



**Master of Science in Counseling
Marriage, Family and Child Therapy**
(MSC/MFCT v.11)
Online Program Handbook

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Section 1: Introduction | 4 |
| Welcome | 4 |
| Introduction..... | 5 |
| Overview of the Online MSC/MFCT Program | 5 |
| Post-Graduate Licensure Requirements | 5 |
| Professional Identity and Professional Organizations | 6 |
| <i>Developing Your Professional Identity</i> | 6 |
| Professional Organizations..... | 7 |
| Section 2: Program and Degree Information | 8 |
| Program Structure | 8 |
| Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs) | 8 |
| Preferred Course Sequence and Prerequisites..... | 9 |
| Admission and Matriculation Requirements | 10 |
| Portfolio Courses | 10 |
| MFCC/502 Graduate Portfolio I | 11 |
| MFCC/503 Graduate Portfolio II | 11 |
| MFCC/505 Graduate Portfolio III | 11 |
| Section 3: Student Responsibilities and Expectations | 12 |
| Student Responsibilities | 12 |
| Counseling Program Professional Dispositions Assessment Rubric | 12 |
| Supplemental and Professional Standards for MSC/MFCT Candidates | 16 |
| Section 4: Degree Requirements | 22 |
| Academic Standing and Scholastic Disqualification..... | 22 |
| Academic Appeal Policies..... | 22 |
| University of Phoenix Approved Writing Style Guide..... | 23 |
| Student Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) | 23 |
| Section 5: Field Experience/Clinical Placements | 25 |
| Eligibility | 25 |
| Practicum MFCC/592..... | 25 |
| Internship MFCC/597A & MFCC/597B | 26 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Professional Liability Insurance | 26 |
| Site Placement..... | 26 |
| Responsibilities and Expectations for Clinical Placements..... | 26 |
| Synchronous Clinical Course Meetings..... | 27 |
| Safety Policies and Procedures for Home Visits | 27 |
| Paid Practicum/Internship Policy | 27 |
| Section 6: Faculty | 28 |
| Section 7: Resources | 29 |
| Procedures for Disseminating Information | 29 |
| Professional Affiliations | 29 |
| Counseling Skills Center..... | 29 |
| Online Resources | 29 |
| Program Certification | 30 |
| Student Counseling Services..... | 30 |
| Disability Services..... | 30 |
| References | 31 |

Section 1: Introduction

Welcome

Welcome to the University of Phoenix online Master of Science in Counseling Marriage, Family and Child Therapy (MSC/MFCT) program. You have joined a community of mental health professionals committed to providing you with a collaborative, scholarly and practitioner-oriented academic and clinical experience. University of Phoenix cultivates an award-winning multi-cultural environment of mutual respect. Our MFCT program maintains a low faculty-to-student ratio, which allows for engagement with you, our students, via ongoing dialogue for personal mentoring as well as for collaborative inquiry and practice. Our comprehensive, rigorous, and research-based curriculum is designed to build your professional identity as a marriage and family therapist and prepare you for state licensure.

You will be supported and guided through the theoretical knowledge and clinical skills development of each phase of the degree program. On behalf of the MFCT faculty and the entire College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, I wish you much success in this program.

Sincerely,

Christina Neider, Ed.D.

Dean, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Introduction

This handbook outlines areas critical to effective student learning in the Master of Science in Counseling (MSC) Marriage, Family and Child Therapy (MFCT) program. Students will use this handbook as a resource guide, along with other UOPX student resources and materials, as they progress through the online MFCT program.

Overview of the Online MSC/MFCT Program

The Master of Science in Counseling/ Marriage, Family and Child Therapy degree program meets the California Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) and Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC) educational requirements for registration with the Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) as an Associate Marriage and Family Therapist (AMFT) and an Associate Professional Clinical Counselor (APCC). Upon successful completion of all educational requirements and required postgraduate supervised clinical hours, graduates are eligible to sit for the LMFT and LPCC licensure exams in California.

The Master of Science in Counseling degree program is a 60-credit degree with a specialization in Marriage, Family, and Child Therapy and provides the required knowledge and skills for students to become competent and ethical practitioners. The MSC/MFCT specialization provides an understanding of marriage and family therapy in recovery-oriented care to the community.

Students are involved in a variety of educational and clinical activities that prepare them to help their clients achieve their goals. The program prepares graduates to work as practitioners with diverse clients in various clinical environments, including private practice, hospitals, schools, non-profit, public, and private mental health agencies. Students learn the foundations of counseling including theories and their application with individuals, children, families, couples, and groups; assessment and evaluation; counseling and consultative relationships; career planning; research methods; legal and ethical concerns, trauma and crisis, and program development, implementation, and evaluation. In addition, the specialization covers cultural competency and sensitivity, including a familiarity with the racial, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds of persons living in California.

Post-Graduate Licensure Requirements

The Master of Science in Counseling/Marriage, Family and Child Therapy program prepares students for licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapist in jurisdictions where it is offered. In order to practice as a counselor in most states, the student must be licensed as a MFT (marriage and family therapist), LPC (licensed professional counselor), or other comparable state professional license designation. License requirements vary by state. Students should ensure they stay updated on the licensure requirements in any state in which the student desires to practice.

Review state licensure requirements: [MFCT State Licensure Requirements](#)

California students:

The Master of Science in Counseling/ Marriage, Family and Child Therapy degree program meets the California Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) and Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC) educational requirements for registration with the Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) as an Associate Marriage and Family Therapist (AMFT) and an Associate Professional Clinical Counselor (APCC). Upon successful completion of all educational requirements and required postgraduate supervised clinical hours, graduates are eligible to sit for the LMFT and LPCC licensure exams in California.

Review state licensure requirements (CA specific): [MFCT State Licensure Requirements](#)

Professional Identity and Professional Organizations

Developing Your Professional Identity

Your MSC/MFCT program is designed to prepare you to become a licensed marriage and family therapist (LMFT). Licensed marriage and family therapists are a specialized group among several mental health professionals educated and trained to diagnose and treat the mental disorders of individuals, couples, families, and groups (California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists [CAMFT], 2022). In addition, LMFTs specifically have training to assist with relationship difficulties. This orientation of LMFTs involves viewing problems in the context of the relationships in which people are a part.

The California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (2024) explains the philosophy behind the unique mental health license as a marriage and family therapist.

[Marriage and family therapists] ...believe that an individual's mental or emotional problems must be treated within the context of his or her current or prior relationships if the gains are to be meaningful and productive for the patient. This treatment philosophy is consistent with current thinking in the health care field, which increasingly emphasizes inter-agency cooperation, involvement of the family, integration, and coordination of services. (CAMFT, 2024).

Marriage and family therapists practice according to the positive philosophy of recovery-oriented care, believing that people with personal and mental health challenges can recover – that is, return to a satisfying life when provided appropriate rehabilitation interventions (American Psychological Association, 2014). This strengths-based approach is underlying the work done by LMFTs.

Using recovery-oriented care as the basis of treatment,

[M]arriage and family therapists are often able to treat a patient's condition quickly - a cost-effective and practical approach to mental healthcare and a prime reason so many physicians and others refer patients to marriage and family therapists. When it is in the

best interest of the patient or outside the scope of the marriage and family therapist's license, therapists collaborate with and refer to other health professionals, such as physicians or psychiatrists in the case of prescribing medication. (CAMFT, 2024).

Marriage and family therapists are essential and widely accepted mental health practitioners. As noted by the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy [AAMFT] (2022), “[t]he Federal government has designated marriage and family therapy as a core mental health profession along with psychiatry, psychology, social work and psychiatric nursing. Currently all 50 states support and regulate the profession by licensing marriage and family therapists” (AAMFT, 2022).

Professional Organizations

As you train to enter the mental health field as a marriage and family therapist, you will find that being involved with various professional associations will provide information and support toward your goals. Our MSC/MFCT program promotes and facilitates the development of a strong professional identity and affiliation with other like-minded professionals. Because your degree prepares you academically for either the role of marriage and family therapist or professional clinical counselor, some of the state and national organizations to consider are:

- California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists [CAMFT] camft.org
- American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy [AAMFT] aamft.org
- California Association for Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors [CALPCC] calppc.org
- American Counseling Association [ACA] counseling.org

Students can become involved in their choice of professional affiliation at the national and state levels by attending meetings and conferences, joining committees, offering input, volunteering, submitting manuscripts to journals, and submitting presentations for conferences.

While you may be involved before then, students are required to join and participate in one of the professional associations, such as the CAMFT, AAMFT, CALPCC, or ACA, at the time of clinical placement. Each of the professional organizations include, with their student membership, coverage for professional liability insurance which is required prior to entering a practicum or internship course.

Section 2: Program and Degree Information

Program Structure

The MSC/MFCT (v.11) program includes three Portfolio courses that assess progression readiness; seventeen six-to-eight-week courses in curriculum designed to meet the educational requirements for state licensing; and three clinical courses that total 40 weeks. Outcome-based assessments of course learning objectives are an ongoing component of the program structure and course sequencing.

Standard program length is three years and four months., including practicum and internship 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:

- Synchronous and asynchronous activities
- Videos and podcasts
- Assigned readings
- Supplemental readings and resources
- Role-plays
- Discussion
- Presentations
- Research
- Participation with group or collaborative learning opportunities
- Written assignments
- Quizzes and exams

While the program will be online, in some classes, students will be expected to participate in synchronous activities with classmates and instructors. Weekly assignments and activities may include papers, worksheets, discussions, research, collaborative meetings, project activities, and comprehensive clinical coursework. Discussion posts are due Thursday and Monday; weekly assignments are generally due on Mondays.

Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)

The MSC/MFCT program identifies nine Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs) which are statements that describe the knowledge, skills, or abilities that students will be able to demonstrate upon completion of a specific program of study. Each is intended to describe a skill that can be measured by faculty in multiple ways throughout the program curriculum.

1. *Professional Identity*: Develop a professional identity as an advocate and steward for recovery-oriented care in the marriage and family and counseling professions.

2. *Social and Cultural Diversity*: Integrate social and cultural diversity competencies into their practice as a mental health professional.
3. *Human and Growth Development*: Integrate human growth and development theories and principles into their clinical practice.
4. *Career Development*: Integrate career development theories and principles into their clinical practice.
5. *Counseling and Helping Relationships*: Integrate counseling theories, models, and techniques into their clinical practice.
6. *Group Counseling and Group Work*: Integrate group counseling theories and practices into their clinical practice.
7. *Assessment and Testing*: Execute assessment and testing processes and procedures to guide their clinical practice.
8. *Research and Program Evaluation*: Evaluate research and programs to inform professional practice.
9. *Marriage and Family Therapy Orientation*: Integrate theories, principles, and methods of marital and family systems approaches into their clinical practice.

Preferred Course Sequence and Prerequisites

| Course ID | Course Title | Credits | Length | Prerequisites |
|------------|--|---------|---------|-------------------------------|
| MFCC/502 | Graduate Portfolio I * | 0 | 6 weeks | |
| MFCC/504 | Individual and Family Development Across the Life Span | 3 | 6 weeks | MFCC/502 |
| MFCC/506 | Personality Theories and Counseling | 3 | 8 weeks | MFCC/502 |
| MFCC/553CA | Legal and Ethical Issues in Counseling | 3 | 8 weeks | MFCC/502 |
| MFCC/510CA | Multicultural Counseling | 3 | 6 weeks | MFCC/502 |
| MFCC/525 | Research Methods in Counseling | 3 | 8 weeks | MFCC/502 |
| MFCC/538 | Psychometrics | 3 | 6 weeks | MFCC/525 |
| MFCC/544 | Introduction to Clinical Assessment | 3 | 8 weeks | MFCC/504, MFCC/538, MFCC/553 |
| MFCC/548 | Psychopathology: Advanced Clinical Assessment | 3 | 6 weeks | MFCC/544 |
| MFCC/554 | Individual Counseling | 3 | 6 weeks | MFCC/548 |
| MFCC/503 | Graduate Portfolio II* | 0 | 2 weeks | MFCC/506, MFCC510CA, MFCC/554 |
| MFCC/557 | Family Systems Theory and Intervention | 3 | 6 weeks | MFCC/554 |
| MFCC/564 | Human Sexuality and Couples Counseling | 3 | 6 weeks | MFCC/557 |
| MFCC/568 | Group Counseling | 3 | 8 weeks | MFCC/503 |

| Course ID | Course Title | Credits | Length | Prerequisites |
|-----------|---|---------|----------|------------------------------|
| MFCC/522 | Psychopharmacology | 3 | 6 weeks | MFCC/503 |
| MFCC/563 | Dependency and Addictions | 3 | 6 weeks | MFCC/522 |
| MFCC/541 | Career and Vocational Counseling | 3 | 6 weeks | MFCC/538 |
| MFCC/537 | Child and Adolescent Counseling | 3 | 6 weeks | MFCC/557 |
| MFCC/567 | Seminar in Marriage and Family Counseling | 3 | 6 weeks | MFCC/563, MFCC/537, MFCC/564 |
| MFCC/505 | Graduate Portfolio III* | 0 | 2 weeks | MFCC/567, MFCC/568, MFCC/541 |
| MFCC/592 | Practicum* | 3 | 10 weeks | MFCC/505 |
| MFCC/597A | Internship A* | 3 | 15 weeks | MFCC/592 |
| MFCC/597B | Internship B* | 3 | 15 weeks | MFCC/597A |
| | Total Credits | 60 | | |

*Requires synchronous meetings

Admission and Matriculation Requirements

Admission and matriculation require successful completion of MFCC/502 (Graduate Portfolio I). After admission to the online MSC/MFCT program, students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 to remain in good standing. Additional admission requirements can be found in the Academic Catalog.

Portfolio Courses

The MSC/MFCT program has three Graduate Portfolio classes that assess students' readiness to enter and to move forward in the MSC/MFCT program. The three Portfolio courses are strategically placed at the start of the program, mid-way through the program, and toward the end of the program before clinical placements. These courses involve an evaluation process designed to determine if students have acquired the knowledge and skills reflective of their progression in the MSC/MFT program. The Graduate Portfolio classes are zero credit courses graded as pass or fail. A non-passing grade requires retaking the course prior to progressing in the program. Students deficient in writing or counseling skills may benefit from utilizing the Center for Writing Excellence or Counseling Skills Lab. The three Graduate Portfolio classes are described below.

MFCC/502 Graduate Portfolio I

Portfolio I is an admission readiness assessment which samples and evaluates the student's cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills for a career in professional psychotherapy and counseling. It is a 6-week workshop, noncredit assessment that helps determine student appropriateness for the program and gives the potential student the opportunity to evaluate his or her aptitude for the counseling program. Attendance at synchronous meetings is required.

Portfolio I must be passed before a student may be admitted to the Master of Counseling/Marriage, Family, and Child Therapy program in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Successful completion of MFCC/502, Graduate Portfolio I. If the student is denied admission because of the unacceptable grade, the student may retake MFCC/502 in 30 days. A student failing MFCC/502 on the second attempt must wait three (3) months before the next re-attempt. Students will be required to follow the Supplemental Standards referral process before their third re-attempt. Passing MFCC/502 is limited to a total of three attempts. If the student does not meet the minimum grade requirement on the third attempt, the student will be denied admission, and administratively withdrawn from this program. See pages 16-20 for Supplemental Standards.

MFCC/503 Graduate Portfolio II

Portfolio II is a competency evaluation of professional dispositions and readiness to progress in the Master of Counseling/Marriage, Family, and Child Therapy Program. Portfolio II provides an integrative experience requiring the student to bring together all of what has been learned in previous courses in the program and to demonstrate how that learning has been applied.

Topics include professional and personal development; applications of theory to practice; and sensitivity to diversity issues. Students will demonstrate intake, assessment, and treatment planning abilities. Attendance at synchronous meetings is required. The Portfolio II class is two weeks in length with some significant synchronous interactions with faculty and peers. A passing grade is required to progress in the program. A non-passing grade will result in a Supplemental Standard referral. See pages 16-20 for Supplemental Standards.

MFCC/505 Graduate Portfolio III

Portfolio III is two weeks in length, with significant synchronous interactions with faculty and peers. The final portfolio focuses on the practical application of Marital and Family Counseling/Systems Approach using advanced counseling skills and competencies. This portfolio is used to assess professional dispositions and readiness for work with diverse populations during clinical placement in practicum and internship courses. Specific topics include professional orientation, professional identity, personal growth, and self-care.

Attendance at synchronous meetings is required. A passing grade is required to progress into the clinical courses. A non-passing grade will result in a Supplemental Standard referral. See pages 16-20 for Supplemental Standards.

Section 3: Student Responsibilities and Expectations

Student Responsibilities

Each student will maintain behavior in accordance with the highest ethical and professional counseling standards as outlined by the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (CAMFT) Code of Ethics. In addition to these counseling professional standards, all students at University of Phoenix must adhere to the Student Code of Conduct. Students are expected to conduct themselves ethically, honestly, and with integrity as responsible members of the University's academic community. This requires the demonstration of mutual respect and civility in academic and professional discourse.

Conduct, either on or off-campus that is determined to impair, interfere with, or obstruct the opportunities of others to learn or that disrupts the mission, processes, or orderly functions of the University will be deemed misconduct and shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. The Student Code of Conduct and retention (disciplinary) process is in the University of Phoenix Catalog. Students violating client confidentiality, other ethical standards, and behavioral standards per the Student Code of Conduct and the Supplemental Standards (that follow), may be withdrawn from the program.

Counseling Program Professional Dispositions Assessment Rubric

MFCT program faculty members utilize the Counseling Program Professional Dispositions rubric below to systematically assess each student during their entire program of study in the following courses: MFCC/502, MFCC/503, MFCC/505, MFCC/592, MFCC/597A and MFCC/597B.

Counseling Program Student Professional Disposition Assessment Rubric University of Phoenix Counseling Program End of Course Student Evaluation of Professional Counselor Dispositions

| Criteria | <i>Exemplary</i> 100% - 95% A | <i>Proficient</i> 94% - 80% A- to B- | <i>Developing</i> 79% - 70% C+ to C- | <i>Needs Improvement</i> 69% - 0% D+ to F |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| <p>The student contributes to a positive climate in the University classroom and all field placements, practicums, and/or internships.</p> <p>(UOPX/SS: 1&12)</p> <p>Score: ____ Comments:</p> | <p>Participates actively in class discussion and assignments, by contributing feedback that engages critical thought, as well as providing additional resources to support views and ideas. Works effectively with others; by displaying both genuine empathy and respect for others. As well as</p> | <p>Participates actively in class discussion and assignments; works effectively with others; shows respect of others and consideration for the thoughts and feelings of others.</p> | <p>Participates occasionally in class discussion and is often late on classroom assignments. Occasionally presents problems with working within group assignments and task.</p> | <p>Frequently does not actively participate in class discussion, and is frequently late in turning assignments, and/ or has several missed assignments. Displays difficulty when working with others. Often shows lack of respect of others and consideration for the thoughts and feelings of others.</p> |

| Criteria | Exemplary 100% - 95% A | Proficient 94% - 80% A- to B- | Developing 79% - 70% C+ to C- | Needs Improvement 69% - 0% D+ to F |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| | creates an atmosphere that stimulates collaboration. | | | |
| <p>The student demonstrates mastery of written and spoken language for self-expression, as well as for effective interaction in all settings.</p> <p>(UOPX/SS: 2)</p> <p>Score: ___</p> <p>Comments:</p> | Verbally communicates thoughts and ideas clearly. Demonstrates an ability to write in a clear and concise manner, with minimal to no errors in spelling and grammar, adheres to APA standards, and communicates in a professional tone. | 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. | Occasionally displays difficulty in clearly communicating thoughts verbally. Written assignments are often disorganized and displays an informal writing style. | Frequently displays difficulty in clearly communicating thoughts verbally. Written assignments are frequently disorganized and unclear and display an informal writing style. |
| <p>The student is a thoughtful and responsive listener.</p> <p>(UOPX/SS:3)</p> <p>Score: ___</p> <p>Comments:</p> | Demonstrates an understanding of program and professional goals and objectives. Solicits and is open to feedback from both instructors and peers. Receives feedback in a positive manner. Displays both eager and enthusiasm in making necessary adjustments; Displays active listen skills and acknowledges the thoughts of others. | 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. | Occasionally becomes argumentative when feedback is provided. Does not display active listening skills and occasionally interrupts others while speaking. | Frequently becomes argumentative when feedback is provided. Does not display active listening skills and frequently interrupts others while speaking. |
| <p>The student is committed to reflection, assessment, and learning as an ongoing process.</p> <p>(UOPX/ SS: 4,8, & 9)</p> | Demonstrates a keen and heighten sense of self awareness. Is eager and enthusiastic in implementing information provided and applying ideas to his/her own practice or life. Frequently | 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; | Displays emerging skills in self-awareness and occasionally struggles with the ability to reflect on information provided and apply ideas to his/her own practice or life. Occasionally demonstrates ability to modify behavior and/or | Lacks sufficient skills in demonstrating self-awareness. Frequently, struggles with the ability to reflect on information provided and apply ideas to his/her own practice or life. Does not demonstrate the ability to modify behavior |

| Criteria | Exemplary 100% - 95% A | Proficient 94% - 80% A- to B- | Developing 79% - 70% C+ to C- | Needs Improvement 69% - 0% D+ to F |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| Score: ___ Comments: | demonstrates ability to modify behavior and/or understanding when provided with new information or experience. Actively, seeks out opportunities and participates in scholarship outside the classroom. | demonstrates an interest in and commitment to lifelong learning. | understanding when provided with new information or experience. | and/or understanding when provided with new information or experience. |
| The student is willing to give and receive help. (UOPX/SS: 5) Score: ___ Comments | Frequently, volunteers to assist others in the University classroom and/or practicum settings; demonstrates openness to assistance from others. Eagerly and enthusiastically, accepts direction from others and respects authority. | Volunteers to assist others in the University classroom and/or practicum settings; demonstrates openness to assistance from others. Accepts direction from others and respects authority. | Occasionally volunteers to assist others in the University classroom and/or practicum settings. Occasionally rejects the direction from others and is occasionally resistant towards authority. | Does not or infrequently volunteers to assist others in the University classroom and/or practicum setting. Frequently rejects the direction from others and is often resistant towards authority. |
| The student appreciates and values human diversity and shows respect for others' varied talents and perspectives. (UOPX/ SS: 6 &7) Score: ___ Comments: | Listens to others' perspectives in a respectful manner; exhibits an understanding of the complexities of race, power, gender, class, sexual orientation, and/ or privilege in American society. Uses culturally sensitive language in communication and avoids communicating stereotypes and group generalizations. Express a genuine desire to increase | Listens to others' perspectives in a respectful manner; exhibits an understanding of the complexities of race, power, gender, class, sexual orientation, and/or privilege in American society. | Demonstrates limited awareness for the need to understand the complexities of race, power, gender, class, sexual orientation, and/or privilege in American society. Occasionally uses language that is insensitive to the multicultural dynamics of others. | Demonstrates limited awareness for the need to understand the complexities of race, power, gender, class, sexual orientation, and/or privilege in American society. Frequently, uses language that is insensitive to the multicultural dynamics of others. |

| Criteria | Exemplary 100% - 95% A | Proficient 94% - 80% A- to B- | Developing 79% - 70% C+ to C- | Needs Improvement 69% - 0% D+ to F |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| | multicultural competencies. | | | |
| <p>The student demonstrates a level of responsibility and ethical judgment appropriate for a professional counselor.</p> <p>(UOPX/SS: 10 &11)</p> <p>Score: ___</p> <p>Comments:</p> | <p>Attends and arrives on time to all classes, and practicum/ internship experiences</p> <p>Consistently, communicates professionally with classmates, instructors, organizations', staff, and clients;</p> <p>Consistently comes to classes, practicum/ Internship experiences prepared; Does not represent work of others as his/her own. Protects both students' and clients' rights to confidentiality and privacy.</p> <p>Frequently, volunteers to take on additional responsibilities, as appropriate.</p> | <p>Attends and arrives on time to all classes and practicum/internship experiences. Comes to classes, and practicum/internship experiences prepared.</p> <p>Does not represent work of others as his/her own. Protects both students' and clients' rights to confidentiality and privacy. Dresses professionally for practicum/internship experiences.</p> <p>Communicates in a professional manner with fellow classmates, instructor, organization's staff, and clients, during classes, practicum/ internship experience.</p> | <p>Occasionally late, and or leaves early to from classes and practicum/internship experiences.</p> <p>Occasionally comes to classes, and practicum/internship experiences unprepared.</p> <p>Represents work of others as his/her own. Protects both students' and clients' rights to confidentiality and privacy. Dresses casually for practicum/internship experiences.</p> <p>Occasionally, communicates in an unprofessional manner with fellow classmates, instructor, organization's staff, and clients, during classes, practicum/ internship experience.</p> | <p>Frequently late, and or leaves early to from classes and practicum/internship experiences.</p> <p>Frequently, comes to classes, and practicum/internship experiences unprepared.</p> <p>Represents work of others as his/her own. Does not adhere to protecting both students' and clients' rights to confidentiality and privacy. Dresses inappropriate and unprofessional for practicum/internship experiences.</p> <p>Frequently, communicates in an unprofessional manner with fellow classmates, instructor, organization's staff, and clients, during classes, practicum/ internship experience.</p> |

The seven program professional dispositions are derived from the 18 University Professional Dispositions utilized in the Supplemental Standards process detailed below. If a student demonstrates behaviors that fall below these seven program professional dispositions, program faculty will file a Supplemental Standards referral.

Supplemental and Professional Standards for MSC/MFCT Candidates

Candidates in programs leading to certification or licensure are subject to greater scrutiny because of their anticipated entry into a licensed profession. Additionally, candidates who will be interacting with members of the community, i.e. students, patients, families, clients, participate in external activities as part of their academic program and are expected to represent the University as professionals and adhere to the ethics and standards of their profession, irrespective of where these activities occur. In addition to being subject to the Student Code of Conduct, candidates are also expected to follow the Supplemental and Professional Standards for their respective program (“Standards”), as both address a candidate’s affective attributes and disposition to be in the selected chosen profession. Adherence to these standards includes off-site activities and locations when the candidate’s behavior affects the reputation of the University and/or the integrity of the program.

A candidate’s ability to satisfactorily meet the Standards is a matter of ongoing academic judgment made by the respective College. Additionally, University of Phoenix faculty members have a legal, ethical, and academic responsibility to ensure candidates refrain from unsafe or unprofessional practices.

Definitions

- **Academic Judgment:** The College’s assessment of whether the candidate’s behavior demonstrates the attributes and disposition to be in the selected chosen profession.
- **Candidate:** Any student in a licensure or certification program or a program that has anticipated interactions with members of the community.
- **Off-Site Activities:** Field Placement, Clinical, Rotation, Practicum, Internship, Preceptorship, or any other activity that is required as part of the candidate’s program at a location other than the classroom.
- **Referral:** Notice to the College that a candidate may be in violation of one or more of these standards.
- **Remediation Plan:** The method the College uses to remediate the candidate to return to the program, if possible.

Supplemental Standards

1. The candidate is sensitive to community and cultural norms that pertain to the University classroom and off-site activities and locations.
2. The candidate contributes to a positive climate in the University classroom and all off-site activities and locations.
3. The candidate adheres to college, clinical, and agency site policies and procedures.

4. The candidate participates in off-site activities consistent with their respective professional practice, including satisfactory performance of all required skills specified.
5. The candidate maintains all state-mandated eligibility requirements for certification for placement and/or licensure.
6. The candidate only engages in practice for which they have been authorized or for which they have been educated/validated.
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 themselves and those with whom they interact.
9. The candidate demonstrates mastery of written and spoken language for self-expression, as well as for effective interaction in all settings.
10. The candidate is committed to reflection and assessment and is open to receiving feedback.
11. The candidate is willing to give and receive help.
12. The candidate is a thoughtful and responsive listener.
13. The candidate maintains a pattern of meeting requirements in courses and external placements.
14. The candidate demonstrates a commitment to keeping abreast of new technology, ideas and understanding in their chosen field.
15. The candidate demonstrates a level of responsibility and ethical judgment appropriate for a professional.
16. The candidate is responsible for personal transportation to and from off-site activities.
17. The candidate maintains professionalism and confidentiality in virtual settings.
18. The candidate is committed to establishing a safe and supportive environment.

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences: Counseling Professional Standards

Candidates in MSC/MFCT counseling programs are required to follow guidelines as outlined below:

Marriage, Family and Child Therapy:

[CAMFT Code of Ethics](#)

Supplemental and Professional Standards Referral Process & Procedure

Upon notice that a candidate may not be meeting one or more of the Standards, the College will review the information, the candidate's history, and any additional information that will assist in appropriately addressing the issue(s) presented. If the respective College determines that a candidate may not be meeting one or more of the Standards, they may file a Referral.

Referrals provide the College the opportunity to review the candidate's behavior and determine whether counseling, remediation, or withdrawal from the program is appropriate. The process is designed to be remedial in nature, as the goal is for candidates to understand what is expected of them to be successful in their profession.

If at any time during the process the candidate fails to meaningfully participate, the College may recommend the student be withdrawn from the program. Program withdrawals must be approved by the College Dean.

Candidates are not permitted to have representation by an attorney or any other third party at any time during the process.

This process is separate from the Student Code of Conduct disciplinary process, but they may run concurrently. Candidates charged with violating the Student Code of Conduct are subject to the policies, procedures, and sanctions under that policy in addition to these standards.

A Student Code of Conduct charge may be the basis for a Referral if the underlying incident indicates these Standards have not been met. Similarly, a Referral may be the basis for a Student Code of Conduct charge.

Candidates are not subject to expulsion for a Standards violation, only for a violation of the Student Code of Conduct if found responsible.

Notice of Referral

1. Once the College determines a Referral should proceed, the candidate will be provided a Letter of Referral identifying the applicable Standards and the student's deficiencies in meeting them.
2. Candidates have ten (10) calendar days from the date of receipt to provide a written response to the College. Candidates are required to respond to the Letter of Referral.
 - a. Failure to respond may result in the candidate being indefinitely suspended at the conclusion of the current course or immediately if not currently enrolled.
3. The candidate is required to meet with the College for the purpose of discussing the Referral and, if necessary, developing a Remediation Plan to correct identified deficiencies.
4. If a candidate fails to meet with the College within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of receipt of the Letter of Referral, the candidate will be suspended at the conclusion of the current course or immediately if the candidate is not currently enrolled. The candidate will remain suspended indefinitely until the Referral is resolved.

Remediation Plan

In the event a candidate is placed on a Remediation Plan, they will be provided with a written copy. The Remediation Plan includes what is required of the candidate and the allotted timeframe for completion.

The College has final authority over the terms of the Remediation Plan, which includes the following:

1. The candidate is expected to maintain regular contact with the College regarding their progress, including any barriers to completion.
2. The candidate must complete the Remediation Plan requirements in the time prescribed and submit documentation of completion to the College for review.
3. After review of the documentation by the College, the candidate will be notified in writing whether the Remediation Plan was successfully completed.
4. If a candidate does not successfully complete the Remediation Plan, the candidate will be suspended at the conclusion of their current course or immediately if not currently enrolled. Non-completion may also result in an additional Referral.
5. A student suspended for failure to complete the Remediation Plan will be reinstated upon successful completion of the Remediation Plan.

Retention Committee

For candidates with more than one Referral or who engage in serious misconduct, the College may refer students to a Retention Committee. Any candidate with a history of more than two Referrals may be automatically referred to a Retention Committee. The process includes the following:

1. Candidates will be notified in writing of the convening of a Retention Committee and potential outcomes.
2. Candidates have ten (10) calendar days from the date of notice to provide a written response.
 - a. Failure to respond may result in the candidate being suspended at the conclusion of the current course or immediately if not currently enrolled. A candidate suspended solely for failure to respond will remain suspended until the candidate's response is received and the student has met with the Retention Committee.
 - b. The candidate will be notified in writing of the decision of the Retention Committee, including any right of appeal.
3. Failure by the candidate to meet with the Retention Committee within thirty (30) calendar days following receipt of the notification will result in the candidate being suspended indefinitely at the conclusion of the current course or immediately if not currently enrolled. A candidate suspended solely for failure to meet with the Retention Committee will be reinstated upon meeting with the Retention Committee.
4. The Retention Committee is comprised of one member of College leadership and two (2) faculty members within the candidate's College.

5. The candidate has the opportunity to address the Retention Committee and is expected to provide insight regarding the Referral. The Retention Committee and the candidate will address the issues that appear to be hindering the candidate's academic progress and possible solutions. The Retention Committee will determine whether a Remediation Plan or withdrawal from the program is necessary.
6. After meeting with the candidate, the Retention Committee will deliberate and make one of the following decisions:
 - a. Take no action;
 - b. Institute a Remediation Plan; or
 - c. Withdraw the candidate from the program.
7. Decision

The candidate will be notified in writing within seven business days of the Retention Committee's decision and information on the appeal process if applicable. Any decision by the Retention Committee is part of the candidate's record and may be taken into consideration should the candidate receive any future referral. The following further explains the Committee's decision:

1. Take No Action
 - a. No further action steps are necessary by the candidate.
 - b. A decision to take no action is final and cannot be appealed.
2. Institute a Remediation Plan
 - a. A Remediation Plan will be instituted according to the above-titled section.
 - b. A decision to institute a Remediation Plan is final and cannot be appealed.
3. Withdraw the Candidate from the Program
 - a. Upon a decision that the candidate be withdrawn from the program, the candidate will be scholastically suspended.
 - b. A summary report, generally containing findings and recommendations, will be forwarded to the College Dean, who has the ultimate authority to accept, reject, or modify the recommendation of the Retention Committee and render a final decision.
 - c. The candidate has the right to appeal a final program withdrawal to the Central Administration Appeals Committee (CAAC).
4. The candidate must file a written statement within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of the decision. The notification will provide the student with information on submitting such appeal.
 - a. If no appeal is filed within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of the decision, the program withdrawal is final, and the student will remain scholastically suspended.
5. Central Administration Appeals Committee details:

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences MSC/MFCT v.11 Program Handbook | January 2024
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- a. The CAAC is comprised of three senior University representatives, at least one of which is from the appropriate College.
- b. The CAAC reviews information provided by the College, including any information considered by the Retention Committee and the candidate's written appeal.
- c. The CAAC will make one of the following decisions:
 - i. Uphold the program withdrawal.
 - ii. Reverse the withdrawal and reinstate the candidate back into the program and remediate, if applicable.
- d. The student will be notified in writing of the CAAC's decision.
- e. The decision of the CAAC is final.

Section 4: Degree Requirements

Academic Standing and Scholastic Disqualification

Students in this program may not attend any further courses after being assigned a grade of incomplete in MFCC/544, MFCC/554, MFCC/503, MFCC/557, MFCC/567 and MFCC/505. All MFCT courses, except for courses that are outlined in the syllabus as Pass/Fail, must be completed with a grade of "B-" or better. MSC students will be placed on Scholastic Disqualification if a minimum grade of "B-" is not attained. If a student repeats a course due to receiving a grade that is less than a "B-" and does not receive a grade of "B-" or better the second time, the student will be scholastically suspended, permanently withdrawn, from this program. Students who have been scholastically disqualified will not be allowed to continue in their degree program until they have taken the following steps:

- Completion of the academic progression student agreement form, signed by the student and returned to the appointed administrator.
- Retake of the course which placed them on scholastic disqualification and satisfy the grade requirement.

Note: Students who are removed from their clinical placement or receive an unapproved self-termination must complete the Supplemental Standards process instead of the academic progression student agreement form.

Students must successfully complete MFCC/503 Graduate Portfolio II and MFCC/505 Graduate Portfolio III in order to continue in this program. Students who do not successfully complete MFCC/503 and MFCC/505 may not enroll in any subsequent coursework until the course has been successfully completed. Students who fail MFCC/503 and MFCC/505 may repeat the course after three (3) months and will be required to follow the Supplemental and Professional Standards referral process. Students will have 3 attempts. If the student does not meet the minimum grade requirement on the third attempt, the student will be scholastically suspended, permanently withdrawn, from this program.

Students who fail to meet the minimum grade requirement for MFCC/502, MFCC/503, MFCC/505, MFCC/592, MFCC/597A, and MFCC/597B will be required to follow the Supplemental and Professional Standards referral process. Portfolio courses and Clinical Placements are key components of the MSC/MFCT program and failure to meet the minimum grade requirement will require a robust remediation plan with input from a college designee. Students in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences graduate programs may not transfer credit to the University from courses taken from other schools while academically or scholastically disqualified.

Academic Appeal Policies

In addition to the appeal policy detailed above in the Supplemental and Professional Standards process, the University has established specific processes for students to submit

grievances for violations or misapplication of a current policy, procedure, or established practice. Except as otherwise provided, students should first attempt to informally resolve their concerns with the department representative(s) involved or a supervisor. If the issue cannot be resolved through informal means, the student may file a formal grievance in writing with [Resolution Services](#) for an impartial evaluation. For additional information please refer to the Academic Catalog.

The University has also established student appeals process for exceptions to academic policies through the Student Appeals Center (SAC). Exceptions may be granted based upon academic rationale and the student's individual circumstances. Students must provide the reason(s) why an exception should be granted, refer to each specific policy being appealed, and provide all relevant supporting documentation. The SAC determines the eligibility of the request and whether it will go forward. If a student's initial SAC appeal is denied that decision may be reviewed by a SAC 2nd Level Committee if the student provides new information not previously considered. SAC decisions are ineligible for appeal through any other entity within University of Phoenix.

University of Phoenix Approved Writing Style Guide

The University of Phoenix-approved writing style guide is the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition*. As a suggestion, purchase the manual before the first course of the program 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 *University of Phoenix 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 requires 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 of the manual is useful. For example, students might consult the manual to determine how to outline a five-page paper, create citations, and format the paper (including title page and reference page). The [Center for Writing Excellence](#) provides a tutorial on APA style for students and faculty.

Student Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

University of Phoenix recognizes that there are numerous generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools available to students, such as ChatGPT, DALLE-2, CoPilot, Google Bard, and more. AI is not a replacement for research, writing development, and critical thinking involved in completing coursework.

Below are some general guidelines to help you use AI responsibly and ethically. Your instructor may have additional information about how AI may or may not be used in your course.

Individual Work: The majority of your work should be original and completed by you. AI is a tool that can help you learn but should not replace your own learning, writing or critical thinking. This means you should not solely rely on output generated by AI tools to complete your assignments.

Disclosure of AI Use: To maintain transparency and academic integrity, you must disclose the use of AI when submitting an assignment. This applies whenever you incorporate AI-generated content into your writing. If you use AI to complete a discussion response or an assignment, include a statement describing the specific AI tool(s) or resources you used and how you used them.

Citing AI Use: AI tools are an information source and sources must be cited. If you use AI-generated output to complete coursework, you must cite it properly according to the American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines. Proper citation acknowledges the source of information and gives credit to the AI tool(s) employed.

Accuracy of Information: You are responsible to verify the information you present in your coursework. Keep in mind that while AI is a powerful tool, it sometimes generates information that is inaccurate or false and may not align with the assignment instructions. It is your responsibility to ensure the material you incorporate into your work is accurate, verifiable, properly cited and meets the assignment requirements. Your textbook, course materials and the University Library may provide the best sources to support your assertions.

Avoiding Misuse: If a student uses AI without disclosure or citation and represents AI-generated content as their original work, that is a form of academic misconduct and is subject to the disciplinary process.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the use of AI in your class, please reach out to your instructor.

Section 5: Field Experience/Clinical Placements

Field experience/clinical placement occur in practicum and internship courses and are supervised clinical experiences that provide opportunities for students to counsel clients in community settings. Students do not begin Practicum and Internship until the last year of their studies after fulfilling all requirements for clinical placement. With support from Field Placement Coordinators, students are responsible for finding the site for their clinical placements.

Important Facts:

- Field Placement Coordinators contact students approximately six months prior to practicum.
- Clinical courses, MFCC/592 Practicum and MFCC/597A and 597B Internship requires weekly attendance to synchronous class; date and time to be determined by course faculty.
- Practicum and Internship courses are taken consecutively; MFCC 592 is 10 weeks; MFCC 597A and 597B are fifteen weeks each for a total of 40 weeks.
- During the 40 weeks of clinical courses students will average between 10 to 20 hours per week at a clinical placement site.
- Students will record direct client hours and other indirect hours completed at the clinical placement site. A minimum of 300 direct client hours are required to graduate.

Eligibility

To be eligible for practicum/internship, students must have fulfilled the appropriate course prerequisites. If you have questions, contact your Academic Counselor. Students must also be enrolled in a practicum/internship course before clinical placement hours can begin. Course numbers by program are as follows:

- MFCC/592: Practicum
- MFCC/597A: Internship A
- MFCC/597B: Internship B

Practicum MFCC/592

This course focuses on the assessment and continuing development of counseling skills and includes regular synchronous interactions with faculty and peers. Students have a variety of opportunities to receive feedback and to evaluate their ability to integrate theory into practice. Individualized practice sessions and feedback are designed into the course. Students serve at approved clinical sites where they provide psychotherapy services to clients under the direction of an approved licensed site supervisor. Legal and ethical issues include spousal/partner abuse assessment and intervention, child abuse assessment and reporting, elder/dependent adult abuse and assessment, and suicide risk assessment and intervention. The expectation is that students should complete at least 40 direct client hours during practicum.

Internship MFCC/597A & MFCC/597B

Internship is a continuation of students supervised clinical experience. Internship is divided into two sections, each lasting 15 weeks. Students serve at approved clinical sites where they provide psychotherapy services to clients under the direction of an approved licensed site supervisor. The expectation is that students will complete 300 direct client hours by the end of practicum and internship.

Professional Liability Insurance

Students are required to obtain Professional Liability Insurance prior to direct client contact in clinical courses. 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 California Association of Marriage and Family Therapist (CAMFT) or American Counseling Association (ACA) will provide the opportunity to obtain Professional Liability insurance at no cost as part of membership benefits.

Site Placement

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 are required to secure their own clinical placement sites from one of the approved, contracted sites on record or submit a request to the field placement coordinator to have a site approved. Students are encouraged to make careful decisions regarding the selection of clinical placement sites. Work and home schedules may require adjustment to work effectively with the site requirements and meet the clinical service hour requirements for each course and for licensure.

Responsibilities and Expectations for Clinical Placements

It is every student's personal responsibility to apply, present professionally, submit a cover letter and resume, and interview for the position at the selected agency (if an interview is required by the agency). There may be additional requirements such as background checks or fingerprinting required at the selected site. We recommend that students consider a variety of sites to ensure timely placement and to receive a wide range of experience. Upon being offered a practicum or internship position, submit paperwork required by the campus, which includes the signed Supervision Contract from the site supervisor.

Students are expected to perform the agreed upon duties while supervised by the site supervisor and practicum/internship instructor. Students are expected to be on time and always demonstrate professional and ethical behaviors. Students are required to attend supervision on site as well as in weekly practicum/internship classes. Students are required to submit an up-to-date weekly log of their practicum/internship activities to their site supervisor and course faculty member for a signature. Signed weekly logs are uploaded to TK20.

Synchronous Clinical Course Meetings

Students are required to attend weekly synchronous class meetings with the practicum/ internship course faculty. For practicum, students meet for 2 hours weekly in a synchronous class. For internship students meet for 1.5 hours. Attendance and participation in weekly, synchronous class is a mandatory requirement for all field experience students. If a student misses more than two synchronous class meetings during the course, they will be required to retake the course. Arriving habitually late is not viewed as professional behavior and may impact your grade. To facilitate full attention and active participation, students are required to be in a confidential setting during synchronous class meetings.

Safety Policies and Procedures for Home Visits

If services are to be provided at a client's home instead of at an agency's location, clinic, hospital, or care facility, the agency agrees to implement formal policies and procedures to protect the safety of the student's educational experience. These policies include student training on safety protocols, check-in and check-out procedures, client screening processes, permission to use mobile phones, and the accompaniment of an agency licensed supervisor to all in-home service sessions.

Under NO circumstances should students provide in-home services without an agency supervisor being physically present. Before starting any agency-related assignments or home visits, the agency must provide written policies and procedures on safety protocols. Students must also sign a statement acknowledging that they've received a copy of the agency's written policies and procedures as well as notice of the applicable training that will be provided to the supervising University faculty member. The agency is responsible for any claims or damages brought by any student, client, or third party arising out of in-home service care. Additional information is provided in the agency's Affiliation Agreement.

Additionally, students are required to fulfill all agreements with the placement site and are not allowed to leave the site until the internship course is complete even if they have completed their hours.

Paid Practicum/Internship Policy

Paid practicum/internships are permitted. Students may complete practicum/internship hours at their place of employment. Students must be supervised by someone other than their employer supervisor; the supervisor providing the clinical supervision must be appropriately licensed and meet the state requirements as a supervisor. Additionally, students must complete their practicum/internship hours doing something unrelated to their employment duties; students cannot continue to work in the same capacity that they are employed and count that as their clinical hours.

In summary, students can get paid for their practicum and internship and are allowed to earn practicum experience at their place of employment under these conditions:

- a. the student practicum/internship experience is different than their job duties;
- b. the student has a different supervisor for practicum/internship activities;
- c. the site meets state and University requirements for practicum/internship students and has been approved by the University for practicum/internship, with an active Affiliation Agreement on file.

Section 6: Faculty

MFCT Program Faculty are working practitioners and role-models dedicated to ethical practice in teaching, supervision, research, scholarship, advocacy, clinical practice, service, and leadership. Faculty are subject matter experts in the courses they teach.

Section 7: Resources

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 emails, faculty announcements in class, and in the electronic forums/Blackboard Classroom. Communication to students is primarily through the university email and students have the responsibility to check this email frequently or forward these emails to a personal one.

Professional Affiliations

Students are encouraged to join the California Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (CAMFT) or the American Counseling Association (ACA). In addition, students are encouraged to participate by attending meetings, volunteering time and services, submitting manuscripts for publication, attending conferences, and speaking at conferences.

Counseling Skills Center

The University of Phoenix California Counseling Skills Center (CSC) offers free telehealth therapy services to university and community members who reside within the state of California. Services are provided by student counselors who are in their clinical course and who are supervised by licensed clinicians.

This may afford the opportunity for some students to complete their practicum and internship hours at the CSC. The student must be located in the state of California to obtain clinical experience including seeing clients and attending supervision. If a student is visiting out of state, they cannot participate during that week.

The [Counseling Skills Center](#) is an educational training facility that models mental health clinics.

Online Resources

The MSC/MFCT program offers several online resources to facilitate learning and development of core competencies. The University of Phoenix classroom includes student textbooks in electronic format, an extensive online library the (University Library), access to online support, and links to assistance with educational tasks (such as writing, researching, and subject tutoring). Students will access the University of Phoenix classroom throughout their program.

Program Certification

Students may submit any requests for program certification related to credentialing and employment through the Field Placement Team, who will evaluate and provide such certification in consultation with Accreditation and Regulatory Compliance (ARC), and administrative faculty. Faculty may provide personal references for students, with appropriate consideration as to their knowledge of the student's progress in the program, the program the student attended, 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, the University of Phoenix recognizes personal issues can impede academic and clinical functioning because of the professional development that takes place within courses and training.

Undergoing counseling as a personal growth opportunity, as well as having the experience of being a client, can be cathartic, and is generally a healthy approach to maintaining mental wellness. It is strongly recommended for all counseling professionals. Information on counseling services is available in the Life Resource Center accessible through the student website. Students also have access to Career Services for Life[®] until they retire. These services include career coaching, resume building templates, and access to job boards. Links to counseling services and Career Services for Life[®] can be found by students in the Virtual Student Union (VSU). The VSU is a centralized hub for student resources located on the student's homepage of their student portal.

Disability Services

University of Phoenix recognizes and accepts the obligations under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability and requiring institutions of postsecondary education to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with a disability in all programs, activities, and employment.

In order for the University to provide eligible students with a disability with reasonable accommodations, the student must submit an official request for services to a disability services advisor. All students seeking accommodations must contact their disability services advisor in order to begin the self-disclosure and accommodation process. University of Phoenix Disability Services Office is available to assist employees and faculty members with disabilities who request accommodations and can be found at the [University of Phoenix Disability Services](#) site.

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