the Counseling program faculty can provide recommendations or evaluations for student employment. Faculty can request students to provide related endorsement documentation such as resumes, clinical documentation, completion of training, etc. Faculty are not responsible for the validity of the student's resume. Faculty cannot verify clinical experience without clinical records. Faculty can verify degree completion, academic performance, counselor identity, ethical behavior, professionalism, multicultural competency, interpersonal communications, peer interactions, clinical skill development, etc.

Employment Opportunities for Graduates

During the practicum and internship classes, students are introduced to employment opportunities.

Opportunities for counseling graduates include, but are not limited to:

- Private Practice
- Clinical Mental Health
- Rural Mental Health
- School Counseling Settings
- Sandtray Therapy
- State and federal prisons
- Correctional facilities
- Texas MHMR
- Psychiatric Hospitals
- Community Agency
- Non-profit Organization
- Addiction Counseling
- Career Counseling
- Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling
- Student Affairs
- Rehabilitation Counseling
- Crisis Counseling

- Residential Advising
- Case Management
- Child Protective Services
- VA Medical Hospitals
- Outpatient Clinics.

Professional Information

Professional Counseling Organizations

Counseling students are encouraged to affiliate with professional counseling organizations including, but not limited to the American Counseling Association (ACA) and Texas Counseling Association to enhance professional growth. Some organizations are listed as follows:

National Level	State Level
American Counseling Association (ACA) www.counseling.org	Texas Counseling Association (TCA) www.txca.org
Association for Assessment and Research in Counseling (AARC) http://aarc-counseling.org	Texas Association for Assessment in Counseling (TAAC) www.txca.org/tca/TAAC_Home.asp
Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling (ACAC) www.acachild.com	Texas Association for Adult Development & Aging (TAADA) www.txca.org/tca/TAADA_Home.asp?SnID=1962583625
Association for Adult Development & Aging (AADA) www.aadaweb.org	Texas College Counseling Association (TCCA) www.txca.org/tca/TCCA_HOME.asp?SnID=1962583625
American College Counseling Association (ACCA) www.collegecounseling.org	Texas Association for Counselor Education & Supervision www.txca.org/tca/TACES_Home.asp?SnID=1962583625
Military and Government Counseling Association (MGCA) http://acegonline.org	Texas Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counseling (TALGTBIC) www.txca.org/tca/TALGTBIC_Home.asp?SnID=1962583625
Association for Counselor Education & Supervision (ACES) www.acesonline.net	Texas Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (TexAMCD) www.txca.org/tca/TEXAMCD_Home.asp
Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counseling (ALGTBIC) www.agblic.org	Texas Mental Health Counselors Association (TMHCA) www.txca.org/tca/TMHCA_Home.asp?SnID=1962583625
Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD) www.amcdaca.org	Texas School Counselor Association (TSCA) www.txca.org/tca/TSCA_Home.asp?SnID=1962583625
American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA) www.amhca.org	Texas Counseling Association for Humanistic Education and Development (T-AHEAD) www.txca.org/tca/TAHEAD.asp?SnID=1962583625

American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA) www.arcaweb.org	Texas Counselors for Social Justice (TCSJ) www.txca.org/tca/TXCSJ_Home.asp
American School Counselor Association (ASCA) www.schoolcounselor.org	Texas Association of Marriage and Family Counselors (TAMFC) www.txca.org/tca/TAMFC_Home.asp?SnID=1962583625
Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC) www.aservic.org	
Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW) www.asgw.org	
Association for Humanistic Counseling (AHC) http://afhc.camp9.org	
Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) http://counselorsforsocialjustice.com	
International Association of Addictions and Offender Counselors www.iaaoc.org	
International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors www.iamfc.com	
National Career Development Association (NCDA) http://ncda.org	
National Employment Counseling Association (NECA) www.employmentcounseling.org	

Opportunities for Professional Involvement and Appropriate Activities

Chi Sigma Iota International (CSI): www.csi-net.org

National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC): www.nbcc.org

American Association for Marriage & Family Therapy (AAMFT): www.amft.org

Texas Association for Marriage & Family Therapy (TAMFT): www.tamft.org

Association for Play Therapy (APT): www.a4pt.org

Texas Association for Play Therapy (TAPT): <http://txapt.org>

American Association of Christian Counselors: www.aacc.net

American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors, and Therapists: www.aasect.org

American College Personnel Association (ACPA): www.myacpa.org

Association for Addiction Professionals (NAADAC): <http://www.naadac.org>

Texas Association of Addiction Professionals (TAAP): <http://www.taap.org>

Humanistic Sandtray Therapy Institute: <https://humanisticsandtray.com/>

Sandtray Therapy Institute: <http://www.sandtraytherapyinstitute.com>

Center for Play Therapy Summer Institute: <http://cpt.unt.edu/training/cpt-annual-conferences/cpt-summer-institute>