

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2024-2025

**Clinical
Mental Health**

 School of Education
& Human Development
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER

CU IN THE CITY 

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PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program Description

The University of Colorado Denver, through the School of Education & Human Development, offers Master of Arts programs appropriate for counseling work in clinical mental health settings, school systems, higher education, private practice, and business settings. The program in Clinical Mental Health Counseling is accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The overall philosophy of the Counseling program is to prepare master's level counselors/therapists with academic, professional, and personal credentials to perform effectively in their anticipated work setting. Individual, systems, and integrated training are emphasized with a focus on what research demonstrates as being essential in effective counseling.

Counseling Program Mission Statement

The Mission of the Counseling program at the University of Colorado Denver is to educate competent counselors who value inclusion and prize diversity such that they are prepared to offer a continuum of mental health services across a variety of settings for the benefit of the community and society.

The Counseling Program faculty strives to train counselors:

1. Who are adept at providing high quality, contextually appropriate counseling and consultation services to individuals, couples, families and systems.
2. Who welcome and support diversity, including race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, spirituality, gender, age, ability and socioeconomic status among the faculty, peers, and clientele; who advocate on behalf of marginalized individuals and groups; and who are open to challenging the dominant paradigm by adopting multiple perspectives with the goal of becoming culturally responsive.
3. Who embody integrity and culturally sensitive ethics in their professional practice.
4. Who are committed to lifelong learning, self-care, and professional development; and who advocate on behalf of their professional identity as counselors.

Current objectives of the Counseling Program are reflected in the core requirements as dictated by national accreditation standards and licensure requirements. Through coursework, practicum, internship, and successful completion of the comprehensive examination, students are expected to satisfy overall program objectives and specific course objectives. Students should be prepared to meet course objectives and attend classes as scheduled. In addition, students must have access to computer technology in order to participate in online coursework and communication within the program. Students will be expected to be able to use campus email, online learning management systems such as Canvas, word processing programs, and programs required to view course materials such as PDF files. Students are encouraged to contact the Office of Information and Technology (<https://www1.ucdenver.edu/offices/office-of-information-technology>) if they would like additional training, support, or resources regarding the use of technology.

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Specific Learning Outcome

Successful completion of the Clinical Mental Health counseling specialization prepares students to articulate roles and settings of clinical mental health counselors and apply principles, models, and documentation formats of biopsychosocial case conceptualization and treatment planning (CACREP V.C.1.c; V.C.2.a).

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Course Sequencing

Courses in the graduate programs in Counseling at the University of Colorado Denver are designed to provide a gradual and stratified skill-building experience, beginning with the introductory course in your particular track, and culminating with the internship experience. Core courses should be taken within the first 30-36 credit hours in the program. Furthermore, course sequencing is utilized to maximize the learning and skill-building process. **Students are responsible for reviewing the catalog and schedule to be certain that all prerequisites for courses have been taken. Some courses may be offered only once per year, or every other year. Please consult the tables below for the information on courses not offered every semester.**

Change of Specialty Track

Students who wish to transfer from one specialty track to another must reapply to the program under that specialty track. For example, switching from school counseling to clinical mental health counseling.

Incomplete Grade Policy

An Incomplete (I grade) is a temporary grade, which may be given at the instructor's discretion to a student when illness, necessary absence, or other reasons beyond the control of the student prevent completion of course requirements by the end of the academic term. Please review the full requirements for an Incomplete on the [Application for Incomplete Grade](#) form for additional information on Incomplete grades. Students will have one full semester to rectify their incomplete grade.

Tevera

As a CACREP accredited program, the University is required to meet certain standards through our assignments and rubrics. We use a platform called Tevera to house all our assignments and rubrics to ensure we are meeting these requirements, which allows us to track the key performance indicators needed for our accreditation. As a student, you will create a Tevera account and submit assignments through that platform. Tevera will also be an integral part of practicum and internship. You will use the site to track your hours throughout both practicum and internship. Your site supervisor can sign off on your hours through the site too. Tevera will be a resource available to students long after graduation so you can access past information to help with licensure and use it as a networking tool.

ALL COURSEWORK MUST BE SATISFACTORILY COMPLETED PRIOR TO APPLYING FOR PRACTICUM

Any student who has not followed the above procedure and has registered for a class out of sequence may be administratively dropped from the class. There are several courses in the Counseling curriculum for which a limited enrollment is essential to maintaining a high quality learning experience for students. **These maximum enrollments are monitored very closely. Students are expected to register early in order to secure a place in these classes.** Those courses are:

Course	Max. per Section
COUN 5100 Counseling Techniques	15
COUN 5110 Group Counseling	15
COUN 5910 Practicum Group Supervision	12
COUN 5930 Internship in Counseling	12
COUN 6140 Counseling w/ Children, Adolescents & Parents	22
*COUN 7100 Advanced Theories/Techniques in Psychotherapy	15

*Because COUN 7100 should be taken right before practicum, priority registration will be given to students who are closest to their practicum.

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Course Plan

(63 semester hours)

COURSE NUMBER	TITLE	TYPE	SEMESTER OFFERED	PREREQUISITES
COUN 5010	Counseling Theories	Core	FALL SPRING	
COUN 5100	Techniques of Counseling	Core		COUN 5010, COUN 5810
COUN 5110	Group Counseling	Core		COUN 5010, COUN 5100, COUN 5810
RSEM 5110	Introduction to Measurement	Core		
RSEM 5120	Introduction to Research	Core		
COUN 5200	Strategies in Agency Counseling	Clinical Mental Health	FALL SPRING	COUN 5010, COUN 5810
COUN 5280	Addictions Counseling	Interdisciplinary		
COUN 5330	Counseling Issues and Ethics	Core		COUN 5010, COUN 5810
COUN 5400	Career Counseling	Core		
COUN 5810	Multicultural & Diversity Issues in Counseling with Individuals and Families	Core	FALL SPRING	
COUN 5120**	Counseling Grief & Loss	Clinical Mental Health	SPRING	COUN 5010, COUN 5810, COUN 5200
COUN 5835**	Gender and Sexual Orientation		FALL	
LDFS 6200	Human Development Over the Life Span	Core		
COUN 6200	Trauma Informed Care for Diverse Populations and Co-Occurring Disorders	Clinical Mental Health	FALL SPRING	COUN 5010, COUN 5810, COUN 5200
COUN 6250	Mental Health Diagnosis	Clinical Mental Health		COUN 5010, COUN 5810, COUN 5200
COUN 7100	*Advanced Theory and Techniques	Clinical Mental Health	FALL SPRING	COUN 5010, COUN 5100, COUN 5200
Elective See page 2 for elective options			AS OFFERED	COUN 5010, COUN 5200, COUN 5810
Elective See page 2 for elective options			AS OFFERED	COUN 5010, COUN 5200, COUN 5810
COUN 5910	Practicum & Individual Supervision	Field Experience		ALL CLASSES
COUN 5911	Practicum & Group Supervision	Field Experience		COUN 5910 TAKEN CONCURRENTLY

COUN 5930	Internship (6 credit hours)	Field Experience		COUN 5910, COUN 5911
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***Because COUN 7100 should be taken right before practicum, priority registration will be given to students who are closest to their practicum.**

****Students must take EITHER COUN 5120 or COUN 5835, if they take both the second will count as an elective.**

Elective Options

COURSE NUMBER	TITLE	TYPE	SEMESTER OFFERED	PREREQUISITES
COUN 5120**	Counseling Grief and Loss	Clinical Mental Health	SPRING	COUN 5010, COUN 5200, COUN 5810
COUN 5835**	Gender and Sexual Orientation		FALL	
COUN 5425	Developing & Implementing School Counseling Programs	School	SPRING	COUN 5010, COUN 5200, COUN 5810
COUN 5815	Introduction to School Counseling	School	FALL	COUN 5010, COUN 5200, COUN 5810
COUN 5825	The Business of Private Practice	Clinical Mental Health	SUMMER	COUN 5010, COUN 5200, COUN 5810
COUN 6100	Spiritual Dimensions of Counseling	Clinical Mental Health	SPRING	COUN 5010, COUN 5200, COUN 5810
COUN 6230	School Based Developmental Counseling and Prevention	School	SPRING	COUN 5010, COUN 5200, COUN 5810
COUN 6529	Intro to Play Therapy	Clinical Mental Health	FALL	COUN 5010, COUN 5200, COUN 5810
COUN 6950	Master's Thesis	Special Study Thesis		COUN 5010, COUN 5200, COUN 5810

****Students must take EITHER COUN 5120 or COUN 5835, if they take both the second will count as an elective****

- Students choose electives based on their professional and academic interests. Any graduate-level COUN class that is not a degree requirement is a potential elective option. Additionally, graduate-level courses outside of COUN may be approved by your faculty advisor as an elective, provided it is related to counseling and supports your academic and professional goals.

Culminating Experience

All students must complete a culminating experience in the form of a comprehensive exam or thesis. The majority of students choose to take the comprehensive exam. Students generally choose the thesis if they intend to conduct research after graduation and/or pursue a PhD degree. It is recommended students discuss their culminating experience options with their faculty mentor.

Comprehensive Examination

Students choosing this option for their culminating experience will be required to pass the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE), a national comprehensive exam. The comprehensive examination covers core curriculum areas in the Counseling Program, so the CPCE is taken after completion of all CACREP core courses (COUN 5010, COUN 5100, COUN 5110, COUN 5330, COUN 5400, COUN 5810, LDFS 6200, RSEM 5110 and RSEM 5120). Below are the eight CACREP areas, with the corresponding CU Denver course(s) in parenthesis:

1. Human Growth and Development (LDFS 6200)
2. Social and Cultural Foundations (COUN 5810)
3. Helping Relationships (COUN 5010, COUN 5100)
4. Group Work (COUN 5110)
5. Career and Lifestyle Development (COUN 5400)
6. Appraisal (COUN 5100, RSEM 5110)
7. Research and Program Evaluation (RSEM 5110, RSEM 5120)
8. Professional Orientation and Ethics (COUN 5330)

A passing score is no more than one standard deviation below the national average for a given test administration, so a passing score cannot be determined prior to receiving your official score report that includes the national average for a given test administration.

Students are required to complete an online application and pay the comprehensive examination fee. Additional information about the test, including the application, dates, and deadlines, is available online at <https://education.ucdenver.edu/academic-services/student-resources/comps> and is due by Census Date for the semester that the student wants to take the exam. Census date is available on the Academic Calendar at <http://www.ucdenver.edu/student-services/resources/Registrar-dev/CourseListings/Pages/AcademicCalendar.aspx>.

In addition, students are required to make a comprehensive case presentation in their Internship class (COUN 5930) during their last semester of internship. Guidelines for such a presentation will be available from course instructors. Successful completion of the case presentation will also be included as part of the comprehensive examination.

Students who do not pass the comprehensive exam will be required to retake the exam before graduating. If a student fails the exam the first time, they may choose to do complete a thesis in lieu of retaking the comprehensive exam. If the student fails the exam a second time it will result in dismissal from the program and failure to earn the Master's degree

Master's Thesis

Students may choose to complete a thesis in lieu of the comprehensive examination. This option requires a thesis committee, an examination on the thesis material as well as any other material, and registration for COUN 6950 Master's Thesis for four (4) semester hours. Students interested in completing a thesis should review the Master's Thesis Guideline ([Appendix A](#)) and touch base with their faculty mentor.

Group Requirement

CACREP accreditation standards (see below) require students to participate in (not facilitate or co-facilitate) a group. Students will also be required to lead (or co-lead) a group for 10 hours during internship. Questions regarding a group's appropriateness for this requirement should be addressed to the student's faculty mentor prior to beginning a group. There is a Facebook Group "UCD Group Therapy Opportunities" as well as periodic announcements in Canvas about affordable groups in the area.

Faculty have determined the following criteria for groups that meet this requirement:

1. The group must have an identifiable, consistent leader, who must be:
2. A fully licensed mental health professional, or
3. A licensure candidate (e.g., LPCC) who is NOT affiliated with CU Denver.
4. Groups must have a mental health focus.
5. Groups must be personally relevant for students (i.e. they must address issues that students are dealing with currently).
6. Students must participate as group members, not as facilitators or co-facilitators.
7. Students may complete the group requirement in COUN 5110. If they do not complete the requirement as part of this course, they MUST complete it prior to entering practicum.
8. The group facilitator must verify via Formstack form in the Canvas Advising Shell that student has completed 10 hours in the group.
9. Questions regarding a group's appropriateness for this requirement should be addressed to the student's faculty mentor. Any group that is led by a person who has not earned a master's degree (i.e., those completing their master's internship) will not count toward the completion of the 10 hours of group participation requirement.

CACREP requires that group work provide both theoretical and experiential understandings of group purpose, development, dynamics, theories, methods, skills, and other group approaches in a multicultural society, including all of the following:

- Principles of group dynamics, including group process components, developmental stage theories, group members' roles and behaviors, and therapeutic factors of group work;
- Group leadership or facilitation styles and approaches, including characteristics of various types of group leaders and leadership styles;
- Theories of group counseling, including commonalities, distinguishing characteristics, and pertinent research and literature;
- Group counseling methods, including group counselor orientations and behaviors, appropriate selection criteria and methods, and methods of evaluation of effectiveness; and

- Direct experiences in which students participate as group members in a small group activity, approved by the program, for a minimum of 10 clock hours over the course of one academic term.

Applying for Graduation

Graduation upon completion of the course requirements is NOT automatic. Students are responsible for ensuring they have met the all graduation requirements. Once registration is available for the semester students intend to graduate, including summer, they may apply for graduation online in the UCDAccess student portal. An application for graduation is due by Census Date for the semester that the student intends to graduate. Census date is available on the Academic Calendar at <http://www.ucdenver.edu/student-services/resources/Registrar-dev/CourseListings/Pages/AcademicCalendar.aspx>

Students who submit an online application for graduation and do not graduate that semester will need to submit another online application for the semester they plan to graduate. Graduation ceremonies are held twice a year (May and December), at the completion of the spring and fall semester.

LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS

Students who have completed the required plan of study for the Clinical Mental Health Track will be endorsed for credentialing as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC).

Licensed Professional Counselor Requirements

Professional Counselors are licensed in all 50 states, although the name designation and licensing requirements vary from state to state. Within Colorado, the Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA) oversees the licensing of all health care providers. University of Colorado Denver faculty will only endorse a student for licensure when they completed the degree requirements listed below, or will endorse only those specific courses completed at UC Denver. In Colorado, an applicant for licensure as a **Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)** must meet the following requirements:

- A counseling master's degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education, preferably one approved by CACREP
- Sixty graduate semester hours in or related to the discipline of counseling
- Coursework in each of the following areas: human growth and development, social and cultural foundations, counseling theories and techniques or helping relationships, group dynamics, career and lifestyle development, appraisals or tests and measurements for individuals and groups, research and evaluation, and professional orientation to counseling.

Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) Requirements At-a-Glance	
Area	Requirement
Experience	2,000 clock hours of post graduate supervised experience in professional counseling over a minimum of 24 months. 1500 clock hours must be direct counseling experience and 500 may be other non-clinical duties.
Supervision	A minimum of 100 hours of direct supervision, at least 70 hours of which must be face-to-face individual supervision, over a minimum of 24 months. Must be completed on a regular and systematic basis while accruing hours as an LPCC.
Licensure Exam	National Counselor Exam (NCE, https://www.nbcc.org/Resources/Applicants/Students)
Jurisprudence	Successful completion of the State of Colorado Jurisprudence Exam

Licensure Endorsement Policy

Below is a detailed description of the Counseling Program policy for endorsing students for licensing, credentialing, and/ or employment:

Only students who have completed the required plan of study for the Clinical Mental Health or School Counseling track will be endorsed for credentialing as mental health counselors, or counselors. The University of Colorado Denver Counseling Program endorses students for licensure only in the state of Colorado. The University of Colorado Denver Counseling Program can certify degree completion for graduates applying for licensure outside of the state of Colorado, but students are responsible for ensuring our program meets the requirements of other states.

Upon completion of all degree requirements, students can register with the state of Colorado as a Licensed Professional Counselor Candidate (LPC-C). Graduates are not fully licensed upon graduation, and must complete post-degree supervised clinical hours. Students also need to pass the National Counselor Examination (NCE) to eligible for licensure. The state agency responsible for licensing Professional Counselors (mental health counselors) in Colorado is the Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA). More information about Colorado licensure laws can be found here:

Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA), <https://www.colorado.gov/dora>

Only students who have completed the required plan of study for the School Counseling Track will be endorsed for credentialing as school counselors, or recommended for positions as school counseling interns or school counselors. The University of Colorado Denver Counseling Program endorses students for licensure only in the state of Colorado. The University of Colorado Denver Counseling Program can certify degree completion for graduates applying for licensure outside the state of Colorado, but students are responsible for ensuring our program meets the requirements of other states. Upon completion of all program requirements, and successful passing of the Praxis exam, students can register with the state as a School Counselor. The state agency responsible for licensing School Counselors in Colorado is the Colorado

Department of Education (CDE). More information about Colorado licensure laws can be found here: Colorado Department of Education (CDE), <http://www.cde.state.co.us/>

Students who wish to transfer from one specialty track to another must reapply to the program under that specialty track. For example, switching from school counseling to clinical mental health counseling.

Remediation

If at any point during the student's program, the student is deemed at risk in terms of failure due to academic skills deficits, professional skills deficits, or personal issues that prevent a student from performing the duties of a professional counselor, a remediation plan will be initiated and documented (assuming that the concerns do not warrant immediate removal from the program as specified in the School of Education & Human Development's academic policies, the University's Code of Student Conduct, or as deemed necessary to protect the public). This remediation plan, designed to address the issue(s) of concern, will be:

1. Established by the student's faculty mentor with consultation from other program faculty, and when appropriate, the student's on-site supervisor, and other professionals who have relevant input into the situation;
2. Presented to the student;
3. Discussed relative to the faculty's concerns, and if applicable, protection of the public and field placement site; and
4. Agreed upon and signed by mentor, student, and the faculty member who will monitor the student's progress relative to the remediation plan, with notification to the program faculty.

Professional Performance Standards

Students' fulfillment of ten *Professional Performance Standards* is reviewed by individual faculty during each class, and by the entire Counseling faculty at the conclusion of the first year of study, at the end of Practicum, and during Internship. The standards include:

1. Openness to new ideas (including bias, power, and privilege)
2. Flexibility
3. Cooperativeness with others
4. Willingness to accept and use feedback
5. Awareness of own impact on others
6. Ability to deal with conflict
7. Ability to accept personal responsibility
8. Ability to express feelings effectively and appropriately
9. Attention to ethical and legal considerations (including use of technology)
10. Initiative and Motivation

More details regarding the evaluation criteria for professional performance and the remediation process can be found in Appendix A and B of the General Handbook.

CACREP 2016 STANDARDS FOR CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

Students who are preparing to specialize as clinical mental health counselors will demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to address a wide variety of circumstances within the context of clinical mental health counseling. Counselor education programs with a specialty area in clinical mental health counseling must document where each of the lettered standards listed below is covered in the curriculum.

1. FOUNDATIONS

- a. history and development of clinical mental health counseling
- b. theories and models related to clinical mental health counseling
- c. principles, models, and documentation formats of biopsychosocial case conceptualization and treatment planning
- d. neurobiological and medical foundation and etiology of addiction and co-occurring disorders
- e. psychological tests and assessments specific to clinical mental health counseling

2. CONTEXTUAL DIMENSIONS

- a. roles and settings of clinical mental health counselors
- b. etiology, nomenclature, treatment, referral, and prevention of mental and emotional disorders
- c. mental health service delivery modalities within the continuum of care, such as inpatient, outpatient, partial treatment and aftercare, and the mental health counseling services networks
- d. diagnostic process, including differential diagnosis and the use of current diagnostic classification systems, including the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) and the International Classification of Diseases (ICD)
- e. potential for substance use disorders to mimic and/or co-occur with a variety of neurological, medical, and psychological disorders
- f. impact of crisis and trauma on individuals with mental health diagnoses
- g. impact of biological and neurological mechanisms on mental health
- h. classifications, indications, and contraindications of commonly prescribed psychopharmacological medications for appropriate medical referral and consultation
- i. legislation and government policy relevant to clinical mental health counseling
- j. cultural factors relevant to clinical mental health counseling
- k. professional organizations, preparation standards, and credentials relevant to the practice of clinical mental health counseling
- l. legal and ethical considerations specific to clinical mental health counseling
- m. record keeping, third party reimbursement, and other practice and management issues in clinical mental health counseling

3. PRACTICE

- a. intake interview, mental status evaluation, biopsychosocial history, mental health history, and psychological assessment for treatment planning and caseload management
- b. techniques and interventions for prevention and treatment of a broad range of mental health issues
- c. strategies for interfacing with the legal system regarding court-referred clients

- d. strategies for interfacing with integrated behavioral health care professionals
- e. strategies to advocate for persons with mental health issues

CACREP 2016 CORE STANDARDS

Students who are preparing to work as professional counselors will demonstrate the professional knowledge, skills, and practices necessary to address a wide variety of circumstances within the Counseling context. Below are the common core curricular experiences outlined in Section II.F, for which programs must provide evidence that student learning has occurred in the following domains:

1. PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING ORIENTATION AND ETHICAL PRACTICE

- a. history and philosophy of the counseling profession and its specialty areas
- b. the multiple professional roles and functions of counselors across specialty areas, and their relationships with human service and integrated behavioral health care systems, including interagency and interorganizational collaboration and consultation
- c. counselors' roles and responsibilities as members of interdisciplinary community outreach and emergency management response teams
- d. the role and process of the professional counselor advocating on behalf of the profession
- e. advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impede access, equity, and success for clients
- f. professional counseling organizations, including membership benefits, activities, services to members, and current issues
- g. professional counseling credentialing, including certification, licensure, and accreditation practices and standards, and the effects of public policy on these issues
- h. current labor market information relevant to opportunities for practice within the counseling profession
- i. ethical standards of professional counseling organizations and credentialing bodies, and applications of ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling
- j. technology's impact on the counseling profession
- k. strategies for personal and professional self-evaluation and implications for practice
- l. self-care strategies appropriate to the counselor role
- m. the role of counseling supervision in the profession

2. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Multicultural and pluralistic characteristics within and among diverse groups nationally and internationally

- a. theories and models of multicultural counseling, cultural identity development, and social justice and advocacy
- b. multicultural counseling competencies
- c. the impact of heritage, attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences on an individual's views of others
- d. the effects of power and privilege for counselors and clients
- e. help-seeking behaviors of diverse clients
- f. the impact of spiritual beliefs on clients' and counselors' worldviews
- g. strategies for identifying and eliminating barriers, prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination

3. HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Theories of individual and family development across the lifespan

- a. theories of learning
- b. theories of normal and abnormal personality development
- c. theories and etiology of addictions and addictive behaviors
- d. biological, neurological, and physiological factors that affect human development, functioning, and behavior
- e. systemic and environmental factors that affect human development, functioning, and behavior
- f. effects of crisis, disasters, and trauma on diverse individuals across the lifespan
- g. a general framework for understanding differing abilities and strategies for differentiated interventions
- h. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for promoting resilience and optimum development and wellness across the lifespan

4. CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Theories and models of career development, counseling, and decision making

- a. approaches for conceptualizing the interrelationships among and between work, mental well-being, relationships, and other life roles and factors
- b. processes for identifying and using career, avocational, educational, occupational and labor market information resources, technology, and information systems
- c. approaches for assessing the conditions of the work environment on clients' life experiences
- d. strategies for assessing abilities, interests, values, personality and other factors that contribute to career development
- e. strategies for career development program planning, organization, implementation, administration, and evaluation
- f. strategies for advocating for diverse clients' career and educational development and employment opportunities in a global economy
- g. strategies for facilitating client skill development for career, educational, and life-work planning and management
- h. methods of identifying and using assessment tools and techniques relevant to career planning and decision making
- i. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for addressing career development

5. COUNSELING AND HELPING RELATIONSHIPS

Theories and models of counseling

- a. a systems approach to conceptualizing clients
- b. theories, models, and strategies for understanding and practicing consultation
- c. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for establishing and maintaining in-person and technology-assisted relationships
- d. the impact of technology on the counseling process
- e. counselor characteristics and behaviors that influence the counseling process
- f. essential interviewing, counseling, and case conceptualization skills
- g. developmentally relevant counseling treatment or intervention plans

- h. development of measurable outcomes for clients
- i. evidence-based counseling strategies and techniques for prevention and intervention
- j. strategies to promote client understanding of and access to a variety of community-based resources
- k. suicide prevention models and strategies
- l. crisis intervention, trauma-informed, and community-based strategies, such as Psychological First Aid
- m. processes for aiding students in developing a personal model of counseling

6. GROUP COUNSELING AND GROUP WORK

Theoretical foundations of group counseling and group work

- a. dynamics associated with group process and development
- b. therapeutic factors and how they contribute to group effectiveness
- c. characteristics and functions of effective group leaders
- d. approaches to group formation, including recruiting, screening, and selecting members
- e. types of groups and other considerations that affect conducting groups in varied settings
- f. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for designing and facilitating groups
- g. direct experiences in which students participate as group members in a small group activity, approved by the program, for a minimum of 10 clock hours over the course of one academic term

7. ASSESSMENT AND TESTING

Historical perspectives concerning the nature and meaning of assessment and testing in counseling

- a. methods of effectively preparing for and conducting initial assessment meetings
- b. procedures for assessing risk of aggression or danger to others, self-inflicted harm, or suicide
- c. procedures for identifying trauma and abuse and for reporting abuse
- d. use of assessments for diagnostic and intervention planning purposes
- e. basic concepts of standardized and non-standardized testing, norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessments, and group and individual assessments
- f. statistical concepts, including scales of measurement, measures of central tendency, indices of variability, shapes and types of distributions, and correlations
- g. reliability and validity in the use of assessments
- h. use of assessments relevant to academic/educational, career, personal, and social development
- i. use of environmental assessments and systematic behavioral observations
- j. use of symptom checklists, and personality and psychological testing
- k. use of assessment results to diagnose developmental, behavioral, and mental disorders
- l. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment and test results

8. RESEARCH AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

The importance of research in advancing the counseling profession, including how to critique research to inform counseling practice

- a. identification of evidence-based counseling practices
- b. needs assessments
- c. development of outcome measures for counseling programs
- d. evaluation of counseling interventions and programs
- e. qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research methods
- f. designs used in research and program evaluation
- g. statistical methods used in conducting research and program evaluation
- h. analysis and use of data in counseling ethical and culturally relevant strategies for conducting, interpreting, and reporting the results of research and/or program evaluation

APPENDIX A: MASTER'S THESIS GUIDELINES

In lieu of taking a comprehensive examination, students may write a thesis as the culminating exercise of their program of study.

Minimum eligibility requirements include:

- Successful completion of all core courses; consultation with thesis advisor should begin as soon as student is considering the thesis option
- Demonstrated ability to pursue research work, as evidenced by research papers developed in other Counseling Program coursework.
- Preliminary identification in discussion with student's faculty mentor of a thesis topic or area of interest
- Agreement from two Counseling faculty members to serve on the thesis committee; the third required member can be another Counseling faculty member as well, or the third member can be an outside member (see below for requirements regarding outside members)

Thesis Process for Master of Arts in Counseling Students

Eligible students will be expected to follow a prescribed process in completing the requirements of the thesis. An overview of the process is provided below.

1. **Consultation with Thesis/Faculty Advisor:** When students are thinking about writing a thesis, they should contact their faculty advisor or another faculty member to establish whether or not the eligibility criteria are satisfied (see eligibility above) and to determine whether or not a thesis fits within the student's overall academic program. The student should select a thesis advisor who is knowledgeable about the research topic. The thesis advisor must be a full-time member of the Counseling faculty. The student should be sure that the thesis advisor is interested in the topic, has time available, and is willing to assume advisor responsibilities. The thesis advisor will serve as Chairperson of the Thesis Committee. The following should be discussed:
 - a. Possible research topic
 - b. Approach to studying the research topic
 - c. Time frame for completion
 - d. Possible committee members

2. **Selection of Thesis Committee:** The Thesis Committee must have three members: thesis advisor, a second member, and a third member. The thesis advisor must be a full-time member of the Counseling faculty; the second committee member may hold adjunct faculty status, and the third committee member may be a faculty member of another department, school, or college at the University, at another University or a professional or community member with expertise related to the thesis. The purposes of the Thesis Committee is to:
 - a. Assist the student in completion of the thesis proposal
 - b. Formally approve the thesis proposal
 - c. Assist the student in implementing the thesis plan
 - d. Review drafts of the thesis; and
 - e. Approve the final copy of the thesis

3. Development of Thesis Proposal: After identifying a research topic, the student must prepare a thesis proposal. All sections of the proposal should comply with APA format & contain the following:

- a. Concise statement of the problem area to be investigated
- b. Statement of the purpose of the thesis as well as the research hypothesis or question/s, & a statement of the thesis' significance
- c. The proposal should include three chapters: (1) Rationale and overview; (2) Literature review; and (3) Methodology
- d. All sections must comply with APA format
- e. Brief discussion of the most important contributing resources, i.e., books, journals, etc.
- f. Discussion and justification of the methodology to be employed, including data sources
- g. Outline of the organization of the thesis; and
- h. Timetable for completion

4. Approval of Thesis Proposal: Committee approval of the thesis proposal is obtained through an oral presentation of the proposal in collaboration and consultation with the Thesis Committee. If applicable, the Colorado Multiple Institutional Review Board (COMIRB) approval process will be initiated after the Thesis Committee has approved the thesis proposal.

5.Registration for COUN 6950 Master's Thesis: Students completing a thesis must register for four (4) semester hours of thesis credits. **This requirement is in addition to the 63 credits required for the degree.**

6.Conduct of Research: Research and data collection/analysis may begin only after COMIRB approval has been secured.

7. Preparation of Thesis Draft and final Thesis copy (in compliance with APA format): With guidance from the Committee, the student prepares a thesis draft in accordance with the timetable. The student should expect that several drafts will typically be required before the Thesis Committee provides formal approval of thesis and final thesis oral defense process. Overall page length of the final thesis will be expected to be 60-100 pages; in addition to the original three chapters developed for the thesis proposal, the final thesis documents will include additional chapters (4 & 5) that will describe the project/study, the outcomes/results, the analysis, discussion, implications, and conclusions. Relevant appendices may also be part of the final master's thesis.

Students completing the Master's thesis are also required to adhere the thesis guidelines, dates, and deadlines set for students in the School of Education & Human Development, as described at <https://education.ucdenver.edu/academic-services/student-resources/master's-thesis>

APPENDIX B: AMHCA CODE OF ETHICS PREAMBLE

The American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA) represents mental health counselors. As the professional counseling organization of mental health counselors, AMHCA subscribes to rigorous standards for education, training and clinical practice. Mental health counselors are committed to increasing knowledge of human behavior and understanding of themselves and others. AMHCA members are highly skilled professionals who provide a full range of counseling services in a variety of settings. Members believe in the dignity and worth of the individual and make every reasonable effort to protect human welfare. To this end, AMHCA establishes and promotes the highest professional standards. Mental health counselors subscribe to and pledge to abide by the principles identified in the Code of Ethics.

This code is a document intended as a guide to: assist members to make sound ethical decisions; to define ethical behaviors and best practices for Association members; to support the mission of the Association; and to educate members, students and the public at large regarding the ethical standards of mental health counselors. Mental health counselors are expected to utilize carefully considered ethical decision-making processes when faced with ethical dilemmas.

The full AMHCA Code of Ethics is available at <https://www.amhca.org/publications/ethics>

APPENDIX C: TECHNICAL STANDARDS ADAPTED FROM ROSALIND UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE AND SCIENCE

Candidates for entry into the Master of Arts Counseling program at CU Denver must possess certain abilities and skills to function effectively and meet the ethical and technical requirements in a broad variety of classroom and clinical settings. These essential functions are:

- **Observational:** The candidate must be able to acquire a defined level of required information as presented through lectures, demonstrations and experiences in basic and applied counseling. Furthermore, a candidate must be able to observe clients and fellow students accurately, at a distance and close at hand, using their senses of sight, smell, touch and hearing. The candidate must be able to acquire information from written documents or electronic media, such as a computer monitor. The candidate must be able to visualize information from paper, films, slides or video. Such observation and information acquisition necessitates the functional use of visual, auditory and somatic sensation while being enhanced by the functional use of other sensory modalities. In any case where a candidate's ability to observe or acquire information through these sensory modalities is compromised, the candidate must demonstrate alternative means and/or abilities to acquire and demonstrate the essential information conveyed in this fashion. If the alternatives are acceptable, it is expected that obtaining and using such alternative means and/or abilities shall be the responsibility of the student. Costs of necessary accommodations should be reasonable and will be borne by the university when not the responsibility of the student or otherwise funded.
- **Communication:** A candidate must be able to speak, hear and observe by sight in order to elicit information, observe clients, describe changes and perceive non-verbal communication. Communication includes verbal and recorded format (writing, typing, graphics or telecommunication). A candidate is expected to independently take paper, computer, practical and comprehensive examinations. A candidate must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with faculty, fellow students, staff, and other members of the SEHD. Communication includes speech and writing. The candidate must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written form with all members of the faculty. Communication via electronic media (e.g., computer terminals utilizing a keyboard) is required.
- **Motor and Sensory Systems:** It is required that candidates possess the motor skills necessary to directly perform basic clinical interactions. Such actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium and functional use of the senses of touch and vision. This requirement also includes but is not limited to the use of an electronic keyboard. Candidates must be able to move freely and safely about a clinical setting and reach across desktops or on top of shelves. The student must be able to travel (utilizing public or private transportation) to clinical internship sites. Furthermore, the student must perform moderately-taxing, continuous physical work, often requiring prolonged sitting or standing, over several hours.
- **Intellectual-Conceptual (Integrative and Quantitative) Abilities:** The candidate must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate and synthesize. In addition, the candidate must be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures. Problem-solving, the critical skill demanded of all healthcare

professionals, requires all of these intellectual abilities. The candidate must be able to perform these problem-solving skills in a timely fashion.

- Behavioral and Social Attributes: The candidate must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of their intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to working with clients and the development of mature, sensitive, ethical and effective professional relationships with co-workers. The candidate must be able to tolerate physically-taxing workloads and function effectively under variable levels of stress, which may at some points reach a high level of intensity for protracted periods. Students must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility and to learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in clinical problems and situations. The student must be able to critically evaluate their own performance, accept constructive criticism and investigate avenues to improve. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest and motivation are all personal qualities that will be assessed during the admissions and educational process. The student must consistently behave in an ethical and professional manner and comport themselves in a manner consistent with Professional Standards and Ethical Codes of Conduct (e.g. ACA, ASCA, AMHCA).

Note: If a candidate's ability to acquire and communicate information through vision, hearing or sensory modalities is impaired, they must demonstrate alternative means and/or abilities to assimilate the information and demonstrate that the essential information can be conveyed in this fashion. If the alternatives are acceptable, it is expected that the obtaining and using of such alternative means shall be the shared responsibility of the student and the university. It must be a reasonable accommodation and not an undue hardship for the university.

An effort will be made to work out potential difficulties as long as this does not pose a threat to the well-being of clients, other students, faculty, other healthcare team members or the candidate themselves.