The College of Social Sciences

“Igniting Students’ Passion for the Helping Professions”

Master of Science in Counseling Program Handbook
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**Introduction**

This handbook outlines the areas that are critical to effective student learning in the Master of Science in Counseling (MSC) Mental Health, Clinical Mental Health, Marriage, Family and Child Therapy, and School Counseling programs. Students should use this handbook as a resource guide as they progress through their respective program along with other UOPX student resources and materials. There are two sections in this manual. The first section entitled, “General Information,” includes information that is consistent across the University’s campuses and MSC programs. The second section, entitled “Campus-Specific Information” provides information that is specific to a particular campus and program.

**Section I**

**General Policies and Procedures**

This information is standard across all University of Phoenix (UOPX) campus MSC programs.

**Overview of MSC Program**

The College of Social Sciences offers graduate level, on-ground counseling programs designed to meet the educational standards for certification and licensure by state authority. The American Counseling Association (2011) provides the following definition as a foundation: "Counseling is a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals."

Curriculum in Master of Science in Counseling/Mental Health Counseling (MSC/MHC), Master of Science in Counseling/Clinical Mental Health Counseling (MSC/CCMH), Master of Science in Counseling/Marriage, Family and Child Therapy (MSC/MFCT), and the Master of Science in Counseling/School Counseling (MSC/SC) prepare students for licensure in most states. Programmatic accreditation by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) and/or the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) may be campus-specific (Section II).

MSC programs at University of Phoenix meet the needs of the working adult professional who will benefit from a graduate education in counseling. Because counseling and jobs requiring counseling skills has an above-average expected growth in both the public and private sectors throughout the first quarter of the 21st Century, students from a variety of settings and backgrounds should find the interpersonal, communication, and therapeutic skills offered in this program useful in advancing their careers.

Curriculum, course work, and clinical experience produce outcomes related to knowledge, critical
thinking, affective development, and counseling skills. These outcomes are based on accepted counselor education standards emphasizing counselor education programmatic attention to professional identity and ethics, social and cultural diversity, human growth and development, career development, helping relationships, group work, assessment, research, and program evaluation. Outcome-based assessments of core counseling competencies are an ongoing component of the program structure and course sequencing. Average program length is 3-4 years including practicum and internship requirements. Practicum/internship courses occur after fulfilling requirements and prerequisite courses.

The program involves a variety of delivery formats depending upon the subject matter and the competencies to be developed. These formats include multimodal delivery methods that may involve, but are not limited to the following:

- class lecture
- assigned readings
- role-plays
- in-class small group work
- discussion
- small group (Learning Team) presentations
- small group and independent research
- participation in a weekly learning team
- access to an electronic “chat room” to discuss materials with other learning team members and faculty
- written assignments
- quizzes and in-class examinations
- critical thinking activities
- take-home exams and exercises

Because of the compressed and intensive nature of graduate courses at University of Phoenix (UOPX), we do not recommend taking more than one course at a time (doubling up). In addition to classroom time, out-of-class time is required for homework, learning team meetings, project activities, and comprehensive clinical coursework. Concurrent courses are not allowed during clinical courses.

**Online Resources**

The MSC program at UOPX is not offered or available in an online format. However, several online resources facilitate learning and development of core competencies. The UOPX Online Learning System (OLS) includes student textbooks in electronic format, an extensive Online Library with multiple databases, information about a student’s local campus, a venue within OLS in which students can communicate with faculty and peers, access online support, and link to assistance with educational tasks (such as writing, researching, and subject tutoring). The UOPX OLS is always evolving to meet student needs. Students will access the OLS throughout their involvement with the University.

**Learning Team Philosophy**
The foundation of the University of Phoenix educational philosophy and practice is the recognition of a distinction between the traditional college student and the student who has assumed the adult responsibilities of self-determination, has achieved a level of independence, and has experienced professional development. The University of Phoenix focuses attention on shared participant responsibility for self-directed learning. Throughout the University programs, student expectations include seeking answers to critical questions, identifying and developing resources for validating information, and taking charge of their own learning process. The programs therefore provide the structure and support necessary to encourage independence and self-direction.

Traditionally, the role of the student has been relatively passive. The educational model advocated by the University of Phoenix, based on the principles of John Knowles, demands active participation by students in their educational process, which places substantial responsibility on the learner. The dynamic process employed with learning teams maximizes each student’s understanding and involvement in his or her degree program. Learning team activities and time commitments are not optional. They require an average of 4 hours per week in addition to classroom time. The University’s students and alumni enthusiastically support the use of Learning Teams as an effective educational strategy. By sharing learning responsibilities, dissemination of more information among group members occurs in a limited amount of time.

Learning teams are comprised of three to five students, who meet weekly outside of class (either face to face, electronically, or as directed by course faculty). Learning teams provide a format for students to support one another, to learn from one another and to develop and refine their problem solving skills. Oral and written projects completed within learning teams contribute to each student's individual grade. It is essential for Learning Team members to make a commitment to work together to meet course objectives and complete group assignments as instructed. Effective collaboration is one of the University's fundamental learning goals. One critical organizational competency involves learning to work effectively in teams, both as a team member and leader. This concept is crucial in the healthcare fields where collaboration between professionals is generally an expected standard. The University of Phoenix goal is to give students educational experiences that enhance effective core competencies and skills in a collaborative spirit such as a Learning Team.

Master of Science in Counseling -- MSC Degree

Program Mission Statement

The mission of the program is to create effective, ethical, and culturally sensitive professional counselors who diagnose and treat mental disorders in the context of a broad theoretical understanding and critical consideration of current research. The counselors completing this program will demonstrate commitment to honoring and respecting diversity, and to ongoing development and maintenance of professional counselor identity. The program will facilitate active engagement of counselors in their community as professional leaders, educators, advocates,
and facilitators of development and change.

**Program Philosophy**

Commitment to standards of excellence and quality curriculum are the core beliefs of the faculty and administration of the Master of Science in Counseling (MSC) Program. The program, faculty, and staff respond to community needs by providing a practical course of study and practicum experiences that prepare students to be competent and ethical practitioners. The MSC program provides needed services to the community through collaboration with local agencies, schools, and a range of institutions. The MSC program also contributes to the community by providing continuing education opportunities.

Students are prepared to become competent professionals, committed to the ideals of working with people in relationships. Students find themselves immersed in educational and clinical systems training that provides opportunities to practice a broad range of skills and prepares them to help people. Exposure to developmental and systemic models with a balance of theory and practical application is at the core of the counseling student experience. Additionally, introduction to a core set of values is a poignant component in a field dedicated to helping others. Descriptions of this ideology, found in a variety of counseling and therapy association codes of ethics, essentially guide professional identity and behavior. Professional organizations related to counseling include the American Counseling Association (ACA), the American Mental Health Counseling Association (AMHCA), the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), and the American School Counselors Association (ASCA).

Students will also gain understanding and experience in providing therapy within ethnically, culturally, and racially diverse populations. MSC faculty provides a collaborative learning environment. They are culturally diverse practitioners who model the behaviors and attitudes fostered by the program. With vast fieldwork backgrounds, our faculty members represent a wealth of information, skill, and practical experience.

**Program Goals**

Graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the following:

1. The nature and needs of the individual at all developmental levels.
2. Issues and trends in a diverse society.
3. Counseling and consultation processes.
4. Group development, dynamics, theories, counseling methods and skills, and other group work approaches.
5. Career and lifestyle development.
6. Individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation.
7. Types of research methods, basic statistics, and ethical and legal considerations in research.
8. All aspects of professional counselor identity, including history, roles, organizational structures, ethics, standards, and credentialing.
9. Needs and appropriate intervention strategies for individuals and groups in crises,
emergencies, and disasters.

Graduates of the MSC program exemplify leadership and excellence in practice and are prepared to:

1. Maintain and advance professional standards.
2. Facilitate growth.
3. Think critically.
4. Communicate effectively.
5. Demonstrate flexibility.
7. Use various theoretical models.
8. Analyze and apply scholarly, counseling related research.
9. Make clinical and treatment decisions based on sound ethical and legal reasoning with consideration and respect for diversity.
10. Make appropriate diagnosis within the scope of practice.
11. Supervise others in the clinical practice of their discipline.
12. Intervene effectively with individuals and groups during crises, emergencies, and disasters.

Program Objectives:

1. To provide a foundation in the current scholarly knowledge base that is essential to the practice of counseling.
2. To integrate the acquisition of theoretical and conceptual foundations for the clinical practice of counseling in the therapeutic process.
3. To ensure the synthesis of theories with skills which enrich clinical and interpersonal interactions.
4. To develop a broad base of therapeutic skills and knowledge to respond to culturally diverse populations.
5. To foster an attitude of intellectual and critical inquiry and self-development, and to inculcate professional values and ethical standards unique to counseling.
6. To develop an understanding of the research process which promotes the use of research for the discipline in which the student will practice.
7. To prepare the student to exercise leadership and self-direction in planning, initiating, implementing, and evaluating therapeutic roles.
8. To interact with the community, agencies, and a diverse range of health professionals to ensure a dynamic collaborative relationship.
9. To expose the student to relevant counseling models, including current paradigms, which provide a balance of theory and practical application.
10. To prepare students to assist individuals, couples, groups, and families with meeting their counseling goals.
11. To provide services based on counseling theories, recognized professional standards, and scholarly research.
12. To teach effective communication, conflict and stress management, negotiation, problem-solving, and decision-making skills with consideration of diversity among individuals and groups.

13. To critically analyze research and apply research findings in clinical practice.

14. To exhibit a broad range of knowledge of available community resources and professional practice, and demonstrate appropriate ability to access and apply new knowledge.

15. To demonstrate continuing professional growth and development.

16. To recognize and take a leadership role in emerging issues and practices in counseling.

17. To use principles of clinical evaluation and assessment to make clinical and program decisions within sound ethical, legal, and regulatory parameters.

18. To apply supervision and consultative principles and practices in a variety of settings.

19. To assist with identifying and providing needed services in the event of individual or community crises, emergencies, and disasters.

**Information about Professional Organizations**

The MSC program promotes and facilitates the development of a strong professional identity among counselors. Students are required to join and participate in the American Counseling Association (ACA) and its branches and divisions, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) or other approved professional organization as listed in the Enrollment Agreement. Proof of membership and coverage for professional liability insurance is required prior to entering a practicum or internship course.

The ACA offers counseling resources and serves as a platform for national leadership, advocacy, and development of the counseling profession. In addition to the parent organization, ACA includes 19 specialty divisions, four regional groups, and 56 branches. Students can access the ACA on the Internet: [www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org). For students in the School Counseling program, the ASCA provides a supportive network for School Counselors with a platform for accessing professional journals and the most up-to-date literature in this field. The website for ASCA is [http://www.schoolcounselor.org](http://www.schoolcounselor.org). The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy is the professional organization for the field of marriage and family therapy. Their website is: [http://www.aamft.org](http://www.aamft.org).

State branches of the professional organizations advocate for counselors at the state level and typically provide continuing education opportunities for the counseling community. Students can become involved in their respective choice of professional affiliation at the national and state levels by attending meetings and conferences, joining committees, offering input, volunteering skills, submitting manuscripts to journals, and submitting presentations for conferences.

**Program Orientation**

Students and potential students receive multiple levels of orientation. Students are provided with information on the following:
• Specific information about the program, policies, and requirements
• Counselor identity
• Specific practicum and internship expectations
• Other student questions

During the CNSL/502, Graduate Portfolio I process, MSC faculty members orient candidates to both the MSC program and the basic tenets and standards of the counseling profession. Program orientation provides several key elements, such as: specifics of program policies and requirements, discussion of counselor identity, information about the future practicum and internship, and answers to other questions as needed. Students must successfully pass CNSL/502 before they are considered as accepted in the program.

Portfolio I (CNSL/502)

Graduate Portfolio I, CNSL/502, involves a selection process for entry into the counseling programs. Admission decisions are based on an evaluative process by a selection committee consisting of experienced counseling faculty. Program candidates are introduced to specifics of their campus program in the first CNSL/502 workshop with a Program Orientation. Over the full 6 weeks of CNSL/502 students will be evaluated in 5 core areas: oral presentation skills, basic counseling skills, writing skills (paper mechanics), writing skills (content), and professional behavior. Candidates are evaluated in general for their potential for success in forming interpersonal relationships in small groups and with individuals, their aptitude for study at the graduate school level, and for their overall career goals in relation to the outcome of the program. Students who do not pass CNSL/502 on the first attempt may reapply in 3 months. A student failing CNSL/502 on the second attempt must wait 6 months before reapplying. Passing Portfolio I is limited to a total of three attempts.

Portfolio II (CNSL/566 or SCHC/566)

About midway through the counseling program (before beginning Clinical Progression courses), students are evaluated for readiness for clinical placement in practicum and internship courses. The evaluation is a gateway, or threshold, that counseling students must pass through providing an opportunity to demonstrate counseling and critical thinking competencies. Teams of experienced faculty-practitioners facilitate the course, Portfolio II, and then provide a collaborative assessment of student learning. Students may pass or fail the course, but passing is required to move forward in the program. Portfolio II provides an integrative experience requiring the student to gather the information learned in the previous courses, integrate that knowledge, and demonstrate competency in a number of key areas covered in the program. This assessment also has two goals: 1) to help the student evaluate their own progress and 2) to provide an opportunity to objectively evaluate the student’s professional and personal development along with readiness for clinical placement.
Students failing Portfolio II may be required to take a temporary leave from coursework and retake Portfolio II according to Policy and Procedures, or accept a plan for remediation in the areas of shortfall discovered during the Portfolio II screening/evaluation process. Student performance during the assessment guides evaluator recommendations for remediation or retaking Portfolio II.

**Portfolio III Clinical Placements**

Students must attend a pre-practicum/clinical placement orientation 12-16 weeks prior to the beginning of their respective initial clinical placement course and will receive a practicum/internship-specific handbook at that time. Information in the handbook pertains to the practicum and internship training, requirements, forms, and processes for acquiring a field placement site.

Practicum and Internships are supervised clinical experiences that provide opportunities for students to counsel clients in community settings. Practicum is a highly supervised tutorial opportunity for students to begin working in a clinical environment. Students do not begin Practicum and Internship until the last year of their studies after fulfilling all requirements for clinical placement.

Practicum/Internship includes opportunities for students to work with diverse populations in multiple modalities. The clinical placement courses represent continued experiential training and, depending on the student’s program, may involve up to 900 hours (depending on state requirements) of documented direct and indirect clinical work. Site Supervisor evaluations of student performance assist in determining areas of focused training during the field placement series of courses. Students also have an opportunity to evaluate both their site and site supervisor.

Students are required to obtain Professional Liability Insurance prior to entering into a client-contact scenario. Students must provide proof of insurance with a Certificate of Insurance in their name at the first clinical placement course workshop (Week 1). Student membership in the American Counseling Association, or other similar professional organizations, will provide the opportunity to obtain Professional Liability insurance as part of membership benefits.

The University enters into contractual agreements with clinical placement sites. These agreements clarify expectations and seek to ensure students have a rich clinical training and supervision experience. Students must select a clinical placement with one of the approved, contracted sites on record. The list of approved sites is available to students after passing Portfolio II, generally during the Practicum Orientation workshop.

Students are encouraged to make careful decisions regarding the selection of clinical placement sites. Students often receive employment opportunities in the settings where they have completed their internship.

Students are required to secure their own clinical placement site selected from the list of approved sites. Work and home schedules may require adjustment in order to work effectively with the site requirements and meet the clinical service hour requirements for each course and for licensure.

**Student Responsibilities**

Each student will maintain behavior in accordance with the highest ethical and professional counseling standards, as outlined by the ACA and other relevant professional organizations (see Program-Specific Information regarding professional organizations related to specific programs). Students are expected to keep all information about clients confidential. Logs, case notes, and other clinical assignments should contain no identifying information; names used should be
fictitious. *Students violating client confidentiality, other ethical standards, and behavioral standards per the Student Code of Conduct and the Supplemental Standards (that follow), may be expelled from the program.* The Student Code of Conduct and retention (disciplinary) process is in the University of Phoenix Catalog with additional procedures in the Supplemental Standards. Additionally, students who are Apollo employees are expected to model positive student behaviors and set the standard for others to follow. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action as detailed in the company’s Policies and Procedures.

**University of Phoenix Supplemental Standards for Candidates in the College of Social Sciences Programs – Counseling**

Candidates in the College of Social Sciences program leading to certification or licensure in Counseling at University of Phoenix are subject to greater scrutiny because of their anticipated interactions with clients and others in the community. These degree candidates participate in one or more field placements, practica, and/or internships as part of their academic program. As prospective counselors, College of Social Sciences candidates are expected to represent the University as professionals and adhere to the ethics and standards of their profession as well as the University’s Student Code of Conduct.

The following Supplemental Standards for Candidates in College of Social Sciences Programs (“Supplemental Standards”) apply to these degree candidates before, during, and after their field placements, practica, and internships. The Supplemental Standards address a candidate’s affective attributes and disposition to be a human services worker or counselor. A corresponding Professional Dispositions Rubric provides additional guidance.

A candidate’s ability to satisfactorily meet the Supplemental Standards is a matter of ongoing academic judgment made by faculty, campus staff, and campus management.

1. The candidate contributes to a positive climate in the University classroom and all field placements, practica, and internships.
2. The candidate demonstrates mastery of written and spoken language for self-expression, as well as for effective interaction in all settings.
3. The candidate is a thoughtful and responsive listener.
4. The candidate is committed to reflection, assessment, and learning as an ongoing process.
5. The candidate is willing to give and receive help.
6. The candidate is sensitive to community and cultural norms for the degree program, the University classroom, and all field placements, practica, and internships.
7. The candidate appreciates and values human diversity and shows respect for others’ varied talents and perspectives.
8. The candidate values the development of critical thinking, independent problem solving, and performance capabilities in himself/herself and those with whom he/she interacts.
9. The candidate demonstrates a commitment to keeping abreast of new ideas and
understanding in the human services and/or counseling field.

10. The candidate demonstrates a level of responsibility and ethical judgment consistent with professional guidelines developed for these fields and appropriate for a professional human services worker and/or counselor.

11. The candidate maintains the highest ethical standards in interactions with faculty, students, staff, and clients as well as in preparation and submission of required course work, and the completion of tests.

12. The candidate maintains a pattern of exceeding minimal requirements in courses, field placements, practica, and internships.

When it is determined by faculty, campus staff, or campus management that a candidate falls short of meeting any of the above Supplemental Standards, they may file a “Referral” with the Campus College Chair, Campus Director of Academic Affairs, or designee. Any candidate who receives one or more referral(s) shall be counseled, remediated, or withdrawn from their program, as appropriate.

Candidates who are separately charged with violating the Student Code of Conduct shall be subject to the policies, procedures, and sanctions for processing such charges. However, a charge under the Student Code of Conduct may also be the basis for a referral on separate academic grounds under these Supplemental Standards. Similarly, an observation under the Referral Process may be the basis for a Student Code of Conduct charge.

Procedure for Processing Supplemental Standards Referrals

The College of Social Sciences has instituted processes to ensure that candidates are regularly evaluated by the faculty and have access to counseling and advisement on professional requirements. These processes are conducted through collaboration between faculty, campus staff, and campus management who understand the professions and who can offer constructive feedback. It is the intention of the Referral Process to identify a candidate’s deficiencies and promote dialogue on how the candidate can improve and move forward in their program.

During the course of their program, faculty members, through a review of grades and dispositions, will monitor a candidate’s academic progress. The Campus College Chair (CCC), or designee, will serve as the primary point of contact in instances where a remediation plan and/or Candidate Retention Committee are deemed necessary.

A. One Referral

1. Notification of a Referral Form is sent to the candidate in writing by the Campus College Chair or designee identifying the candidate’s deficiencies in meeting the above Supplemental Standards.

2. The candidate must meet with the Campus College Chair or designee to discuss why the referral occurred and whether or not a formal remediation plan or other corrective action is needed.
3. The Campus College Chair or designee may convene a meeting of the Candidate Retention Committee (“CRC”) if deemed necessary. If the CRC will be convened, the notification to the candidate shall specifically describe the issue(s) to be discussed and the possible recommendation options available to the CRC.

4. If the CRC will be convened, the candidate shall be provided with ten (10) days to respond to the notification.

5. If the CRC meeting is held, the Committee members shall discuss with the candidate the issues or problems that appear to be hindering his/her academic progress and make one of the following recommendations:
   a. Take no action;
   b. Institute a formal remediation plan; or
   c. Withdraw the student from the program.

6. The CRC shall issue a report explaining the basis for its recommendation.

B. Two or More Referrals

1. Notification of a Referral Form(s) is sent to the candidate in writing by the Campus College Chair or designee identifying the candidate’s deficiencies in meeting the above Supplemental Standards.

2. Notification shall specifically describe the issue(s) to be discussed and the possible recommendation options available to the CRC.

3. The candidate shall be provided with ten (10) days to respond to the notification.

4. After the candidate has the opportunity to respond, the Campus College Chair or designee shall convene a meeting of the Candidate Retention Committee.

5. The CRC members shall discuss with the candidate the issues or problems that appear to be hindering their academic progress and make one of the following recommendations:
   a. Take no action;
   b. Institute a formal remediation plan; or
   c. Withdraw the student from the program.

6. The CRC shall issue a report explaining the basis for its recommendation.

C. Candidate Retention Committee

1. The CRC is comprised of the Campus College Chair or designee and at least two faculty members.

2. The candidate will be expected to participate in a dialogue with the Committee to exchange ideas on remediation or withdrawal from the program.

3. The candidate will not be permitted to have representation by an attorney or any other third party in this academic meeting.

4. If the CRC recommends that the candidate be withdrawn from the program, and this recommendation is endorsed by the Campus Director of Academic Affairs, the candidate has the right to appeal this decision to the Central Administration Appeals Committee (CAAC) within 10 days of receipt of the decision.
5. The CAAC is generally comprised of at least the Dean and an Associate Dean from the College of Social Sciences or designee(s), and a Regional Director of Academic Affairs (RDAA).

6. The decision of the CAAC is final.

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### Professional Dispositions Rubric

**Note:** This document complements the Supplemental Standards for Candidates in College of Social Sciences – Counseling.

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<tr>
<th>Disposition*</th>
<th>Description of &quot;At Standard&quot; Indicators</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. The candidate contributes to a positive climate in the University classroom and all field placements, practicums, and/or internships.</td>
<td>Participates actively in class discussion and assignments; works effectively with others; shows respect of and consideration for the thoughts and feelings of others.</td>
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<td>2. The candidate demonstrates mastery of written and spoken language for self-expression, as well as for effective interaction in all settings.</td>
<td>Communicates effectively verbally; demonstrates an ability to write in a clear, organized, fluent manner; adheres to the conventions of the language when appropriate; recognizes distinctions between formal and informal communication.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. The candidate is a thoughtful and responsive listener.</td>
<td>Solicits feedback that demonstrates an understanding of program and professional goals and objectives; receives feedback in a positive manner and makes necessary adjustments; listens and responds to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The candidate is committed to reflection, assessment, and learning as an ongoing process.</td>
<td>Reflects on information provided and demonstrates an ability to apply ideas to his/her own practice or life; able to modify behavior and/or understanding when provided with new information or experience; demonstrates an interest in and commitment to lifelong learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. The candidate is willing to give and receive help.</td>
<td>Volunteers to assist others in the University classroom and/or practicum settings; demonstrates openness to assistance from others. Accepts direction from others and...</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. The candidate is sensitive to community and cultural norms of the counseling and/or human services program, the University classroom, and all field placements, practicums, and/or internships.</td>
<td>Uses language that demonstrates sensitivity to others; communicates effectively with peers, instructors, students, and clients; shows an awareness of the context in which s/he is interacting.</td>
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<td>7. The candidate appreciates and values human diversity and shows respect for others' varied talents and perspectives.</td>
<td>Listens to others' perspectives in a respectful manner; exhibits an understanding of the complexities of race, power, gender, class, sexual orientation, and privilege in American society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The candidate values the development of critical thinking, independent problem solving, and performance capabilities in himself or herself and those with whom he/she interacts.</td>
<td>Demonstrates an ability to identify, analyze, and evaluate complex issues; exhibits the ability to solve problems both independently and in cooperation with others; sets and achieves high standards.</td>
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<td>9. The candidate demonstrates a commitment to keeping abreast of new ideas and understanding in the counseling and/or human services field.</td>
<td>Identifies and analyzes important trends in counseling and/or human services; looks for opportunities to integrate theory and practice; demonstrates enthusiasm for learning new ideas and strategies; relates class discussions and issues to current events in counseling and/or human services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. The candidate demonstrates a level of responsibility and ethical judgment appropriate for a professional counselor and/or human services worker.</td>
<td>Attends all classes, practicum experiences, and required activities and arrives on time; dresses for practicum experiences in an appropriate manner; communicates in a professional manner regarding extenuating circumstances that may prevent attendance; comes to class prepared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The candidate maintains the highest ethical standards in interactions with faculty, students, and staff, as well as in preparation and submission of required course work, and the completion of assignments.</td>
<td>Does not represent the work of others as his/her own; is truthful when making statements about qualifications and competencies; observes contractual commitments and timelines; protects students’ and clients’ rights to privacy and confidentiality; establishes relationships with co-workers and clients based on courtesy, mutual trust and open communication; respects the uniqueness and characteristics</td>
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of varying backgrounds; acts within the community in a way which enhances the status of the profession; promotes the improvement of organizational policies; develops an understanding and respect for laws and policies that protect organizations, staff, clients, and communities.

| 12. The candidate maintains a pattern of exceeding minimal requirements in course, field placements, practicums, and/or internships. | Attends all required activities and arrives on time; dresses for field placements, practicums, and/or internships in a professional manner; communicates professionally to organizations, staff, and clients; comes to class prepared; respects diversity; volunteers to take on additional responsibilities, as appropriate; participates in professional development opportunities offered in counseling/human services setting; maintains privacy and confidentiality. |

*Note: The first nine dispositions were adapted from the standards of the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), formerly available at the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) website, [http://www.ccsso.org](http://www.ccsso.org).*

**Academic Requirements**

**Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE)**

Students in UOPX counseling programs must take the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE), and pass it with a minimum of 60%. The CPCE is an exit exam as well as preparatory for the National Counselor Examination (NCE), required for licensure in most states, and addresses the core areas of competency assessed on the NCE. Counseling programs at UOPX prepare you to sit for the NCE. Students are eligible to take the CPCE after completing all coursework listed as prerequisite to the first clinical placement course.

**Grade Requirements**

A failing grade (“F”), and In Progress (IP), or an Incomplete grade (“I”) is not acceptable. Students who receive an “F”, "IP", or an “I” grade may not enroll in any other coursework until a passing grade is awarded. Students in the counseling programs may not attend any further courses after being assigned a grade of Incomplete in a course. MSC students will be placed on Scholastic Disqualification if a minimum grades established in the program Policy and Procedures are not earned. Students who have been scholastically disqualified will not be allowed to continue in their degree program until they have fulfilled the requirements for reentry if allowed by Policy and Procedures.
As gatekeepers for the profession, faculty may share information in accordance with FERPA guidelines about student progress throughout the program as a strategy for enhancing student success and ensuring compliance with professional ethical responsibilities.

Class Participation Guidelines
Grading the student both individually and as a group member is a complex task for the faculty member. The philosophy of the University of Phoenix is to encourage active student participation in each workshop to augment the learning; thus, the faculty member must be able to objectively and subjectively grade participation.

In most courses, part of the student’s grade is derived from class participation or is a factor in learning team assignments.

Outlined below is a suggested class participation guide:

1. With regard to Group Involvement, the student
   a. contributes to group discussion frequently;
   b. chooses topics that are relevant to the topic being presented in class at that time;
   c. is interested in class and faculty discussion;
   d. actively listens to others;
   e. leads group discussion;
   f. serves as group spokesperson;
   g. relates theory to practice in group discussion;
   h. asks questions;
   i. is prepared for group discussion; and
   j. enhances the group presentation.

2. With regard to Class Involvement, the student
   a. comes prepared to each class;
   b. shows interest in faculty and class discussion;
   c. asks pertinent questions in class;
   d. relates theory to practice;
   e. contributes to class discussion frequently;
   f. brings materials to share with the class (at least once);
   g. does not dominate or monopolize group discussions; and
   g. makes an effort to involve classmates in the discussions.

University of Phoenix Approved Writing Style Guide
The University of Phoenix approved writing style guide is the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition. As a suggestion, purchase the manual before
the first course of the program and as it will be useful throughout your program. In the University of Phoenix Course Materials, this book is referred to as both the “APA Manual” and the “UOPX-Approved Style Guide.” Students are expected to have well-developed writing skills appropriate for graduate-level work, and to understand APA writing style format to be accepted into the program. Graduate school typically involves a good deal of writing in each class. Further, it is a professional expectation in counseling.

The APA manual contains specifications for researching, writing, documenting, and formatting typewritten work. The nature of each assignment will dictate which section(s) of the manual is/are useful. For example, students might consult the manual in order to determine how to outline a five page paper, do citations and format the paper (including title page and reference page). The Center for Writing Excellence houses a tutorial on APA style for students and faculty.

**Standards for Written Work**

1. **Content/Development**
   a. All key elements of the assignment are covered in a substantive way.
   b. Content is comprehensive, accurate, and persuasive (if applicable).
   b. Major points are stated clearly; are supported by specific details, examples, or analysis; and are organized logically.
   c. Where appropriate, the paper supports major points with theory relevant to development of the ideas, and uses the vocabulary of the theory correctly.
   d. There is integration of theory and practice whereby the writer is able to link theories to practical experience (i.e., application to the “real world” work setting).
   e. Research is adequate and timely for the topic.
   f. The context and purpose of the writing is clear (e.g., critique, research, sample memo, business plan, etc.).

2. **Organization**
   a. The structure of the paper is clear and easy to follow.
   b. The paper’s organization emphasizes the central theme or purpose and is directed toward the appropriate audience.
   c. Ideas flow in a logical sequence.
   d. The introduction provides sufficient background on the topic and previews major points.
   e. Paragraph transitions are present and logical and maintain the flow of thought throughout the paper.
   f. The conclusion is logical and flows from the body of the paper.
   g. The conclusion reviews the major points and does not introduce new material.

3. **Format**
   a. The paper, including citations and the reference page, follows APA guidelines for format.
   b. The paper is laid out effectively and uses reader-friendly aids (e.g., sections, summaries,
tables of contents, indices, appendices, etc.) when appropriate.

c. The paper makes appropriate use of references. Three are considered minimum at this level.

d. Headings, the use of italics, etc., aid in the readability of the paper and are not “overdone.”

e. The paper is neat, with attention given to format requirements.

4. Grammar/Punctuation/Spelling
   a. Rules of grammar, usage, and punctuation are followed.
   b. Spelling is correct.

5. Readability/Style
   a. Sentences are complete, clear, and concise.
   b. Sentences are well-constructed, with consistently strong, varied structure.
   c. Sentence transitions are present and maintain the flow of thought.
   d. Words used are precise and unambiguous.
   e. The tone is appropriate to the content and assignment.

Standards for Oral Presentations

1. Organization and structure
   a. Presentation is well-organized, clear, and effectively structured.
   b. The introduction tells the reader what to expect (i.e., act as a “sign post”). The conclusion summarizes the main points.
   c. Group presentations are integrated rather than a disjointed series of individual presentations.
   d. Topic is researched adequately.

2. Effective use of visual aids
   a. Visual aids are clear and effective.
   b. Visual aids contribute to a focused and integrated presentation.

3. Content of presentation
   a. Content of presentation clearly follows the written paper on which it is based (if applicable).
   b. The topic is relevant and addresses the specifications of the assignment. c. The content presented is comprehensive, accurate, and believable.
   c. Key points are noted and presented logically.

4. Style and presentation
   a. Non-verbal gestures are appropriate to the purpose of the presentation and flow of ideas.
   b. Confidence and knowledge of content are evident.
   c. Audience is engaged, when appropriate, in a professional manner.
   d. Delivery time is used well. Presentation is not rushed.
   e. Speaker adheres to the specified time limit.

5. Questions and comments
a. Audience feedback is solicited.
b. Audience questions are effectively addressed and correctly answered.

**Standards for Learning Team Work**
1. Members develop perspective and goals for the group as a whole.
2. Members develop effective work plans, meeting schedules, and assignments.
3. Members are clear about goals for work products.
4. Members develop and agree upon standards of performance for group members.
5. Members effectively manage conflict within the group and resolve problems.
6. Members share workload equally.
7. Members build consensus and effectively share in decision making.
8. Products of the group process (oral presentations, papers) are cohesive and present the image of a single product rather than a collection of individual products.
9. Tasks are completed on time and meet established requirements.

**Faculty Overview**
Faculty members for the MSC program are leaders in the local counseling community. Selected faculty have distinguished themselves through effective practice, professional service, and demonstrated knowledge. All faculty members in the MSC program are active in the counseling community, providing direct services, supervising counselors, volunteering for professional organizations, and serving as administrators of agencies. Faculty members in the MSC program demonstrate continued learning and professional service throughout their employment at UOPX.

**Relationships between Students and Faculty**
Because faculty members are active within the local counseling community, there is an increased possibility that students will have contact with faculty members outside of the educational setting. For example, students may work at the same agency as a faculty member.

There are potentially beneficial aspects to this relationship. For example, faculty members with whom students are familiar or comfortable can function as mentors for the student. Faculty members can mentor students through such activities as writing manuscripts, presenting at conferences, attending meetings of professional organizations, and discussing theoretical perspectives or career options. However, the possibility of interactions outside the educational setting requires vigilant attention to ethical boundaries. Faculty and students follow ACA Ethical Code guidelines with regard to unacceptable relationships (ACA, 2005, F.10.a-e) and potentially beneficial relationships (ACA, 2005, F.10.f).

**Program Resources**
Each campus may have counseling training facilities referred to as the Counseling Skills Center (CSC). Where available, the CSCs are equipped with private counseling rooms, a small group meeting rooms, video/audio recording technology, a bulletin board for information sharing, and internship site compendium. In addition, each campus has testing materials, and a library of counseling resources including textbooks, videos, and testing materials.

**Procedures for Disseminating Information**
It is important that students are aware of programmatic changes, current professional and academic events, and learning opportunities. Students receive information through mass e-mails, faculty announcements in class, and in the electronic forums/OLS, and the program message board located in the Counseling Skills Centers. In addition, Academic Counselors may conduct class visits at specific times throughout the program. During the class visits, they may review progression and degree completion requirements.

Section II

Campus-Specific Program Information

MSC programs are not available online and may differ from campus-to-campus (campus-specific). Consult with your Enrollment Advisor to ascertain the specific program and program version you are attending at your campus. Master of Science in Counseling Degree programs are at these University of Phoenix local campus locations:

- Bay Area Campus
- Central Valley Campus
- Colorado Campus
- Detroit Campus
- El Paso Campus (St. Theresa, NM – LC only)
- Las Vegas Campus
- Phoenix Campus
- Puerto Rico Campus
- New Mexico Campus
- Northern Nevada Campus
- Sacramento Valley Campus
- Southern Arizona Campus
- Southern California Campus
- Southern Colorado Campus
- Utah Campus
- West Michigan Campus

Counseling programs are “state-specific” and aligned with state licensure laws and rules. Should a student relocate while enrolled in a counseling program, they may not complete their program in a state that does not have a current counseling program. Further, transferring to a different state may not ensure licensure in the new state.

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program Description

The Master of Science in Counseling Degree program with a specialization in Clinical Mental Health Counseling provides the required knowledge and skills to become competent and ethical practitioners. The MSC/CCMH specialization provides a needed service to the community through collaboration with agencies and institutions and their personnel and through the provision
of continuing counselor education and programming. Students are involved in a variety of educational and clinical activities that prepare them to help their clients to meet their counseling goals. The program encompasses foundations of counseling and guidance including theories and their application with groups, individuals, assessment and evaluation, counseling and consultative relationships, career planning for students, and program development, implementation, and evaluation. The program addresses critical issues facing mental health counselors and offers supervised clinical experiences.

School Counseling Program Description
The Master of Science in Counseling Degree program with a specialization in School Counseling provides the required knowledge and skills to become effective school counselors. The program encompasses foundations of counseling and guidance including theories and their application with groups, individuals, assessment and evaluation, counseling and consultative relationships, career planning for students, and program development, implementation, and evaluation. The program addresses critical issues facing school counselors and offers supervised clinical experiences that allow students to obtain the practical experience necessary for licensure as school counselors.

Mental Health Counseling Program Description
The Master of Science in Counseling Degree program with a specialization in Mental Health Counseling provides the required knowledge and skills to become competent and ethical practitioners. The MSC/MHC specialization provides a needed service to the community through collaboration with agencies and institutions and their personnel and through the provision of continuing counselor education and programming. Students are involved in a variety of educational and clinical activities that prepare them to help their clients to meet their counseling goals. The program encompasses foundations of counseling and guidance including theories and their application with groups, individuals, assessment and evaluation, counseling and consultative relationships, career planning for students, and program development, implementation, and evaluation. The program addresses critical issues facing mental health counselors and offers supervised clinical experiences.

Marriage, Family and Child Therapy Program Description
The Master of Science in Counseling Degree program with a specialization in Marriage, Family and Child Therapy provides the required knowledge and skills to become competent and ethical practitioners. The MSC/MFCT specialization provides a needed service to the community through collaboration with agencies and institutions and their personnel and through the provision of continuing counselor education and programming. Students are involved in a variety of educational and clinical activities that prepare them to help their clients to meet their counseling goals. The program encompasses foundations of counseling and guidance including theories and their application with groups, individuals, assessment and evaluation, counseling and consultative relationships, career planning for students, and program development, implementation, and evaluation. The program addresses critical issues facing mental health counselors and offers supervised clinical experiences.

Faculty Advisors (Campus-Specific)
The Master of Science in Counseling Degree program may provide Faculty Advising for counseling students. If your program is CACREP accredited, a Faculty Advisor will be assigned.
During your first course following Portfolio I, the entrance assessment. Check with your Academic or Enrollment Advisor to see if this service is provided at your campus. Faculty Advisors help students with their graduate program by providing support, challenging student learning, and overseeing the students’ ability to work with others within the program. Faculty Advisors serve as mentors, encourage and assist in the development of a professional counseling identity and promote student-specific professional career goals and development. Faculty Advisors help track student’s progress through the entire program and offer professional guidance to students as they navigate graduate school challenges. Faculty Advisors will also communicate about opportunities for participation in professional organizations and conferences and counselor related research.

There are many possible topics for discussion with Faculty Advisors including:

- Career goals, including a professional development plan
- Development and articulation of theoretical approach
- Use of advocacy in the office, in administration and in legislation
- Membership in professional organizations
- Acquisition of advanced clinical skills/specialized training
- Research and presentation opportunities
- Supervision and licensure
- Portfolio assessment and CPCE/NCE

As gatekeepers for the profession, faculty may share information in accordance with FERPA guidelines about student progress throughout the program as a strategy for enhancing student success and ensuring compliance with professional ethical responsibilities.

**Professional Affiliations**

Students are required to join the American Counseling Association (ACA), state branches of ACA, the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, and/or the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) according to your respective degree program policy. Faculty will inform students about the available and required Association memberships according to your respective program. In addition, students are encouraged to participate by attending meetings, volunteering time and services, submitting manuscripts for publication, attending conferences, and speaking at conferences.

It is recommended that you consider joining Chi Sigma Iota, the Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society International, which promotes scholarship, research, professionalism, leadership, and excellence in counseling. The Society was established at Ohio University in 1985 through the efforts of leaders in the counseling profession whose desire was to provide recognition for outstanding achievement as well as outstanding service within the profession. The Society has over 12,000 active members and over 58,000 initiated members in over 250 chapters in the USA, Europe, and the Philippines. This makes Chi Sigma Iota one of the largest single member organizations of professional counselors in the world. Contact your Faculty Advisor to explore campus chapter possibilities.

**Endorsements**

Submit any requests for program endorsements related to credentialing and employment through the Campus College Chair who will evaluate and provide such endorsement in consultation with faculty. Faculty may provide personal references for students with appropriate consideration as to their knowledge of the student’s progress in the program and the faculty members’ area of
expertise within the scope of program instruction.

**Student Counseling Services**

Although it is not the policy of this University to require personal or career counseling as a program requirement, University of Phoenix recognizes that personal issues can impede academic and clinical functioning as a result of the professional development that takes place within courses and training. Undergoing psychotherapy/counseling as a personal growth opportunity as well as having the experience of a client can be cathartic, is generally a healthy approach to maintaining mental wellness, and is strongly recommended for all counseling professionals. Students who experience personal difficulties as a motive for seeking counseling are informed of the availability of services within the Campuses and within the respective communities. Students are encouraged to consult with core faculty, their faculty advisors, and/or Campus College Chair for community referrals. NOTE: *It is possible that a student may be referred for counseling as a result of action under the Supplemental Standards.*

**Preferred Course Sequence and Prerequisites**

Program versions and sequences may vary from campus-to-campus. Your campus will provide a Course Sequence outline and addendum for your particular program that will include prerequisite information. Additional information is included in the Campus Addendum that includes guidelines and policy for taking the CPCE at your campus and other pertinent information relevant to your specific degree program.

University of Phoenix
Master of Science in Counseling

**Statement of Acknowledgement and Understanding**

I, ________________________________ (Print Student Name), hereby state that I have downloaded an electronic copy or received a hard copy, and have read and understand the Master of Science in Counseling Program Handbook for the University of Phoenix MSC Degree program. I further state that I acknowledge and will adhere to the supplemental standards for College of Social Sciences students.

Student Signature ________________________________  Date: ______________