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Welcome!

Welcome to the doctoral program in Counseling Psychology at The University of Southern Mississippi. We are pleased that you have agreed to become part of our accredited training program and hope that you find your experience with us to be both challenging and rewarding.

This handbook will include all of the relevant policies and procedures developed by the Department of Psychology and the Counseling Psychology program faculty. You are expected to be aware of and comply with all aspects of this handbook. Consider this handbook a contract between faculty and students. This handbook is designed to provide you with all the information you will need to successfully complete the doctoral program and is meant to supplement the policies outlined in the Graduate Bulletin. Changes to program or Department policy will be provided in writing to all students. Please keep a copy of this handbook as a reference during your time as a student here and use this as a reference after graduation as you pursue licensure and employment. A copy of all relevant forms can be found at: https://sites.google.com/site/cpyusm/. Links are embedded throughout this document which link to the appropriate form found on this site.

Beginning a doctoral graduate program can be an exciting and often overwhelming process. We hope that you utilize your time here in our program to develop both personally and professionally. As such, you will find that while you learn a great deal attending class and completing program requirements, much of your ‘learning’ will take place outside of formal class settings. Please plan to be present and actively involved in all program and Department activities. Attend workshops, consult with faculty, and develop good working relationships with your peers. You will find that these experiences are equally influential in shaping your development as a psychologist and similarly rewarding. We hope that as you acculturate yourself to our program and environment that you find this a welcoming and supportive place to learn. Ask for help often and seek advice from your Major Professor, Director of Training and other faculty. We anticipate your success and are here to support you in achieving the program training goals.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions, concerns, need clarification or additional information about this program. I am happy to help!

Best of luck to you,

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The University

The University of Southern Mississippi is one of three comprehensive universities, along with the University of Mississippi and Mississippi State University in the state system of higher education. Although the "youngest" of the three major universities (university status granted in 1962), enrollments at Southern Miss have steadily grown to become one of the state’s larger institutions with a combined enrollment (Hattiesburg and Gulf Coast campuses) of about 15,000 students. The majority were enrolled on the Hattiesburg campus. The student body is diverse with ethnic minorities constituting almost 30% of the Hattiesburg student body. The University of Southern Mississippi offers over 90 bachelor’s degree programs, over 60 master’s degree programs, two specialist’s degree programs, and 24 doctoral degree programs. The Department of Psychology at Southern Miss is one of the very few departments nationwide, currently offering three APA-accredited programs (Clinical, Counseling, and School Psychology).

The Department of Psychology

The Department of Psychology is administratively housed in the College of Education and Psychology and is located in the Owings-McQuagge Building near the center of the Southern Miss campus. The Department offers advanced degrees in four areas: Clinical, Counseling, General Experimental, and School Psychology and has a terminal master’s program in Counseling Psychology and Applied Behavior Analysis. The School, Clinical, and Counseling doctoral training programs are fully accredited by the American Psychological Association. The Department is composed of about 30 full time faculty members in Hattiesburg and 5 full time faculty members on at the Gulf Coast campus. The core faculty members for the Counseling Program provide primary leadership and direction for that program. However, other departmental faculty members may teach foundations courses and/or serve on research committees, broadening the scope of mentors and faculty resources available to students.

The faculty at USM generally have an open door policy. We strongly encourage students to get to know their faculty, both within and outside of their emphasis area. Much mentoring and learning occurs outside the classroom in other formal as well as informal interactions with faculty. Such opportunities, however, cannot occur if a student only attends required classes and meetings and is rarely in the department.

Community Counseling and Assessment Clinic

One of three departmental clinics, the Community Counseling and Assessment Clinic (https://www.usm.edu/counseling-psychology-clinic) is the primary training site for the beginning and intermediate practica that are completed by both master’s and doctoral students in Counseling Psychology. Clientele include university students as well as adults, families, and children from the Hattiesburg community. All practicum supervision will be done by Counseling Program faculty and doctoral supervisory assistants. This is a unique aspect of our program as it provides direct, hands-on instruction from faculty and peer consultation. The clinic is equipped for direct observation and digital recording of counseling sessions.
The Counseling Psychology Program

The Ph.D. program in Counseling Psychology is one of four doctoral programs within the Department of Psychology (others include Clinical, School, Experimental/General Psychology). All of the programs offered under the Psychology major are developed from a common foundation of psychological science and research training. The Counseling Psychology Program embraces the scientist-practitioner model and incorporates standards embodied in the APA Guidelines and Principles for Accreditation of Programs in Professional Psychology. The model adopted by Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs further serves as an extension of the APA guidelines and principles and provides a framework from which a specialty focus in counseling psychology can be maintained [see Murdock, Alcorn, Heesacker, & Stoltenberg (1998). Model training program for counseling psychology. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 26(4), 658-672]. The program has been fully accredited by the American Psychological Association since July 1, 1979. The most recent accreditation visit was in 2014 and fully approved the program for seven years.

Counseling psychology is a licensed, health-service specialty within the field of applied-professional psychology. As an area of applied-professional psychology, counseling psychology has been shaped by values that give priority to interventions which foster psychological health and adaptive development. While practically speaking, clinical and counseling psychologists both provide psychotherapy, training in counseling psychology has historically been driven by a focus on normative development.

Gelso and Fretz (2001) proposed unifying themes of counseling psychology, which were embellished by the Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs. These philosophical themes are (a) a focus on working within a developmental framework across a wide range of psychological functioning; (b) a focus on assets and strengths, regardless of level of functioning; (c) the inclusion of relatively brief counseling approaches; (d) an emphasis on person-environment interactions, rather than an exclusive focus on either person or environment; (e) an emphasis on prevention, including psycho-educational interventions; (f) emphasis on the educational and vocational lives of individuals; (g) a strong commitment to attending to issues of culture, race, and ethnicity, as well as other areas of individual diversity such as gender, age, ability, socioeconomic status and sexual orientation; and (h) evaluation and improvement through critical thinking and a commitment to the scientific approach (retrieved 7/28/08: www.ccptp.org).

Consistent with the scientist-practitioner model, students are trained to develop critical thinking skills, objectivity, and a hypothesis-testing approach to human problems which applies science to the practice of psychology. Students should expect to be trained to engage in research and to provide psychotherapy, assessment, and supervision. The integration of scientific inquiry and competent practice is achieved through a sequence of courses and supervised practice and research experiences.

Our program is modeled after the licensure requirements in the State of Mississippi. We do not guarantee that we meet the licensure requirements of other states. You will be responsible for verifying that your program of study meets your desired state’s licensure requirements.

Counseling Psychology Values Statement

The Counseling Psychology program at The University of Southern Mississippi subscribes to the values and ethics put forward by the American Psychological Association. As such, students are expected to adhere to the highest professional and ethical standards. Upon admission, students are expected to familiarize themselves with the American Psychological Association’s (APA) Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct (2002), and also be familiar with and abide by the various guidelines published by APA (www.apa.org) and the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Given the nature of this program and the intimacy
that emerges in counseling relationships, all exchanges of personal information will be handled with absolute professional confidence in accordance with the Ethical Standards of the APA.

Further, respect for diversity and for values different from one’s own is a central value of counseling psychology training programs. The valuing of diversity is also consistent with the profession of psychology as mandated by the American Psychological Association’s Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct (2002) and as discussed in the Guidelines and Principles of Programs in Professional Psychology (APA, 2005). More recently there has been a call for counseling psychologists to actively work and advocate for social justice and prevent further oppression in society. Counseling psychologists provide services, teach, and/or engage in research with or pertaining to members of social groups that have often been devalued, viewed as deficient, or otherwise marginalized in the larger society.

Academic training programs, internships that employ counseling psychologists and espouse counseling values, and post-doc training programs (herein “training programs”) in counseling psychology exist within multicultural communities that contain people of diverse racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds; national origins; religious, spiritual and political beliefs; physical abilities; ages; genders; gender identities, sexual orientations, and physical appearance. Counseling psychologists believe that training communities are enriched by members’ openness to learning about others who are different than them as well as acceptance of others. Internship trainers, professors, practicum supervisors (herein “trainers”) and students and interns (herein “trainees”) agree to work together to create training environments that are characterized by respect, safety, and trust. Further, trainers and trainees are expected to be respectful and supportive of all individuals, including, but not limited to clients, staff, peers, and research participants.

Trainers recognize that no individual is completely free from all forms of bias and prejudice. Furthermore, it is expected that each training community will evidence a range of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Nonetheless, trainees and trainers in counseling psychology training programs are expected to be committed to the social values of respect for diversity, inclusion, and equity. Further, trainees and trainers are expected to be committed to critical thinking and the process of self-examination so that such prejudices or biases (and the assumptions on which they are based) may be evaluated in the light of available scientific data, standards of the profession, and traditions of cooperation and mutual respect. Thus, trainees and trainers are asked to demonstrate a genuine desire to examine their own attitudes, assumptions, behaviors, and values and to learn to work effectively with “cultural, individual, and role differences including those based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status” (APA Ethics Code, 2002, Principle E, p. 1063). Stated simply, both trainers and trainees are expected to demonstrate a willingness to examine their personal values, and to acquire and utilize professionally relevant knowledge and skills regardless of their beliefs, attitudes, and values.

Trainees will be engaged in a manner inclusive and respectful of their multiple cultural identities. Trainers will examine their own biases and prejudices in the course of their interactions with trainees so as to model and facilitate this process for their trainees. Trainers will provide equal access, opportunity, and encouragement for trainees inclusive of their multiple cultural identities. Where appropriate, trainers will also model the processes of personal introspection in which they desire trainees to engage. As such, trainers will engage in and model appropriate self-disclosure and introspection with their trainees. This can include discussions about personal life experiences, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, feelings, and personal histories. Assuming no one is free from biases and prejudices, trainers will remain open to appropriate challenges from trainees to their held biases and prejudices. Trainers are committed to lifelong learning relative to multicultural competence.

Counseling psychology training programs believe that trainee self-disclosure and personal introspection are essential components of graduate training. Thus, trainees are expected to engage in self-reflection and introspection on their attitudes, beliefs, opinions, feelings and personal history. Trainees will be encouraged to
examine and attempt to resolve any of the above to eliminate potential negative impact on their ability to perform the functions of a psychologist, including but not limited to providing effective services to individuals from cultures and with beliefs different from their own and in accordance with APA guidelines and principles.

APA says the following about the ethics of requiring self-disclosure in an academic program:

“Psychologists do not require students or supervisees to disclose personal information in course or program-related activities, either orally or in writing, regarding sexual history, history of abuse or neglect, psychological treatment, and relationships with parents, peers, and spouses or significant others except if (1) the program or training faculty has clearly identified this requirement in its admissions and program materials or (2) the information is necessary to evaluate or obtain assistance for students whose personal problems could reasonably be judged to be preventing them from performing their training or other professionally related activities in a competent manner or posing a threat to the students or others” (APA, 2002, 7.04).

Because both (1) and (2) apply to our specialization, we often require self-disclosure and introspection of our students as they matriculate through the program.

Members of the training community are committed to educating each other on the existence and effects of racism, sexism, ageism, heterosexism, religious intolerance, and other forms of invidious prejudice. Evidence of bias, stereotyped thinking, and prejudicial beliefs and attitudes will not go unchallenged, even when such behavior is rationalized as being a function of ignorance, joking, cultural differences, or substance abuse. When these actions result in physical or psychological abuse, harassment, intimidation, substandard psychological services or research, or violence against persons or property, members of the training community will intervene appropriately.

In summary, all members of counseling psychology training communities are committed to a training process that facilitates the development of professionally relevant knowledge and skills focused on working effectively with all individuals inclusive of demographics, beliefs, attitudes, and values. Members agree to engage in a mutually supportive process that examines the effects of one’s beliefs, attitudes, and values on one’s work with all clients. Such training processes are consistent with counseling psychology’s core values, respect for diversity and for values similar and different from one’s own.

This document was endorsed by the Association of Counseling Center Training Agencies (ACCTA), the Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs (CCPTP), and the Society for Counseling Psychology (SCP) in August of 2006.

Program Goals and Objectives

The Counseling Psychology program strives to achieve two primary training goals:

- Goal 1: To develop psychologists who are competent researchers.
- Goal 2: To develop psychologists who are competent and ethical health service providers.

Courses and counseling opportunities are developmentally sequenced to provide you with challenges appropriate to your level of training. Both research and practice are emphasized and begin early in the program. The following describes each of the three main goals, objectives and associated outcomes. These serve as the basis for the training model which includes three broad areas: Research, Counseling Skills, and Coursework.

Goal 1: To develop psychologists who are competent researchers.

Objective 1: Students will demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate literature and complete empirical studies independently by engaging in research activities which exemplify their identity as a counseling psychologist and demonstrate the integration of science and practice.

- Outcome 1: Students will successfully conduct an empirical project which demonstrates a critical evaluation of the literature in the core areas of counseling psychology.

Objective 2: Students will make active contributions to the field by engaging in professional presentations and publications in core areas of counseling psychology.

- Outcome 2: Students will prepare at least one manuscript for publication.
- Outcome 3: Students will engage in at least one professional presentation of their research at a conference relevant to counseling psychology core themes.

Objective 3: Students will demonstrate professional competence in their role as researchers.

- Outcome 4: Students will engage in ethically sound decision making relevant to their role as researchers.
- Outcome 5: Students will be effective research colleagues as evidenced by such things as active participation on research teams, willingness to accept feedback, adherence to program/team deadlines and/or strong leadership skills.

Goal 2: To develop psychologists who are competent and ethical health service providers.

Objective 4: Students will engage in clinical practice using evidence-based approaches to assessment, diagnosis, and intervention which appreciates the role of individual and cultural differences as well as the integration of science and practice.

- Outcome 6: Students will successfully complete a formal case conceptualization which demonstrates the utilization of evidence-based interventions, awareness of cultural and individual differences and with a plan for assessing outcomes.
- Outcome 7: Students will complete detailed, well-written, accurate integrated reports.
- Outcome 8: Students will make assessment-based diagnostic decisions and will develop treatment plans which are evidence-based and sensitive to individual and cultural differences.
- Outcome 9: Students will assess treatment outcomes and use these data to inform professional practice.
- Outcome 10: Students will adhere to program policies, legal guidelines and professional requirements [this can include HIPAA, APA ethics, FERPA, clinical policies, etc.]

Objective 5: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the supervision process and an ability to engage effectively as both supervisor and supervisee.

- Outcome 11: Students will provide ethical, competent and supportive supervision as evidenced by an ability to adjust supervision to meet the individual and developmental needs of the supervisee and demonstrate an ability to maintain appropriate boundaries.
- Outcome 12: Students will be actively engaged in their own supervision as evidenced by an ability to give and receive feedback and modify behavior accordingly.
Objective 6: Students will engage in professional activities which exemplify their identity as a counseling psychologist and health service provider.

Outcome 13: Students will engage in professional activities related to the profession of counseling psychology (e.g., attendance at professional conferences relevant to counseling psychology core themes, involvement in professional organizations related to counseling psychology, outreach activities, practicum/externship activities, involvement in CPSG) in line with professional goals and not to the detriment of other training obligations.
Counseling psychologists strive to integrate practice, theory and research into all aspects of their practice (Nicholson & Madson, 2015). As such, research training is an important component of the training to become a psychologist. Program requirements are structured so as to best model this integration. This happens in the following ways:

- **Coursework** will expose students to the process and products of scientific research. Evidenced-based theories are supported in coursework and in practica. Research-based classes provide guidance on the development of a sound research question and the means by which to investigate it. Foundation courses provide the necessary background knowledge to bring the process of research to life. Research papers and proposals are common course requirements; students are encouraged to complete the assignments under the consultation of the major professor and in an area consistent with the students’ thesis and dissertation topics.

- Students are paired with a major professor during the admission process who will serve as a research mentor. This “match” will assist students in immediately becoming part of the major professor’s research team early in their doctoral program and prior to developing a dissertation project. Participation in these teams allows students to become active in the process of research and to gain hands-on experience. Admission to the program is made contingent upon each student’s agreement to work with the major professor in an area consistent with the major professor’s field of study. Students are expected to participate in the major professor’s research as they work toward completion of a thesis and dissertation. Research team, or collaboration with the major professor, participation is part of the annual evaluation process.

- **Responsible Conduct in Research (CITI Training).** The University of Southern Mississippi is committed to promoting, supporting, and educating relative to the ethical and responsible conduct of research on our campuses. In order to achieve this goal, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has authorized mandatory education in the Responsible Conduct in Research (RCR). The RCR curriculum is intended to follow the National Institute of Health’s (NIH) November 2009 update on its requirement of training in the RCR and the National Science Foundation’s (NSF) execution of the America COMPETES Act. The online tutorial and quizzes are organized into modules. Your Director of Training will assist you in being sure you complete the required modules for your research area. RCR trainings must be completed by the end of the first semester of graduate training (by October 1) and a copy of the certificate should be filed in the student’s departmental file. For directions to access and enroll to the CITI web site and USM’s required courses, follow this link: [http://www.usm.edu/research/program-requirements](http://www.usm.edu/research/program-requirements).

- Students are expected to identify a thesis topic and complete a first draft of the literature review by the conclusion of the first semester. Topics are selected in collaboration with the major professor and are expected to compliment the work of the research team. The length of the literature review and specific due dates will be established with the major professor. More stringent requirements may be set by the major professor.

- Students are required to propose the thesis no later than the Fall semester of the 2nd year of coursework. Students who do not propose the thesis by the end of the Spring semester of Year 2 will not be permitted to complete the master’s internship and may not be allowed to enroll in additional coursework until the thesis is successfully proposed. Thesis projects are data-driven under the close supervision of the major professor and in conjunction with a thesis committee of two additional members, at least one of which is also in the counseling psychology program. The thesis is intended to be in manuscript style and the student is expected to be able to demonstrate competency with the research process at its conclusion during the oral defense.

- Students are required to propose an original study for their dissertation prior to being approved to apply for internship (no later than October 1 of the internship application year). It is strongly suggested that students
planning to meet this deadline negotiate a timeline with their major professors well in advance to avoid delays. **Students expecting to propose in time for the 10/1 deadline should submit a complete draft of the dissertation proposal no later than 7/1 to ensure there is sufficient time to read and revise.** Note: Successfully submitting a completed draft by 7/1 does not guarantee a student will meet the 10/1 deadline. Consistent progress will be necessary in order to meet this deadline. Similarly, those proposals received after the 7/1 deadline will not be considered in time for the 10/1 application deadline. Students submitting first drafts of dissertation proposals after 7/1 will be expected to wait a year before applying for internship.

- A dissertation is intended to include a comprehensive review of the literature and include a data driven project which is directed by the student. An oral defense of the dissertation is required where the student is expected to provide a sound and empirically-driven defense of the project and its contribution to the literature. *A manuscript-length paper based on the dissertation is expected following the completion of a successful defense.* More stringent requirements may be set by the major professor.

- Thesis and Dissertation courses are now graded using an “S” (Satisfactory) and “U” (Unsatisfactory) grading scale. Students are encouraged to work with their Major Professor to establish the criteria needed to obtain a Satisfactory grade each semester a student is enrolled in thesis or dissertation credits. Consistent with the Graduate School policies, any grade of “U” will result in probationary status and one semester to remediate the concerns. More than one U grade will result in dismissal. Students will receive a “P” (Pass) the semester that they successfully defend the thesis/dissertation and complete all graduate reader edits. Students are strongly encouraged to work quickly to finalize the defense document and to seek approval from the Major Professor and committee to submit the document to the Graduate School in the same semester as the defense occurred. Failure to do so may result in needing to enroll in additional thesis/dissertation credits the semester following the defense.

- Additional opportunities for publication and presentation may be available as part of collaborations with the major professor or with the major professor’s research team. Typically, doctoral students work closely with faculty to publish research and/or to present at professional conferences (e.g., Mississippi Psychological Association, Southeastern Psychological Association, American Psychological Association). All research products should be completed under the supervision and approval of the major professor, and students may not submit material to professional conferences or for publication without faculty involvement, review and approval.

**Thesis and Dissertation Requirements**

**Form and Style of Theses and Dissertations**

The style for the thesis or dissertation must conform to the standards set forth in the most recent *Publication Manual* of the American Psychological Association and the University of Southern Mississippi Graduate School. Final thesis and dissertation documents must conform to the Graduate Reader Guidelines, so it is in the student’s best interest to prepare their document using these guidelines to avoid significant delays. There are a number of resources that are available to guide students in the development of theses and dissertations. The Graduate School publishes a manual (found here: [http://www.usm.edu/graduate-school/reviewer-dissertations-nursing-capstone-projects-theses-formerly-graduate-reader](http://www.usm.edu/graduate-school/reviewer-dissertations-nursing-capstone-projects-theses-formerly-graduate-reader)), which may be obtained at the Office of the Graduate Dean in the McCain Library. In addition, the publication, *Dissertations and Theses From Start to Finish* (Cone & Foster, 2006) is an excellent resource.

Thesis and dissertation projects are intended to be thorough, well-designed and subject to critical review during the proposal and defense process. Students should be well informed about their chosen topics, the statistical techniques used and the implications their study has on the field of psychology and counseling psychology. As scientist-practitioners, it is expected that students will develop competency with the process of research (thesis)
and with a specific area of study (dissertation). Theses and final defense documents are intended to be manuscript style and length. Dissertation proposals should be developed with a longer, comprehensive review of the literature and revised to manuscript length for the defense. It is expected that both the thesis and dissertation will be submitted for publication as part of the final submission.

Topics for the thesis and dissertation should be selected in collaboration with the major professor. Acceptable research designs are described below:

- **True Experimental Design** - To investigate possible cause-and-effect relationships by exposing one or more experimental groups to one or more treatment conditions and comparing the results to one or more control groups which have not received the treatment. Random assignment to treatment/control conditions is an essential component of this design.

- **Quasi-experimental Design** - (including single case/multiple-baseline behavioral designs) - To approximate the conditions of the true experimental design in a setting which does not allow the control and/or manipulation of all relevant variables. The researcher must clearly understand what compromises exist in the internal and external validity of this design and proceed within these limitations.

- **Instrument development** – To create a new instrument or improve an existing instrument to measure a psychological construct(s). Appropriate use of this design will depend on the nature of the project but may include specific procedures to develop or refine the scale items and steps to estimate reliability and validity of the item.

- **Qualitative Design** – To explore phenomena using non-numerical data, such as words and images, garnered from participant interviews and/or ethnographic observations. The researcher must clearly articulate their philosophical paradigm (e.g., grounded theory), source(s) of data, measures (e.g., interview protocol), coding process, evaluative criteria, and rigor enhancing strategies.

- **Correlational Design** - To investigate the extent to which variations in one or more factors correspond with variations in one or more other factors based on correlation coefficients. Appropriate use of this design could include multiple regression, discriminant function analysis, or other multivariate techniques.

Archival data sets may be considered for thesis and dissertation data pending prior approval from the committee. The following designs are not acceptable under any conditions: historical, descriptive, case study (excluding single-case and multiple-baseline designs) and field, or "ex post facto." While developmental designs are of great value, they are seen as inappropriate for students in the Department, given the longitudinal nature of the data collection process. Definitions and examples of all the designs covered above can be found in Leong & Austin (2005). The psychology research handbook: A guide for graduate students and research assistants. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

**The Thesis/ Dissertation Process**

Four major milestones make up the thesis/dissertation process:

1. **Writing the Proposal** - The thesis/dissertation proposal includes two common elements: Literature Review and Methods. Both sections should clearly articulate an understanding of the previous literature and a set of clearly developed research questions and accompanying methodology as described above. The proposal typically is revised several times in collaboration with the major professor and should be in its final form prior to presenting to the committee members. Development of sound research proposals can take several months and typically take longer than most students have spent writing papers or working on other similar assignments; students are encouraged to plan ahead in an effort to stay on track. Committees should be selected with the advice and approval of the major professor and should include faculty members who contribute to the development of the project. Committee members are typically asked to read, edit and make suggestions to the improvement of the project, although some take a more active role in project development. Thesis projects include 3 member committees (the major professor and two additional members); Dissertation committees include 4 members (the major professor and 3 additional members).
Each committee should include at least 2 counseling psychology faculty. The Graduate School requires submission of the Committee Request Form which can be found on the Graduate School website.

2. The Proposal Meeting - The proposal meeting includes the student, major professor and committee members. The research presentation and question/answer portions of the meeting can be open for student attendance as well. Committee members receive a copy of the thesis/dissertation draft and the Thesis/Dissertation Cover Sheet from the major professor giving each member at least 10 working days to indicate the proposal’s readiness to move forward (i.e., schedule a meeting). Should any member indicate that the draft is not ready for proposal, the student will revise the draft as necessary and with the approval of the major professor, resubmit it to all committee members with a new cover sheet and an additional 10 days to review and provide comment. Students should plan around university breaks and holidays when distributing copies of a proposal of final thesis or dissertation for review. Similarly, additional timelines may be negotiated based on certain committee members’ availability. Students should be aware that faculty may be less available during the summer semester and are strongly encouraged to propose or defend their projects during the Fall and Spring semesters.

With the approval of the committee members, students can plan a proposal meeting. Meetings are scheduled at times agreed upon by the committee. Students should be mindful of the university calendar when scheduling meetings and work to accommodate faculty schedules when suggesting meeting times. Since most faculty members are less available during the first and last parts of the semester, and may be unavailable during the summer and university breaks, students are strongly encouraged to obtain confirmation that all committee members will be available to review and schedule meetings which fall outside of the standard academic year. Please be familiar with the Academic Calendar and the deadlines posted through the Graduate School when scheduling meetings.

Ultimately, the format for your thesis/dissertation proposal meeting and defense is up to the discretion of your thesis/dissertation chair. Typically, meetings should include a brief overview of the literature and presentation of the research questions, hypotheses and methods (e.g., 10 minutes) and then expect to respond to questions and discussion (e.g., 45 minutes). Proposal meetings are intended to be ‘working meetings’ whereby committee members discuss the proposed project, make suggestions for improvement and facilitate the development of the project. Commonly, revisions are part of this process.

The Dissertation, Nursing Capstone & Thesis Proposal Approval Form is completed by the chair and the committee members. The proposal, once approved, is considered a contract between the student and the committee. Substantive changes to the research project require the approval of the committee. If unsuccessful (i.e., the student did not demonstrate adequate readiness to carry out proposed project), a remediation plan will be developed in collaboration with the program faculty and the student will be given one additional opportunity to propose before considered for dismissal.

3. Carrying Out The Research - Following successful completion of the thesis/dissertation meeting, and approval to proceed, the student works with the major professor to submit an application to the Institutional Review Board – Human Subjects Review following the procedure described online: http://www.usm.edu/research/institutional-review-board. Data collection cannot begin until final approval from the Board. Copies of the IRB approval letter are to be included in the final thesis/dissertation document. (Note: IRB approval may not be required for projects that utilize archival data; determination of necessity of IRB approval in such cases should be decided in consultation with the thesis/dissertation chair.)

The Defense Document – The final draft of the thesis/dissertation includes a manuscript length Literature Review, Methods, Results, and Discussion. The final draft of the thesis/dissertation should include all revisions from the proposal meeting and should be worded in past tense. Following approval of the major professor, the final draft is distributed using the same process as described above (using the
Thesis/Dissertation Cover Sheet) and the meeting scheduled using the same guidelines. Please consult the Graduate School regarding other required documentation including approval of title pages prior to the defense meeting. The overall goal of a successful thesis/dissertation defense is to demonstrate the ability to orally communicate and defend the execution and understanding of an independent research project to a group of informed professionals. It is expected that the thesis/dissertation will be submitted for publication no later than the semester following the defense. If the project has not been submitted within a year from the date of defense, the major professor reserves the right to pursue publication as a co-author. All revisions suggested by the committee and required by the graduate reader need to be completed before a grade of “P” can be recorded. Therefore, if the revision process extends beyond the semester when the defense was held, the student will be required to register for additional thesis/ dissertation credits until the final edits have been approved and the document submitted to the Graduate School. All students should be registered in at least one thesis/ dissertation credit the semester of the defense (and if necessary, during subsequent semesters until the project is submitted and approved by the Graduate School).

Beginning 2017/18, the Thesis/ Dissertation Checklist should be submitted to the major professor completing the forms to ensure all paperwork is submitted properly. Please initial each box noting completion of the correct steps.

4. Oral Defense of Thesis/Dissertation – The oral defense of the thesis and dissertation both include a brief presentation of the research followed by a question and answer period. Both are intended to be public meetings, however the Chair will decide the format and guidelines around including the audience. Students should prepare to answer questions regarding details of the research, including methodology, statistics and theoretical implications. Further, as the dissertation defense acts as the oral examination of their research competency, the student can expect to receive questions related to their knowledge of the field, research methodology, and implications for practice. Seek guidance from the major professor when preparing for this meeting. Successful completion of this meeting is noted by majority vote of the committee as reflected in their signatures on the Results of Oral Defense Form and in compliance with University regulations, as noted by their signatures on three copies of the title page (see www.usm.edu/graduate-school for more information about appropriate documentation).

A signed Results of Comprehensive Exam Form is submitted by the major professor upon successful defense of the Thesis project; the Thesis defense serves as the master’s comprehensive exam for the Counseling Psychology program.

5. Submit Required Paperwork - These forms are each completed by the Major Professor, however it is the student’s responsibility to ensure each form is completed and on file in both the department and with the Graduate School. Failure to do so may delay processing of graduation paperwork. See the Thesis/ Dissertation checklist to ensure proper processing of all paperwork.

   a. Committee Form
   b. Dissertation, Nursing Capstone & Thesis Proposal Approval Form
   c. Results of Oral Defense Form (pending completion of the TurnItIn review)
   d. Results of Comprehensive Examination Form (Thesis only)

TurnItIn is now required for all final drafts of the Thesis or Dissertation at the time of the defense meeting. It is suggested that students take the following steps to check for plagiarism prior to the defense meeting and email confirmation of the Originality Report to the major professor. It will be the student’s responsibility to provide the Major Professor with the final document and the Originality Report from TurnItIn prior to sending the Results of Oral Defense form to the Graduate School. The Major Professor should determine what, if any, action needs to be taken after reviewing the Originality Report. The steps
for the Student and the Major Professor are described below. Contact bonnie.nicholson@usm.edu if you encounter any problems.

**Turn-It-In Plagiarism Check**

**Students:**

1. Prior to submitting the final draft of the thesis or dissertation to the Graduate Reviewer, the student will be responsible for generating an Originality Report on TurnItIn.
   - Go to: [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)
   - Log in using your e-mail and password (if you have not previously used turnitin, please create an account)
   - Click the tab “Enroll in a Class”
   - Log in using the class ID and Enrollment password pictured below.
   - Find the Assignment labeled: *Thesis/ Dissertation* & submit your thesis or dissertation file as a Microsoft word document.
   - Wait until the “Similarity” section changes from “Processing” to a bar with the % similar reported.
   - Click “View” and upon receiving the Originality Report, print and/or send to your Major Professor (On the bottom left of the Originality Report, click the printer symbol. You can choose to download a PDF to save to your computer to e-mail to your major).

**Major Professors:**

- The Major Professor should receive the Originality Report in an email and review the report. Bibliographic references and quotes have been excluded. Please do not simply refer to the percentage noted on the first page. It is important to review the entire document. Take whatever action may be necessary at this time to finalize the document for submission. Students can be required to submit the document again if changes are required. Resubmission follows the same steps as outlined above. Note: the documents do not become part of the TurnItIn repository.
- When the major professor is satisfied with the final product, they should complete the Results of Oral Defense form. At this point the student can be instructed to submit their final draft to the Graduate Reviewer following the steps found here: [http://www.usm.edu/graduate-school/reviewer-dissertations-nursing-capstone-projects-theses-formerly-graduate-reader](http://www.usm.edu/graduate-school/reviewer-dissertations-nursing-capstone-projects-theses-formerly-graduate-reader)

All students are required to submit their final drafts to the Graduate Reader in the same semester in which they defend. The Dissertation is not considered “completed” until all revisions have been completed with the Graduate Reader. Please be aware that such revisions may be time-consuming and are subject to Graduate School posted deadlines. Doctoral students are strongly encouraged to plan ahead and be knowledgeable about the process to avoid paying for additional credits of tuition. A manuscript is expected to be developed from the thesis and dissertation project; students will be required to develop this paper in conjunction with the committee chair/ major professor shortly upon successfully defending the project.
**Required Credits:**

- PSY 698: Master’s Thesis (3 credits)
  - The Graduate School requires that students register for 1 credit of PSY 698 the semester that the defense is scheduled, however can make exceptions to this rule if class scheduling does not permit this load. See the Director of Training for details on requesting this exception. Three credits are required for completion of the MA degree.

- PSY 898: Dissertation (9 credits)
  - Students are required to register for at least 1 credit of PSY 898: Dissertation, during the semester he/she defends the dissertation and completes all required edits with the Graduate Reader. Please be mindful of Graduate School deadlines with respect to submitting and completing revisions of this document in compliance with the Graduate Reader. Failure to adhere to the Graduate School deadlines in any given semester may result in additional credits the following semester.
  - Students must successfully complete the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination prior to scheduling their dissertation defense.

**Timeline to Completion of Research Competencies**

*Note: The following table provides a general guideline to assist students in developing research goals each semester and to allow for timely completion of program requirements. Only those dates which are underlined and in bold font are firm deadlines. Major professors may establish more stringent guidelines related, so please consult with your major professor related to their expectations. Students are encouraged to meet these deadlines prior to the proposed dates.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Major Professor assigned; Topic development in progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upon Admission</td>
<td>Major Professor assigned; Topic development in progress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Fall | • Topic selection for thesis - 9/30  
• CITI training is due 10/1  
• Outline of the Introduction section - 10/30  
• First draft of literature review due 12/1  
(note: faculty may set earlier deadlines) |
| Spring | • Finalize variables and measures - 2/1  
• Initial draft of full proposal (Introduction & Methods) -3/1  
• Revised draft of thesis proposal should be completed by 4/1 and thesis committee should be formed at this time.  
Ideally the thesis proposal should be approved for committee before the summer semester. |
| Summer | Thesis revisions; Data collection; manuscript development |

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<tr>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Data collection; final thesis draft in preparation</th>
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</table>
| Fall | Data collection; final thesis draft prepared  
**Note: A successful thesis proposal is required prior to beginning the MS Internship.** Students who do not propose the thesis by the end of the Spring semester of Year 2 will not be permitted to enroll in additional coursework or complete the master’s internship until the thesis is proposed and significant progress is made. This is in addition to being placed on probationary status. Funding is contingent on remaining in good academic standing. |
| Spring | Data collection; final thesis draft prepared  
**Note: A successful thesis proposal is required prior to beginning the MS Internship.** Students who do not propose the thesis by the end of the Spring semester of Year 2 will not be permitted to enroll in additional coursework or complete the master’s internship until the thesis is proposed and significant progress is made. This is in addition to being placed on probationary status. Funding is contingent on remaining in good academic standing. |
| Summer | • Thesis Manuscript in preparation for publication  
Note: It is expected that students will complete the thesis by the end of the 2nd year and failure to maintain this timeline may result in probationary status, restrictions in coursework, clinical hours and funding. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Demonstration of consistent progress on the thesis project is necessary to avoid these sanctions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Fall   | Thesis Manuscript submitted to a Peer Reviewed Journal Begin Dissertation Process  
|  | • Dissertation topic selected  
|  | • Outline of Introduction section - 9/30  
|  | • First draft of literature review due 12/1  
|  | (*note: faculty may set earlier deadlines*) |
| Spring | Preparation of Dissertation Proposal (note: please plan to develop a timeline with your major professor with regard to development of the proposal if you are hoping to meet the October 1 deadline below). Initial draft of full proposal due to the Major Professor no later than 7/1. |
|        | Note: The MA thesis is required by March 1st and prior to permission to participate in the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination. Failure to have successfully defended the MA thesis may result in probationary status, restrictions in coursework, clinical training, and funding. |

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Successful dissertation proposal <strong>required by Oct. 1</strong> for permission to apply for internship (therefore, final draft of dissertation proposal should be completed by 9/1 to ensure sufficient time to make this deadline).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Note: Students are expected to make significant progress on the dissertation project prior to beginning the pre-doctoral internship; it is hoped that students will strive to defend the dissertation prior to beginning internship and publish an article from their dissertation work during the internship year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Master’s Equivalent Projects for Students Admitted with completed Master’s degree**

Students admitted with a completed master’s degree in counseling psychology, or a closely related field, are required to either:

1. Demonstrate successful completion of a Master’s Thesis from previous graduate program subject to the review and approval of the Director of Training and Major Professor, or
2. Complete a **Master’s Equivalent Research Project** by the conclusion of the first year of academic coursework (end of Summer, Year 1). The Master’s Equivalent Research Project is meant to be an opportunity for students to be exposed to the research process in a developmentally appropriate way in preparation for the doctoral dissertation. Master’s Equivalency Projects are negotiated between the student and the major professor and should include a data-driven project with an identified work product at their conclusion (e.g., manuscript submitted for publication; paper or poster presentation). **Project goals and a timeline should be submitted in writing to the Director of Training by the midpoint of the first Fall semester.** In an effort to be mindful of the impending deadlines associated with the dissertation process, **students are required to have completed the Master’s Equivalency project by the end of the first year of academic coursework or will be placed on probation.** Successful completion of this requirement should be noted in written form to the Director of Training to be placed in the student’s file.
**Accessing Qualtrics:**

Qualtrics has set up the campus SSO for our account holders. When a person logs into https://usmep.qualtrics.com for the first time, they will need to enter their access code in their account settings in order to be assigned to the correct division. To do this, that person will need to follow these steps:

1. Sign into Qualtrics using their SOAR username and password
2. In the right hand corner, click on their name
3. Select Account Settings
4. Click Upgrade Account
5. Enter the Access Code
6. Click Upgrade Account

Codes for Counseling are:
- Students: PSY_C_Stu7N5VW
- Faculty: PSY_C_Fa37505A

**Assessing Research Competencies**

Research competencies are included in the Profession Wide Competencies expected of all students graduating from programs accredited by the Commission on Accreditation/ American Psychological Association. These are assessed via the Annual Evaluation, as well as during the thesis/ dissertation proposal and defense meetings. The student is responsible for ensuring the completion of the Research Competency Checklist during these meetings. Students failing to meet minimal competency expectations will not pass their proposal/ defense meeting and will be expected to remediate these concerns during a second attempt. It is expected that all students will demonstrate competency with research on all domains before completing the program.
Counseling Psychology Counseling Training

Doctoral students complete several semesters of hands-on counseling practica via the Community Counseling and Assessment Clinic as well as community-based externships. Specialized training in evidenced-based approaches is offered throughout the training program. In addition to incorporating these interventions in practica, advanced training in topics such as parent training, career counseling, and Motivational Interviewing is also offered. These specialized training experiences exemplify the scientist-practitioner model by incorporating both practice and research into applied experiences for students.

**CPY Practica I & II:**

During the first year in the program, students gain the necessary foundation in counseling skills, assessment and diagnosis. Approval of the faculty and successful completion (grade of B- or better) of the following courses is required before beginning PSY 652: Counseling Psychology Practicum I: PSY 614, PSY 607, PSY 630, PSY 712 and PSY 713. Additionally, client contact is offered through closely supervised training experiences offered through other courses during the first year (e.g., Vocational Counseling and/or via participation in applied research projects). Pre-practicum competencies are considered during the Annual Evaluation process completed during each Spring semester.

Beginning in the second year, students begin practicum work through the Community Counseling and Assessment Clinic and under the faculty supervision, maintain an active caseload of clients matched to the students’ developmental level. Students also participate in weekly group and individual supervision through enrollment in PSY 652: Counseling Psychology Practicum I (Fall, Year 2) and PSY 762: Counseling Psychology Practicum II (Spring, Year 2). The standard Practicum Evaluation Form is used across all sections of practicum to assess skills and progress. Students are required to maintain strict adherence to the Community Counseling and Assessment Clinic Manual. You are encouraged to maintain accurate records of all practicum experiences using the PsychTrack software offered free to graduate students in the program. Details on this system will be provided by the Director of Training.

**Case Presentation.**

A formal case presentation is required of all students during both Practicum I and II. The purpose of this assignment is to allow students to demonstrate integration of psychological theory, research and practice with a particular case. The case conference is a common practice among internship sites, so this will be a good experience in preparation for internship. Case presentation skills are evaluated on the Practicum Evaluation.

Students admitted with a completed master’s degree in a related field but with little or no counseling practice may be permitted to enroll in Counseling Psychology Practicum I or II depending on readiness and availability. Decisions related to practicum placement are left to the discretion of the Director of Training and Counseling Psychology faculty during advisement prior to beginning the first semester of coursework.

**Master’s Internship:**

Following successful completion of Practicum I and II, and an approved thesis proposal, doctoral students complete a summer master’s-level internship at an external site (note: this is generally a full-time, unpaid experience; part-time experiences are available – see the Internship Coordinator for details).
• **General Requirements**
  1. The student has a minimum GPA of 3.0 and has successfully remediated any personal, professional or academic concerns.
  2. The student needs to have earned at least a “Satisfactory” rating on the Annual Evaluation in all four areas.
  3. Student has earned at least “Satisfactory” ratings on the final practica evaluations for both PSY 652: CPY Prac I and PSY 762: CPY Prac II.
  4. Doctoral students are required to have successfully proposed the thesis prior to the start of the Summer semester, Year 2.

The student should bear the responsibility of consulting with their Major Professor and Internship Coordinator concerning possible internship placements and training experiences. Detailed information about possible training sites will be made available during the second year of coursework. Some sites require early application, and many require a formal application be submitted and an in-person interview. Several sites in the area have received formal approval; the process for seeking approval of a new site can be discussed with the Internship Coordinator.

A mid-semester and final evaluation (Intern Performance Rating Form) will detail the student’s progress on internship. Internship is graded on a “pass/ fail” basis. Minimum criteria for passing grades include final evaluation recommendations and a score of a “3” or better on the final internship evaluation. A passing grade is required to be approved for continued practicum/ externship experiences. A not-passing grade may result in dismissal from the program, and at minimum will include a detailed remediation plan and probationary status.

**Advanced Practicum:**

PSY 835: Advanced Practicum is taken each semester following completion of the Master’s Internship. Advanced practicum is an opportunity for students to develop more advanced counseling skills with primarily community clients, to provide supervision to more novice counselors, and to conduct psychological assessments. Prerequisites for advanced practicum include:

1. Successful completion of the Master’s Internship
2. Successful defense of the Thesis or demonstration of consistent progress on the thesis project and approval of the Major Professor and Director of Training

Students are required to register for 3 credits of PSY 835 throughout the remaining semesters prior to beginning the pre-doctoral internship (or at least through Spring, Year 4; students in Year 5 who receive Department funding may be required to continue to enroll in PSY 835; students in Year 5 who are self-supported and who have satisfactorily completed all requirements are not required to continue to enroll). As such, students are expected to maintain a small caseload of therapy and assessment clients, to participate in and facilitate individual and/or group supervision and to respond to the needs of the Community Counseling and Assessment Clinic as needed. **Registration in Advanced Practicum involves direct service (therapy and assessment cases), supervision of Practicum I and II students and, if applicable, Externship activities.**

**Additional Advanced Practicum Requirements:**

- **Case Presentation.** A formal case presentation is required of all students during each semester they are enrolled in Advanced Practicum. The purpose of this assignment is to allow students to demonstrate integration of psychological theory, research and practice with a particular case. The case conference is a common practice among internship sites, so this will be a good experience in preparation for internship. Case presentation skills are evaluated on the Practicum Evaluation.
• **Externship:** Following successful demonstration of basic and advanced skills, external placements are arranged, typically in the student’s third or fourth year. External placements include experiences with clients across the lifespan at community mental health centers, university counseling centers, and psychiatric settings. Some are paid positions which include 20 hours/week and are in place of university-based assistantship/ work study positions. Externships are evaluated at the conclusion of each semester using the Extern Evaluation Form. The student will bear the responsibility of securing timely written feedback from the site supervisor. Students who are enrolled in PSY 835 do not need to register for additional externship credits, however students who are no longer in residence (e.g., 5th year students who are self-supported may register for one credit of PSY 840 with permission of the Director of Training). Externships and other outside training opportunities need to be arranged with the consultation of the Director of Training and a signed contract is required. Training goals, supervision and consistent evaluation are considered essential components of a “program sanctioned” training experience. Students should consult with the Director of Training when considering new training opportunities to ensure that they meet these requirements.

• **Supervision:** Advanced students complete a one-semester supervision course (PSY 727: Counseling Supervision) and then have the opportunity to provide supervision to beginning practicum students as part of their Advanced Practicum course requirements (PSY 835). Students will be paired with novice level peers and will provide individual supervision weekly to students enrolled in their first two semesters of practicum. Doctoral supervisory assistants will meet weekly and/or as-needed with the supervision practicum instructor to review recorded supervision sessions and to participate in their own supervision and consultation. Additional meetings may be required with the practicum supervisors. Supervision competencies are assessed using the Practicum Evaluation form and during the Annual Evaluation process.

**Liability Insurance**

The university maintains a liability insurance policy which is associated with particular courses taught in the applied training programs (i.e., all programs except the Brain and Behavior program). Students are expected to pay all course fees associated with liability insurance prior to the start of the semester. Proof of payment is required each semester. Additionally, the applied programs may require students to maintain personal liability insurance through APA Trust (https://trustinsurance.com/Products-Services/Student-Liability) prior to engaging in practicum training/ internship. Students should consult their program-specific handbooks for information about these expectations.

**Assessing Clinical Competencies**

Clinical competencies are included in the Profession Wide Competencies expected of all students graduating from programs accredited by the Commission on Accreditation/ American Psychological Association. These are assessed via the Annual Evaluation, as well as during each semester of practicum and master’s internship. Students failing to meet minimal competency expectations will be expected to engage in remediation prior to approval to reenroll in the next level of training (including permission to apply for predoctoral internship). It is expected that all students will demonstrate competency on all clinical domains before completing the program.

**Pre-Doctoral Internship**

Following completion of all coursework, comprehensive examination, successful defense of the dissertation proposal and approval of the faculty, students complete their pre-doctoral internship in their final year in the
program. One year (2,000 hours) of pre-doctoral internship experience is required. Internships involve full-time responsibilities and are usually funded. Over the past 10 years approximately 90% of our students that applied for internships were successful in gaining placements. The overwhelming majority gained placements in their first or second choice of sites. Internship is intended to be the capstone experience in your doctoral training and as such, approval to apply for internship includes the following prerequisites:

1. The student must be in the final year of academic coursework.
2. The student has demonstrated successful completion of the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination.
3. The student has completed a successful defense of dissertation proposal.
4. Approval of the faculty - Internship approval consists of a follow-up review of annual evaluation materials due the first week of the Fall semester prior to submitting internship applications (Pre-Doctoral Internship Approval Form). Approval of the faculty is contingent upon successful completion of all coursework, positive evaluations on practicum and externship evaluations, and a successful dissertation proposal. Students have until October 1st of the internship proposal year to successfully propose a dissertation pending having met all other approval criteria. The approval process allows for faculty to 1) determine the student’s readiness for internship based on evaluations and counseling hours and 2) assist with the advising process. Students will receive written feedback from the faculty indicating approval/ no approval and any additional specific recommendations regarding the application process (e.g., type of sites to apply to, letters of recommendation). Students who are not approved for internship will receive written feedback indicating specific recommendations on how to improve their application materials during the following year and may be permitted to apply again.

Students are encouraged to begin planning for the internship application process early. In consultation with the Director of Training and Major Professor, students should begin to narrow down their population/setting of choice by the 3rd year and to seek out training experiences consistent with these goals, when available. Additional counseling training experiences may be recommended for students with specific training goals which may delay application to internship by at least one year.

Students are required to apply to APA-accredited pre-doctoral internships sites participating in the APPIC Match. A uniform application is now in use and available through APPIC (www.appic.org); students are strongly encouraged to begin maintaining accurate records of their practicum hours using the MyPsychTrack system during the first practicum experience. Students are encouraged to seek out feedback with respect to their applications for internship. The Director of Training and Major Professor should be consulted when drafting essays, cover letters and in developing a list of potential letter-writers for letters of recommendation.

Approved internship essays are required in order to receive permission to apply for pre-doctoral internship. As such, the following timeline has been put in place to ensure the final essays submitted in conjunction with the Application for Approval to Apply for Internship (due the first Friday of the Fall semester) are of sufficient quality to ensure success with the internship process.

**Required Deadlines:**
- 6/1: 1st draft of essays to Training Director and Major Professor
- 6/30: tentative list of sites to TD and MP
- 7/1: 1st complete draft of dissertation submitted to Major Professor
- 7/15: revised draft of essays to TD and MP
- First Friday of the Fall semester: Pre-Doctoral Internship Approval form which includes a finalized list of sites, completed essays, summary of APPI clinical hours and names of letter writers.
• 9/1: Contact letter writers with site relevant information, an updated CV and any additional information you they may find helpful; finalize essays; receive approval for any de-identified clinic information (see Clinic Director for approval)
  o Share SRF with letter writers to assist them in preparing their letters.
• Oct 1: Dissertation proposal; Finalize AAPI for Training Director verification
• Oct 1: Finalize AAPI for Training Director verification

While many sites are moving toward a phone-interview format, be aware that early in the Spring semester following application for internship, students are typically traveling to internship interviews while balancing their counseling, research, and coursework responsibilities. It is the student’s obligation to make arrangements for coverage during this time.

Students are encouraged to make use of the APPIC Match II process if they are not successfully matched. As the Match II process is similarly time-intensive and time-limited, both the Director of Training, and the student’s Major Professor should be consulted immediately following match-day to determine the best course of action.
Counseling Psychology Coursework

Coursework is sequentially and developmentally arranged – students are strongly encouraged to attend to course sequencing and to stay on track in their program of study. As such, students admitted with a bachelor’s degree begin work on the Psychology and Counseling core simultaneously. This lays the groundwork for both research and practica expectations in subsequent semesters.

During the period of full-time study, students are expected to carry a course load of thirteen (13) credit hours per semester during the academic year and three (3) to six (6) hours during the summer term (or as determined by the Director of Training) and participate in a variety of departmental activities including professional seminars, research activities, and other related professional activities. Students should be aware that they are financially responsible for maintaining this load regardless of funding status. Exceptions to this full-time load require the approval of the counseling psychology faculty.

Curriculum Planning

A Plan of Study will be completed with all students by the end of the first semester which will closely follow the course sequence presented in the Program Plan.

Students who have completed a master’s degree in counseling or related fields are eligible to petition the Director of Training for a waiver of certain degree requirements. A Course Transfer/Waiver Form must be completed prior to the start of the first Fall semester to determine which courses will likely be waived and which will be completed during the doctoral program. Syllabi and transcripts are required for the course review process, however additional materials (i.e., reading lists, tests, papers) may be required. The Director of Training will review the Course Waiver Form and distribute to all parties involved as deemed appropriate. The thesis, if applicable, should be submitted for review by the Director of Training and the Major Professor and if approved, the student will waive the thesis requirement. Previous supervised counseling experiences are also carefully evaluated. Students will be asked to complete the Course Transfer/Waiver Form and attached detailed information regarding the type and amount of previous supervised clinical experiences in addition to submitted evaluations from two previous clinical supervisors (evaluations should be completed using the Practicum Evaluation Form). The Director of Training and the Counseling Psychology faculty will review the description of previous experiences and the evaluations received to determine which, if any, practicum requirements may be waived. Students entering with master’s degrees in fields not related to psychology should not expect to have any degree requirements waived and should begin at the Year 1 level as indicated on the Program Plan. For students with graduate credit not related to completion of a degree, no more than six hours may be transferred for credit. The Course Transfer/Waiver Form will also be used for this purpose, following the same procedure as outlined above.

Advising is done at least twice annually with the Director of Training and all doctoral students. Because adherence to the curriculum plan is encouraged, little deviation from the course sequencing is expected. The Director of Training is available anytime during the semester to discuss program concerns and academic issues.

Major Professor

Students are assigned a Major Professor prior to entering the program. This Major Professor serves as a student’s primary mentor and source of communication between the program and the student. The student should work to communicate often with the Major Professor and should plan to consult first with the Major Professor before consulting with the Director of Training, Chair, or other faculty. In an effort to present clear and consistent information to the students, the Major Professor should be the first point of contact on all matters
with the exception of advising regarding class schedules (which is the job of the Director of Training). If the matter cannot be resolved with the Major Professor then the Director of Training should be consulted. If the matter continues to be unresolved, then the Department Chair should be consulted. Proceeding out of this order creates a climate of confusion that is counterproductive to the problem solving process.

The Major Professor serves as the students’ mentor and is also the primary research supervisor (including chairperson of the thesis and dissertation committee) during the student’s graduate program. Admission to the program is contingent upon the student’s agreement to work with a specific Major Professor through completion of the master’s equivalency project or thesis and at the discretion of the Major Professor. As research supervisors, the Major Professor should be consulted regarding interests in presenting or publishing; students are not permitted to submit presentation or publication proposals without the consent of the Major Professor. Additionally, the Major Professor should approve requests to engage in additional professional development activities (e.g., helping a peer with data collection, engaging in additional practica experiences).

Any requests to change to a new major professor should be in writing and include the signature of both the current and new major professors. It is recommended that changes to major professors happen during naturally occurring program transitions (e.g., upon completion of the thesis) which protects both the student and faculty members from difficulties with transition of incomplete projects.

**Program Requirements**

**Ph.D. IN PSYCHOLOGY: COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY EMPHASIS**

Minimum course requirements for the Ph.D. in Psychology (Counseling Emphasis) are described as follows. The following represents the minimum necessary to graduate, however students may find that they accrue far more hours as they matriculate through the program. The following courses represent 100 total credit hours, which includes the MA degree requirements. Course substitutions may be made at the discretion of the Director of Training.

**Psychological Foundations (18 credits required):**
- PSY 624 – Behavioral Neuroscience
- PSY 722 – Cognitive Processes
- PSY 679 – Advanced Developmental Psychology
- PSY 750 – Advanced Social Psychology
- PSY 718 – History and Systems of Psychology
- PSY 613 – Cultural Basis of Behavior

**Professional Core (31 credits required):**
- Ethics and Professional Issues (6 credits required)
  - PSY 607 – Ethics and Current Issues in Psychology
  - PSY 630 – Introduction to Counseling Psychology
- Intervention Theory (9 credits required)
  - PSY 710 – Group Counseling and Psychotherapy
  - PSY 713 – Intermediate Counseling Theory
  - PSY 714 – The Psychology of Vocational Development
- Diagnosis and Assessment (12 credits required)
  - PSY 614 – Testing and Individual Analysis
  - PSY 641 – Cognitive Assessment
  - PSY 712 – Assessment and Diagnosis
  - PSY 740 – Objective Personality Assessment
- Supervision and Teaching (4 credits required)
PSY 701 – Seminar in Teaching of Psychology (1 credit)
PSY 727 – Counseling Supervision

**Research Design and Analysis (24 credits required)**
PSY 661 – Research Evaluation in the Behavioral Sciences
PSY 662 – Quantitative Methods I or REF 762 – Advanced Regression Analysis
PSY 663 – Quantitative Methods II or REF 830 – Multivariate Analysis
PSY 791 – Research in Psychology
PSY 698 – Thesis (3 credits)
PSY 898 – Dissertation (9 credits)

**Practica, Internships, Externships (21 credits required)**
PSY 652 – Counseling Psychology Practicum I
PSY 762 – Counseling Psychology Practicum II
PSY 796 – Field Internship
PSY 835 – Advanced Practicum in Counseling Psychology (9 credits minimum)
PSY 883 – Pre-doctoral Internship (3 credits over 3 semesters)

**Recommended Electives**
While electives are not required to complete the degree, many students opt to supplement their degree plans by taking courses in the following areas. Each of the courses listed below are approved, however additional courses may be made available and the student should secure the approval of the Director of Training prior to enrolling in a course not listed below.

- PSY 640 – Behavioral and Emotional Assessment of Children
- PSY 734 – Child Behavior Therapy
- PSY 738 - Seminar in Alcoholism and Drug Abuse
- PSY 768 – Psychometric Theory
- FAM 655 - Theories of Marriage and Family Therapy I
- FAM 656 - Theories of Marriage and Family Therapy II

**Comprehensive Examinations**

**Master’s Comprehensive Examination**
A successful Thesis defense is considered the equivalent of the master’s comprehensive exam. No additional examination is required. Major professors are expected to submit the [Comprehensive Exam Results Form](#) to the Director of Training upon successful completion of the thesis defense.

**Doctoral Comprehensive Examination**
The comprehensive examination is designed to determine whether students have acquired and assimilated the coursework and experiences in the Counseling Psychology Program at a level appropriate to the Ph.D. The comprehensive examination should be a culminating experience that allows students the opportunity to integrate and apply their knowledge to the types of problems and issues confronted by doctoral level psychologists and should reflect students’ scientist-practitioner training.

A Comprehensive Exam Checklist has been developed which details the specific prerequisites needed before completing the comprehensive exam.

**Readiness Checklist for the Counseling Psychology Doctoral Comprehensive Examination**
All are required in order to sit for the exam. Successful completion (defined as earning a B- or better), concurrent enrollment, or waiver of the following:

- PSY 613 – Cultural Basis of Behavior
- PSY 607 – Ethics and Current Issues in Psychology
- PSY 630 – Introduction to Counseling Psychology
- PSY 710 – Group Counseling and Psychotherapy
- PSY 713 – Intermediate Counseling Theory
- PSY 714 – The Psychology of Vocational Development
- PSY 614 – Testing and Individual Analysis
- PSY 641 – Cognitive Assessment
- PSY 712 – Assessment and Diagnosis
- PSY 740 – Objective Personality Assessment
- PSY 661 – Research Evaluation in the Behavioral Sciences
- PSY 662 – Quantitative Methods I or REF 762
- PSY 663 – Quantitative Methods II or REF 830
- PSY 652 – Counseling Psychology Practicum I
- PSY 698 – Thesis (6 credits) – **successful thesis defense is required**
- PSY 762 – Counseling Psychology Practicum II
- PSY 796 – Field Internship
- PSY 835 – Advanced Practicum in Counseling Psychology (at least 2 semesters; to include assessment experience and at least one “passed” case conference)

**Examination Format**

The **Doctoral Comprehensive Portfolio** will serve as the comprehensive examination for students in Year 3 of the program (or for students preparing to apply for pre-doctoral internship in the following semester). The doctoral comprehensive exam is administered with permission of the major professor and the director of training during the spring semester which precedes application to internship (typically Spring, Year 3). The Doctoral Comprehensive Portfolio replaces the Annual Evaluation during this evaluation period. The Portfolio should include the following components:

**Section 1 – Overview of Training Experiences**
1. Professional Identity and Goals Statement* (see below for details)
2. Doctoral Comprehensive Exam Cover Sheet*
3. Updated Curriculum Vita
4. **Degree plan**

**Section 2 – Research Competency**
This section should include evidence of your research activities:
1. Copies of article reprints, posters/ papers presented
2. Research Competency Checklist

**Section 3 – Counseling Competencies**
1. Practicum hours documentation (PsyTrack summary report)
2. **Practicum evaluations**
3. Externship evaluations
4. **Supervision evaluations**

**Section 4 – Professionalism**
1. Assistantship Evaluations
2. **Teaching Evaluations** (both from the faculty supervisor and from the students)

**Section 5 – Support Materials**
Previous evaluation letters, feedback, remediation plans

*Please email these to your major professor*

**Professional Identity and Goals Statement**

The purpose of this statement is to offer students an opportunity to describe their development as a psychologist, to articulate their strengths and areas for growth, and to discuss their professional goals on internship and beyond. This narrative statement should be thoughtfully organized and demonstrate evidence of self-awareness, insight and the ability to show integration across training experiences. Excellent statements will include descriptions of each of the four broad training areas (Research, Coursework, Clinical Skills, Professionalism) and descriptions of the relative influence each has had on the student’s professional training. Avoid simply summarizing the CV. Rather, consider identifying key experiences in each of these areas as they relate to the developing professional identity and connect to internship and career goals. Statements will be between 3-5 pages, single spaced. References are not necessary. Statements should include the following:

1. Describe your developing professional identity as a psychologist and health service provider. Discuss how your training experiences in the four broad training domains (Research, Coursework, Clinical Skills, Professionalism) have contributed to your professional development. The focus of this aspect should be on integration – how has your research training, coursework, clinical experiences, and professional development activities contributed to your professional development. What have you learned about the profession of counseling psychology that you did not know or appreciate before. Be certain you can show integration across these four main areas. Be certain you can detail the ways in which you identify as a counseling psychologist.

2. Develop a Professional Goals Statement which identifies your strengths and areas for growth and integrates these with feedback from supervisors and from key experiences in each of the four broad training domains (Research, Coursework, Clinical Skills, Professionalism).

   a. A Professional Goals statement must include both internship goals as well as a statement of anticipated plans after graduation. This statement should show evidence of the student’s ability to integrate training in the four broad areas (Coursework, Research, Counseling Skills & Professionalism) into their own professional development plans.

The Doctoral Comprehensive Portfolio should be organized in a 3-ring binder and is due to the major professor by the Monday following Spring Break.

**Doctoral Comprehensive Portfolio Rating Criteria**

**Professional Identity and Goals Statement**

- **Exceptional**
  - Student did an exceptional job articulating training experiences and integrating experiences with professional identity and goals
  - Student demonstrated exceptional insight

- **Satisfactory**
  - Student described professional identity and summarized training experiences in four broad domains with evidence of integration of training experiences with professional identity
  - Student identified professional goals and articulated integration of training experiences to goals

- **Unsatisfactory**
  - Student did not describe relevant training experiences in all four broad domains
  - Student did not describe professional goals
  - Student failed to articulate integration of training activities and professional identity
Coursework

- **Exceptional**
  Student has completed coursework in a timely manner with high grades (A or A-)
- **Satisfactory**
  Student has completed coursework in a timely manner with at least a B+ average
- **Unsatisfactory**
  Student’s grade point average fell below the minimum 3.0
  Student is on academic probation
  Student has failed to meet criteria of remediation plan

Research

- **Exceptional**
  Student has been an active contributor to the Research Team
  Student has exceeded all research milestones
  Student has submitted at least one article for publication
  Student has at least one national/ regional research presentation
- **Satisfactory**
  Student has regularly participated in Research Team activities
  Student has met most research milestones
- **Unsatisfactory**
  Student has minimal participation and/or no attendance on research team
  Student has failed to make adequate progress on research project(s)
  Student failed the oral defense (thesis or dissertation)

Counseling skills

- **Exceptional**
  Practicum evaluations note ‘exceptional’ performance
  Student’s externship evaluations average 4 on a 5 point scale
  Student’s supervision evaluations are rated exceptional
- **Satisfactory**
  Practicum evaluations report at least satisfactory performance
  Student receives at least satisfactory externship evaluations
  Student receives at least satisfactory supervision evaluations
- **Unsatisfactory**
  Unsatisfactory ratings on all or part of practicum evaluation
  Unsatisfactory ratings on all or part of externship evaluation
  Unsatisfactory supervisory ratings

Professionalism

- **Exceptional**
  Student demonstrates exceptional level of insight and self-awareness; sets appropriate goals
  Interpersonal behaviors have been noted to be exceptional
  Student receives exceptional assistantship evaluations
  Student receives exceptional teaching evaluations
- **Satisfactory**
  Student demonstrates some self-awareness; goals seem consistent with feedback
  No interpersonal difficulties have been documented
  Student receives at least satisfactory assistantship evaluations
  Student receives at least satisfactory teaching evaluations
- **Unsatisfactory**
Interpersonal behavior difficulties have been noted by faculty or other informed parties
Student received unsatisfactory assistantship evaluations
Student received unsatisfactory teaching evaluations

The Doctoral Comprehensive Portfolio committee is made up of the tenure-track faculty in the counseling psychology program and chaired by the major professor. Ratings will be decided by the committee. Students will be expected to earn at least Satisfactory ratings in each of the four Doctoral Comprehensive Portfolio categories (Research, Coursework, Clinical Skills, Professionalism) as well as regarding the Professional Identity Section. Earning Satisfactory ratings in each of these categories constitutes a “pass”.

Unsatisfactory ratings in any category will constitute a “fail” on the comprehensive examination. As consistent with Graduate School policy, students failing a section of the comprehensive examination will be expected to remediate any concerns and are permitted one retake. Failure in on the retake of the failed section of the comprehensive exam is grounds for dismissal from the program.

Final Disposition of the Comprehensive Examination
There are 3 potential outcomes on the comprehensive examination:

**Pass.** The student achieves satisfactory ratings across all Doctoral Comprehensive Portfolio categories. The student has passed the Comprehensive Exam and receives feedback on his/her performance. The Director of Training will submit the correct forms to the Graduate School.

**Attempt 1 Failure.** The student achieves one or more “unsatisfactory” ratings. A remediation plan will be developed which provides the student guidance on the ways he/she may improve his/her score. The student will be required to retake this section at the next administration of the Comprehensive Exam (scheduled the first Friday of the Fall semester). Per Graduate School policy, students are only permitted one retake of the Comprehensive Exam. In accordance with Graduate School policies, a student who does not pass all sections of the Comprehensive Exam on the second attempt will be dismissed from the program.

The Director of Training will notify the student of the disposition of their exam. The comprehensive exam must be successfully passed prior to approval to apply for internship. Students are required to take the Comprehensive Exam upon successful completion of the above coursework and prior to applying for pre-doctoral internship.

**Continuous Enrollment Policy**
Doctoral students who have passed their comprehensive examinations and completed the internship must enroll in a minimum of one hour of coursework (i.e., 898 or 883) each Fall and Spring semester until the semester they defend the dissertation, at which time they are require to register for one hour of 898. Failure to meet the continuous enrollment policy can result in the student being placed on inactive status and dismissed from the program. Note that continuous progress on dissertation research is required to remain in good standing and to avoid a “U” (unsatisfactory) grade.

**Time to Completion**
The student must complete the doctoral degree within eight (8) calendar years from the date of initial enrollment in a doctoral program. Six years is the maximum age allowed for course work and the comprehensive exam, other than dissertation and research hours toward a graduate degree. The Graduate School, under extenuating circumstances and special petition, may approve revalidation of over-age credit hours.
if the original credit was earned at The University of Southern Mississippi and if the department chair approves the revalidation. The revalidation is secured by the student’s successfully passing a special examination on the course. However, any student who fails to complete the doctoral degree program within the eight-year time period becomes subject to any changes in degree requirements made at any date eight years prior to graduation. The fee charged for the special revalidation examination is to be paid before the revalidation examination is taken. Over-age extension courses cannot be revalidated. Revalidation forms are available in the Graduate School.

**Out-of-State Training Experiences**

Due to restrictions which vary from state to state, students seeking to engage in training experiences (e.g., courses, practica, internships or research) in another state should seek to gain the approval of the Director of Training and the University Compliance Officer.
Students and trainees in professional psychology programs (at the doctoral, internship, or postdoctoral level) should know—prior to program entry, and at the outset of training—that faculty, training staff, supervisors, and administrators have a professional, ethical, and potentially legal obligation to: (a) establish criteria and methods through which aspects of competence other than, and in addition to, a student-trainee's knowledge or skills may be assessed (including, but not limited to, emotional stability and well-being, interpersonal skills, professional development, and personal fitness for practice); and, (b) ensure—insofar as possible—that the student-trainees who complete their programs are competent to manage future relationships (e.g., client, collegial, professional, public, scholarly, supervisory, teaching) in an effective and appropriate manner. Because of this commitment, and within the parameters of their administrative authority, professional psychology education and training programs, faculty, training staff, supervisors, and administrators strive not to advance, recommend, or graduate students or trainees with demonstrable problems (e.g., cognitive, emotional, psychological, interpersonal, technical, and ethical) that may interfere with professional competence to other programs, the profession, employers, or the public at large.

As such, within a developmental framework, and with due regard for the inherent power difference between students and faculty, students and trainees should know that their faculty, training staff, and supervisors will evaluate their competence in areas other than, and in addition to, coursework, seminars, scholarship, comprehensive examinations, or related program requirements. These evaluative areas include, but are not limited to, demonstration of sufficient: (a) interpersonal and professional competence (e.g., the ways in which student-trainees relate to clients, peers, faculty, allied professionals, the public, and individuals from diverse backgrounds or histories); (b) self-awareness, self-reflection, and self-evaluation (e.g., knowledge of the content and potential impact of one's own beliefs and values on clients, peers, faculty, allied professionals, the public, and individuals from diverse backgrounds or histories); (c) openness to processes of supervision (e.g., the ability and willingness to explore issues that either interfere with the appropriate provision of care or impede professional development or functioning); and (d) resolution of issues or problems that interfere with professional development or functioning in a satisfactory manner (e.g., by responding constructively to feedback from supervisors or program faculty; by the successful completion of remediation plans; by participating in personal therapy in order to resolve issues or problems).

This policy is applicable to settings and contexts in which evaluation would appropriately occur (e.g., coursework, practica, supervision), rather than settings and contexts that are unrelated to the formal process of education and training (e.g., non-academic, social contexts). However, irrespective of setting or context, when a student-trainee’s conduct clearly and demonstrably (a) impacts the performance, development, or functioning of the student-trainee, (b) raises questions of an ethical nature, (c) represents a risk to public safety, or (d) damages the representation of psychology to the profession or public, appropriate representatives of the program may review such conduct within the context of the program’s evaluation processes.

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2 This document was developed by the Student Competence Task Force of the Council of Chairs of Training Councils (CCTC) (http://www.apa.org/ed/graduate/cctc.html) and approved by the CCTC on March 25, 2004.
Evaluations in the program are ongoing. Students should expect to be evaluated each semester in the following ways:

1. **Course grades**
2. **Assistantship evaluations** are completed each semester by the assistantship/ work study supervisor.
3. **Teaching evaluations** – when students are primary instructors for a course, they receive feedback from their students in the form of course evaluations, and additionally will be supervised, observed and evaluated by a counseling psychology faculty supervisor; written feedback is provided.
4. **Practicum/ Externship evaluations** will be completed each semester and offer a detailed assessment of a student’s assessment, diagnostic and counseling skills as well as the student’s ability to give and receive feedback and display insight, among other indicators of performance. Additional **supervisor evaluations** are completed during the semesters you serve as a supervisory assistant.
5. **Comprehensive Examination** provides an opportunity for students to synthesize their knowledge (i.e., predoctoral internship).
6. **Thesis and Dissertation** defense meetings provide an opportunity for students to present their research work products as well as orally defend their knowledge of the research topic, methodology and process.
7. Research Competencies Checklist – provides an ongoing record of students’ progress toward achieving Profession-wide competencies which relate to research competencies as dictated by the Commission on Accreditation.
8. **Pre-doctoral Internship Application Approval** is completed early in the Fall semester preceding the application for internship and offers additional opportunity for faculty to assess readiness for internship.
9. **Annual Evaluation** – completed once annually and offered as a summative integration of all evaluation points into a clear description of the student’s progress and suggested areas for growth during the coming year.

**Annual Evaluation**

A student's advancement through his or her academic program from one semester to the next is contingent upon satisfactory progress each semester. Student advancement in the program is intended to ensure that each student maintains adequate progress in gaining knowledge, skills, competencies, and behaviors required for graduation and professional practice.

Formal evaluations are conducted by the faculty at least one time per year. In the Spring of each year of resident study, students will be asked to develop and update their annual evaluation materials which provide a summary of progress for the year and establish training goals for the coming year using the Annual Evaluation Cover Sheet. The faculty consider the evaluation process an important opportunity for integrating feedback, reflecting on progress, and for setting goals for the coming year. Data collected each year will be integrated into the following year’s annual evaluation materials, providing a ‘big picture’ and attention to the developmental aspects of the evaluation process. As such, students are expected to strongly assert their strengths and present compelling data which demonstrates success in multiple areas. Similarly, using self-reflection and insight, students are encouraged to make use of formative evaluations to assist in the development of goals which are responsive to feedback and attentive to needed areas of improvement.

The Annual Evaluation materials will be maintained in a 3-ring binder with the following sections: (It is the student’s responsibility to assure they have gathered all necessary forms, information, and paperwork to create the information required in the Annual Evaluation.)

**Section 1 – Evaluation Overview**

1. A cover letter which should include the following:
a. Strengths and areas for growth within the four broad categories of Coursework, Research, Counseling skills and Professionalism.
b. Brief statement of internship/career goals, summary of clinical/assessment experiences (include hours, settings)
c. Goals for the upcoming year which should include detailed and specific timelines when appropriate (e.g., research deadlines).

2. Updated Curriculum Vita (see Major Professor or Training Director for examples)
3. Degree plan (please update annually with inputted grades for the previous year)

Section 2 – Research Competency
This section should include evidence of your research activities:
1. Copies of article reprints, posters/ papers presented
2. Research Competencies Checklist.

Section 3 – Counseling Competencies
1. Practicum hours documentation (PsyTrack summary report)
2. Practicum evaluations
3. Externship evaluations
4. Supervision evaluations

Section 4 – Professionalism
1. Assistantship Evaluations
2. Teaching Evaluations (both from the faculty supervisor and from the students)

Section 5 – Support Materials
Previous evaluation letters, feedback, remediation plans

Annual Evaluation materials should be organized in a 3-ring binder with tabs for each section as defined above. New material should be organized on top of previously reviewed materials to allow for a developmental overview of the student’s progress. The Annual Evaluation materials will be presented to the major professor the Monday following Spring Break.

The Major Professor will review the materials and then will present the student’s progress to the faculty for formal input during regularly scheduled faculty meetings. Student’s progress in each of the four areas of competency (i.e., coursework, research, counseling skills and professionalism) will be evaluated by the Counseling Psychology Program faculty on the following scale: Exceptional/ exceeds expectations, Satisfactory/ meets expectations, Unsatisfactory/ does not meet minimal expectations (see below) using the Annual Evaluation Cover Sheet.

Any substantive or outcome area which is deemed unsatisfactory will include a remediation plan developed by the faculty which details specific areas for improvement and the student will be placed on probation (see Probation policy detailed elsewhere in this handbook). Additionally, even areas which may be deemed Satisfactory might be accompanied by constructive feedback, suggestions for improvement and other evaluative comments which are meant to aid in facilitating the student’s growth in that area.

The student will receive written feedback from the Major Professor and Director of Training which assess student’s performance in each area. The student will be offered an opportunity to register a written response and this will also be placed in the file. Any appeal of the annual evaluation is subject to the appeal process as detailed elsewhere in this handbook.
The following details possible criteria to be used in determining the annual evaluation rating in each of the four areas assessed. This list is not meant to be exhaustive however and therefore final judgment of the assessment of progress is left to the discretion of the faculty.

**Annual Evaluation Rating Criteria**

### Coursework

#### Exceptional
- Student has completed coursework in a timely manner with high grades (A or A-)
- Comprehensive exams successfully completed with ratings of 4 or better

#### Satisfactory
- Student has completed coursework in a timely manner with at least a B+ average
- Student successfully completed comprehensive exams

#### Unsatisfactory
- Student’s grade point average fell below the minimum 3.0
- Student is on academic probation
- Student failed to pass comprehensive examination
- Student has failed to meet criteria of remediation plan
- Concerns related to academic integrity

### Research

#### Exceptional
- Student has been an active contributor to the Research Team
- Student has exceeded all research milestones
- Student has submitted at least one article for publication
- Student has at least one national/ regional research presentation

#### Satisfactory
- Student has regularly participated in Research Team activities
- Student has met most research milestones

#### Unsatisfactory
- Student has minimal participation and/or no attendance on research team
- Student has failed to make adequate progress on research project(s)
- Student failed the oral defense (thesis or dissertation)
- Concerns related to academic integrity

### Counseling skills

#### Exceptional
- Practicum evaluations note ‘exceptional’ performance
- Student’s externship evaluations average 4 on a 5 point scale
- Student’s supervision evaluations are rated exceptional

#### Satisfactory
- Practicum evaluations report at least satisfactory performance
- Student receives at least satisfactory externship evaluations
- Student receives at least satisfactory supervision evaluations

#### Unsatisfactory
- Unsatisfactory ratings on all or part of practicum evaluation
- Unsatisfactory ratings on all or part of externship evaluation
- Unsatisfactory supervisory ratings
- Ethical violations
- Failure to appropriately prioritize client concerns/ well-being (e.g., missing appointments)
Professionalism

- **Exceptional**
  - Student demonstrates exceptional level of insight and self-awareness; sets appropriate goals
  - Interpersonal behaviors have been noted to be exceptional
  - Student receives exceptional assistantship evaluations
  - Student receives exceptional teaching evaluations

- **Satisfactory**
  - Student demonstrates some self-awareness; goals seem consistent with feedback
  - No interpersonal difficulties have been documented
  - Student receives at least satisfactory assistantship evaluations
  - Student receives at least satisfactory teaching evaluations

- **Unsatisfactory**
  - Interpersonal behavior difficulties have been noted by faculty or other informed parties
  - Student received unsatisfactory assistantship evaluations
  - Student received unsatisfactory teaching evaluations

Statement on the Evaluation of Non-academic Difficulties

In addition to maintaining satisfactory academic performance, research productivity, and clinical competence, training programs in professional psychology are also obliged to evaluate interpersonal competencies as they relate to one’s professional work. This section describes the ways in which problem behaviors, impairment, incompetence and ethical violations are assessed and evaluated.

In addition to problems identified during the annual evaluation, any faculty member, supervisor, or student may raise an issue at any time. Students who have a concern about a fellow student should first discuss the issue with their own major professor, who will then raise the issue with the other Program faculty. Advisors and faculty members will protect the confidentiality of the student reporting the potential problem, but they may request that the student meet with them to provide additional information. The Program faculty will briefly discuss the potential problem during the meeting in which it is raised, and if necessary the Major Professor and/or Director of Training will gather additional data and will report to the Program faculty within one week. If the concern appears valid, a formal review will take place as described below.

Review Procedures for Possible Problems

When a possible impairment or problematic behavior has been identified, the faculty will meet with the student to review the evaluation, and to determine whether a problem actually exists. This discussion can take place in the context of the annual review process, but may occur at any other time during graduate training. In addition the original report of the problem, information will be gathered from formal written and/or verbal evaluations of the student and from informal sources, including observations of students outside the training environment or reports from other interested parties.

Areas to be reviewed and discussed include the nature, severity, and consequences of the reported impairment or problem behavior. The following questions will be posed at this stage (adapted from Lamb, Cochran, & Jackson, 1991):

- What are the actual behaviors that are of concern, and how are those behaviors related to the goals of the program?
- How and in what settings have these behaviors been manifested?
- What were the negative consequences for the training agency or others (e.g., clients, other students) of the problematic behaviors?
- Who observed the behaviors in question?
- Who or what was affected by the behavior (clients, agency, atmosphere, training program, etc.)?
- What was the frequency of this behavior?
• Has the student been made aware of this behavior before the meeting, and if so, how did he or she respond?
• Has the feedback regarding the behavior been documented in any way?
• How serious is this behavior on the continuum of ethical and professional behavior?
• What are the student’s ideas about how the problem may be remediated?

While each case is different and requires individual assessment, the following factors may indicate that the problem is more serious and may represent a more serious impairment rather than a problematic behavior that is easier to remediate:
• The student does not acknowledge, understand or address the problematic behavior when it is identified.
• The problematic behavior is not merely a reflection of a skill deficit that can be rectified by training.
• The quality of service delivered by the person suffers.
• The problematic behavior is not restricted to one area of professional functioning.
• The behavior has the potential for ethical or legal ramifications if not addressed.
• A disproportionate amount of attention by training personnel is required.
• Behavior that does not change as a function of feedback.
• Behavior negatively affects the public image of the agency or the university or the training site.

After the initial meeting with the student, the faculty will meet to determine whether problematic behavior exists. If the faculty determines that there is a problem, the student will be placed on probation and develop a written plan for remediation or may be dismissed from the program (see Probation and Dismissal sections elsewhere in this handbook).

## Selective Retention Policies

### Departmental Grade Policy

A grade of “B-” or better is required to be considered “passing” for all required graduate courses.

Graduate students are required to maintain an overall GPA of 3.0. An overall GPA of < 3.0 will result in a review of the student’s status by program faculty. Additionally, as is summarized in the table below, a grade of C (including a C+) will result in a letter from the Department Chair warning of risk for termination. A second C or a grade of D at any time will result in a termination review by the program faculty and the student will be placed on probation by the Department Chairperson. Students earning three C’s, lower grades (C + D, 2 D’s) or an F will receive a termination letter from the Department Chairperson. A grade of “U” earned due to lack of progress on thesis (698) or dissertation (898) credits will result in immediate probation. Students will be offered one semester to remediate these concerns. According to the Graduate School policy, failure to remediate a “U” to an “S” (Satisfactory) will result in a Termination Review.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Warning</th>
<th>Probation/Termination Review</th>
<th>Termination</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 C</td>
<td>2 C’s</td>
<td>3 C’s</td>
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<td>1 D</td>
<td>C + D</td>
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<td>1 U</td>
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Students placed on probation will be required to have a remediation plan that is developed with and has the approval of their program faculty. The director of the program will provide the department chairperson with a written report of the remediation plan.

Note: Students earning poor evaluations at any point during the predoctoral internship will be automatically placed on probation and a remediation plan will be developed in conjunction with the predoctoral internship...
Students who fail to successfully complete the predoctoral internship are subject to dismissal by the program.

A student receiving a letter of termination on the basis of grades has the right of appeal. The appeal of termination on the basis of grades must begin with the Department Chairperson and must be filed in writing within seven working days of receipt of the written notification of termination. The Department Chairman will appoint an appeals committee consisting of faculty from each of the graduate studies programs. During the appeals process, the student is discontinued from the program. If the student succeeds in the appeal, the student is then reinstated into the program.

In most cases, termination from the department on the basis of grades will occur at the end of a semester, after grades are assigned. However, the department and individual programs may recommend a student for immediate dismissal (i.e., at any point during a semester) for egregious violations of program, departmental, university, or APA policies/ethical standards.

Programs may have more restrictive grade policies. This policy also does not preclude an emphasis area from requiring a student to retake any course considered essential to their training program. However, retaking a course will not result in the removal of the original grade from a student’s record.

**Students are reminded that they have the right to appeal academic decisions. These rights are discussed in the Grievance of Due Process section of this handbook.**

**Additional Program Grade Policy**

Counseling Psychology program policies require that students earn at least a B- or better in all required courses. Additionally the following prerequisites should be noted:

- A minimum of B- must be earned in each of the following prerequisites for PSY 652: PSY 614, PSY 630, PSY 712 and PSY 713
- A minimum of B- must be earned in each of the following prerequisites for PSY 762: PSY 652
- A minimum of a B- must be earned in both PSY 652 and PSY 762 to be approved for PSY 796: Master’s Internship (additional evaluation criteria also apply)
- A passing grade is required in PSY 796 to be approved for continued supervised counseling experiences

Students earning a C or lower in any class will be placed on probation and will be required to repeat the course at the next available offering and will be expected to earn a grade of a B- or better. Failure to achieve this minimal competency may result in dismissal from the program.

**Withdrawing from a Course**

While the University does allow students to petition to withdraw from courses during the semester, the program discourages this practice. Courses are sequenced in a deliberate manner and therefore modifying the plan of study impacts several factors including readiness for practicum, externship, thesis and dissertation timelines, and graduation. Therefore, if a student is considering withdrawing from a course in the program, the student should plan to discuss their concerns with the Director of Training so that the program faculty can collaborate in the development of an appropriate plan to address the student concerns. Students are not permitted to withdraw from any class simply because of poor performance.

**Probation and Remediation**

A student may be placed on program probation for unsatisfactory academic progress or for unsatisfactory performance in other training domains, including but not limited to graduate assistantship or work-study duties,
research-related duties, clinical practice requirements, externship placements, internship placements, and/or professional, academic or ethical violations or behavioral concerns.

Resulting from formal annual evaluation or from informal evaluation, probation is considered in the following circumstances (including but not limited to):
1. Failure to maintain minimum academic standards
2. Unsatisfactory performance in counseling practica courses
3. Academic misconduct or dishonesty
4. Criminal conviction of misconduct that affects ability to practice as a psychologist or to be licensed as such
5. Failure to comply with established university or program timetables and requirements, including clinic policies and procedures
6. Unethical practices and/or unprofessional conduct
7. Cognitive, affective, and/or behavioral impairments that obstruct the training process and/or threaten client welfare (such as, but not limited to: substance abuse; dual relationships with clients or students/supervisees for whom the student is responsible; passive-aggressive behavior; anti-social behavior; lying or misrepresenting oneself to clients, faculty or supervisors; failure to refer, or practicing outside of one's area(s) of competence without appropriate supervision; chronic lateness and/or absence from academic and clinical responsibilities; and dysfunctional emotional reactions that interfere with or jeopardize the well-being of clients, students, faculty, or supervisor).

When a counseling psychology student is placed on probation, the basis for the probation, the term of the probationary period, and the conditions which must be met in order to be removed from probationary status will be specified in writing using the Remediation Plan. Failure to meet the conditions of the probation will result in dismissal from the program (see below). When a student experiences difficulties in the training program, remediation may include, but is not limited to, (a) reducing the student’s course load, (b) approving a request for a leave-of-absence, (c) referring a student for medical treatment or psychological therapy, (d) requiring additional semesters of practicum or other clinical experience beyond the minimum normally required by the program, and (e) providing additional faculty mentoring and encouragement.

A student placed on probation will remain on probation for a minimum of one semester. A student placed on probation for unacceptable grades must successfully remediate the unacceptable grade and meet the requirements of his/her remediation plan, without incurring any additional complaints or problems, in order for probationary status to be removed. However, removal of probationary status will not prevent termination from the program in the event the student earns a subsequent failing grade (a grade of C or lower).

A student placed on probation for nonacademic impairment must demonstrate progress in remediation of deficits by the end of the probationary semester in order for the probation to continue or for the student to be removed from probation. Otherwise, the student will be considered for dismissal. Removal of probationary status will not prevent dismissal from the program in a subsequent event and/or if subsequent academic deficiencies arise.

A meeting with all available counseling psychology faculty and the student may be held to discuss the concerns and to present the remediation plan. The student should expect to meet regularly with the major professor during the probationary semester to evaluate progress and reassess the remediation plan if necessary. A formal review of the student’s progress in achieving the goals of the remediation plan will be held at the first faculty meeting of the semester following the probationary semester and a student’s status in the program will be reviewed. The student is charged with having met with the Major Professor to review his/her progress with this remediation plan prior to this meeting and presenting any written comment to the Major Professor at this time. At this point, probation will either be suspended, continued, or the student will be considered for dismissal from the program.
The student has the right to appeal the decision to place the student on probation and/or the terms of the probation following the appeals procedures outlined elsewhere in this handbook.

**Dismissal Procedures**

Except in the case of automatic dismissal based on violations of the department grade policy, the counseling psychology faculty use the procedure described in this section in deciding to dismiss a student from the program. Dismissal can be for academic or non-academic reasons. Dismissal may follow unsuccessful remediation after the probationary semester; however the faculty reserve the right to dismiss students from the program without opportunity for probation if the concerns are sufficiently serious or if the student’s academic performance was such that probation is unlikely to be successful. As often as possible, students are encouraged to resign from the program rather than being dismissed and advised into more appropriate career paths and programs.

**Protocol for Dismissal of a Student from a Graduate Program**

The following are some reasons for dismissal of a student with regular status from a graduate program:

- The student did not return to good academic standing following probationary semester(s).
  - A GPA of 3.0 was not achieved. (Some programs have more rigorous standards).
  - The student did not earn the required improved grade on a retaken course.
  - The student failed to meet other remediation criteria.
- The student earned grades that made it impossible to return to good academic standing, thus rendering graduation impossible.
  - The student earned a grade of C- or below that could not be retaken because the one allowable retake was used to replace a prior low grade.
  - The student earned the 7th hour of C+ or below that could not be retaken because the one allowable retake was used to replace a prior low grade.
- The student failed to show acceptable improvement in research/scholarly progress after a probationary semester.
- The student exceeded the time limit for the degree program without completing the degree.
- The student was proven to have committed academic/research misconduct or other ethical violation.
- The student violated the Code of Student Conduct and required disciplinary action. (In this case dismissal follows review by the Dean of Students).
- The student failed to demonstrate professional competency and/or exhibited conduct inappropriate to the profession.
- The student failed a qualifying exam, comprehensive exam, or defense twice.
- Other (Departments may have discipline-specific policies which stipulate reasons for dismissal).

Dismissals will normally be initiated at the end of a semester following the posting of grades unless the dismissal is a result of academic misconduct or unethical/unprofessional behavior.

Dismissal must be initiated using the following protocol:

1) The student’s advisor and/or department chair will schedule a termination review with the student. The purpose of this meeting is to communicate the justification for dismissal with the student and to allow the student to provide written documentation of any extenuating circumstances that should be considered in a decision to dismiss. This meeting should be conducted face to face if possible. If the student cannot meet face to face, the meeting should take place via telephone, videoconference, or conference call. Email is acceptable but should be used only if personal communication is not possible.
The Director of Training will notify the student one week prior to the faculty meeting where dismissal is being considered. The student will be permitted to provide written documentation of any relevant extenuating circumstances which they believe may have inhibited their performance. The faculty will make a decision based on all available evidence. The Director of Training will meet with the student and provide a written account of the decision as soon as possible following the dismissal meeting. Decisions are subject to the same appeals procedure as documented elsewhere in this handbook.

2) If the department chooses to move forward with a dismissal following a termination review, the following items must be submitted to the dean of the Graduate School either electronically as a pdf with electronic signatures or as a hard copy with original signatures:
   a. A letter addressed to the student articulating the reason(s) for dismissal.
   b. A completed dismissal form indicating the reason(s) for dismissal and signed by the advisor, department chair or director, and the college dean.

3) Upon receiving notice of the dismissal, the dean of the Graduate School will send the student a formal letter of dismissal along with a copy of the letter of rationale from the department as an attachment. The dean’s letter will inform the student of the following:
   a. That scheduled classes (including current semester classes and future classes for which the student is pre-registered) must be dropped using the withdrawal process within seven (7) working days of receiving the dismissal letter from the dean of the Graduate School and that if he/she does not withdraw from classes the Graduate School will initiate the withdrawal.
   b. The impact of dismissal on a graduate assistantship, insurance, and tuition.
   c. The student’s right to appeal the dismissal and instructions for filing an appeal.

The letter will be sent to the student by certified mail through the U.S. Postal Service and by email using the student’s official USM email address. Dismissed students are responsible for contacting the Director of Training to arrange return of all Department property (including keys) and to obtain all personal items.

**Appeal Procedures**

If the student chooses to appeal a dismissal, the following protocol will be applied. This procedure follows the Grievance and Appeals Procedures included in the Graduate Bulletin and gives the student due process.

1. **Department/School Level.** The student will submit a signed letter to the chair or director within **fifteen** (15) working days of notification of dismissal from the Dean of the Graduate School or other action that prompts a grievance or appeal. The letter must state the action for which the student is filing an appeal or grievance and explain the basis of the appeal or grievance. The chair/director will review all pertinent material, interview the student and relevant faculty member(s), and render a decision on the appeal/grievance, normally within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal/grievance. The decision of the chair/director will be submitted to the student via certified mail and the student’s official USM email account. This correspondence will also be copied to the dean of the Graduate School.

2. **Dean of the College Level.** If the student chooses to appeal the departmental decision, he/she must submit a written appeal within ten (10) working days of the emailed notification of the departmental/school decision to the dean of the college. The dean will review the appeal and render a decision on the appeal, normally within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the college dean will be submitted to the student via certified mail and the student’s official USM email account. This correspondence will also be copied to the Dean of the Graduate School.

3. **Dean of the Graduate School Level.** If the student chooses to appeal the academic dean’s decision, he/she must submit a written appeal within ten (10) working days of the emailed notification of the academic dean’s decision to the dean of the Graduate School. The graduate dean will convene a Graduate School Appeals Committee (made up of faculty who are members of the Graduate Council and one graduate student) which will review all pertinent materials and hold an official hearing on the
appeal. Normally, the hearing will be held within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the written appeal as long as the university is in session or within ten (10) working days of the university beginning a session. The student may attend the hearing and a representative of the department/school may also attend the hearing or respond to the appeal in writing. The Appeals Committee will submit a letter detailing their decision to the dean of the Graduate School. The dean will send the student a letter indicating the Committee’s decision via certified mail and the student’s official USM email account.

4. Provost Level. If the student chooses to appeal the Graduate School Appeals Committee’s decision, he/she must submit a written appeal within ten (10) working days of the emailed notification of the committee’s decision to the Provost. The Provost will review all appeal materials and render a decision on the appeal, normally within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Provost will be submitted to the student via certified mail and the student’s official USM email account. This correspondence will also be copied to the dean of the Graduate School.

5. President Level. If the student chooses to appeal the Provost’s decision, he/she must submit a written appeal within ten (10) working days of the emailed notification of the Provost’s decision to the President. The President will review all appeal materials and render a final decision on the appeal, normally within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the President will be submitted to the student via certified mail and the student’s official USM email account. This correspondence will also be copied to the dean of the Graduate School. The decision of the President is final.

**Grievance: General Guidelines**

Students may file a grievance if experiencing difficulties with other students, faculty members, staff members, or supervisors; or with program/departmental rules or procedures. Because graduate students may serve in several roles, University rules and regulations for resolving complaints or grievances may vary with the circumstance.

Due process ensures that decisions made about a student’s academic performance or academic standing in a graduate degree program are not arbitrary or personally based. Due process requires that decision-making procedures be fairly applied to all students, appeal procedures are available to all students, and that students may challenge a decision without prejudice.

As part of due process, students may appeal any decision that is made by the university faculty or administration. Students also have the right to file a grievance regarding actions taken by the university or its representatives (e.g., faculty, administrators). Appeals and grievances are separate processes. There may be instances that involve both an appeal and a grievance, but the two actions will be handled separately. The departmental faculty strives to achieve fair and equitable resolution of complaints or grievances at the earliest possible time and at the lowest possible level. Thus, students who wish to appeal a decision or seek action on a matter of grievance are usually encouraged to seek clarification and review in consultation with their major professor, the Director of Training, or the Department Chair. *Students are encouraged to consult with the Director of Training and/or the Major Professor before bringing concerns to the attention of the Department Chair or Dean.*

**Appeal of Grades**

Grade appeals are governed by University policy. A description of the formal process may be found at [https://www.usm.edu/provost/grade-appeal-policies-and-bylaws](https://www.usm.edu/provost/grade-appeal-policies-and-bylaws). If a student wishes to formally appeal a grade that has resulted in program/department termination, the department may opt to wait until the University grade appeal process is concluded before conducting appeals for departmental or program dismissal.
University Grievance Policy
The University Grievance Policy is available here: https://www.usm.edu/student-handbook/university-grievance-policy.

Sexual Harassment & Discrimination Policies
Sexual Harassment policies can be found here https://www.usm.edu/student-handbook/aaeeo-policies. A student who believes she or he has been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, color, race, religion, national origin, disability, or Vietnam-Era veteran status by a university employee may file a complaint with the Office of Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity. Specific procedures are outlined at http://www.usm.edu/aa-eeo/aaeeo-complaint-procedure.

Consensual Relationships Policy
There are special problems in any romantic or sexual relationship between individuals where one party possesses direct academic, administrative, supervisory, evaluative, counseling, or extracurricular authority over the other party. Please find the Consensual Relationship Policy here: https://www.usm.edu/graduate-school/policy-regarding-consensual-relationships.

ABD Policy
The student must complete the doctoral degree within eight (8) calendar years from the date of initial enrollment in a doctoral program. Six years is the maximum age allowed for course work and the comprehensive exam, other than dissertation and research hours toward a graduate degree. Please note that if the thesis is not completed by the end of the second year, students may be placed on probation. Failure to complete the doctoral degree within these time periods will result in the student being placed in an inactive status. Reinstatement will necessitate a re-application to the program. If granted, the core faculty of the respective program may require re-validation of courses, completion of another comprehensive examination and/or other training experiences as deemed appropriate and beneficial. In cases of reinstatement, the core faculty will designate a final deadline for program completion.

Students who are ABD must demonstrate continuing progress toward completion of the dissertation (and the doctorate) in order to remain in an active status. As a minimum, ABD students must:

a.
   Register for one hour of PSY 898 each semester/term until the degree is completed (as per Graduate School requirements), but, as per university policy, students must register for three hours during the semester that they are defending their dissertation. One hour per semester is required while on internship, though students must register for three hours during the semester they defend their dissertation.

b.
   File a written plan for degree completion (including time lines) with the training director immediately following the semester in which all course requirements and the internship are completed; and

c.
   File written progress reports with the Director of Training each January 1 and July 1 until the dissertation is defended.

An ABD student who does not comply with a., b., c. and/or who does not demonstrate progress toward completion of the dissertation during any 6 month period will be placed on probation. Failure to remove the “probationary” status by the next semester will result in the student being placed in an inactive status. After
being placed in an inactive status, a student who wishes to reactivate a program must file a written request for reinstatement with the Department Chair. The request should be accompanied by a plan for completion (with timelines). The Department Chair will base reinstatement on a positive recommendation from the core faculty and an endorsement.

**Educational Leave Policy**

A student who experiences unusual personal or health problems of such nature and extent that would prevent timely progress toward degree completion may petition the core faculty for a leave period up to one year and/or extension to their program completion deadline. The petition must be filed prior to or concurrent with the initiation of the presenting problem, and documentation must be provided that substantiates the nature and impact of the condition on degree completion. Program faculty must approve the request. At the end of the year if significant extenuating circumstances result in additional leave, the student must again request, in writing, the need for the leave.

**Student Support and Expectations**

**Background Checks Required for Admission & Continued Enrollment**

All graduate students admitted to the Department of Psychology must complete a background check provided through Castlebranch and coordinated through the College. Requirements for admission include the absence of a felony conviction(s) or misdemeanor conviction(s) involving moral turpitude and/or convictions suggesting the applicant is not of good character or reputation. Concerns noted will be discussed with the student. Given the connection between such convictions and subsequent employment and/or licensure eligibility, applicants failing this background check will not be permitted to enroll and will be dismissed from the program. The Department of Psychology reserves the right to request additional background checks at any point prior to receiving the degree. Students are subject to dismissal should they fail a background check after already enrolled. Costs associated with the Castlebranch background check are the responsibility of the applicant/student.

**Financial Aid and Assistantships**

Since initial accreditation of the program in 1979, all students admitted to the doctoral program have been offered financial assistance in the form of graduate work-study program, graduate assistantships, and/or research grants. Except in a very few cases with special circumstances, it is anticipated that all students admitted to the doctoral program will be offered financial assistance in the form of graduate assistantships, and/or research grants. It is anticipated that this practice will continue in the future though it cannot be absolutely guaranteed due to yearly budget allocations. Assistantships include both a stipend (currently at a rate of $7200 for 9 month assistantships) and a waiver of tuition. Tuition waivers earned during the academic semesters may continue through the summer even if the student is not being funded. Summer funding and summer tuition waivers are not guaranteed. Department funding (stipend and tuition waiver) are not offered for pre-doctoral internship and are rarely awarded beyond the 4th year of training. Students need to complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) each year prior to the posted deadlines. Information on departmental assistantships will be shared during the on-campus interviews. Names of students who are offered program positions are automatically included in assistantship requests submitted to the department. There is no separate application for departmental assistantships.

Due to the demands of doctoral study, part-time employment which might be undertaken outside of the organized training program will be strongly discouraged until all program and internship requirements are completed. More particularly, the delivery of counseling and psychological services by doctoral students, externs, or interns will be limited to activities that are a planned part of the student’s training program and occur.
under the direct supervision of a qualified psychologist (i.e., licensed or license-eligible in an appropriate area of psychology). Requests for exceptions to these guidelines in response to unexpected financial or personal crises must be approved by the doctoral program faculty.

**Teaching Undergraduate Courses**

The Department of Psychology affords opportunities for doctoral students to teach undergraduate classes at USM. Graduate students must have completed 18 hours in their discipline before teaching undergraduate classes. Therefore, counseling psychology students are eligible to teach by the summer semester following their first year. Graduate students are generally not permitted to teach upper division (400-level) courses. All counseling psychology students, whether they intend to teach or not, are also required to take PSY 701: Seminar in Teaching of Psychology (1 hr). For any semester that a student is the instructor of record for a course, the student is required to enroll in PSY 702 (Practicum in Teaching of Psychology) with your Major Professor or another counseling psychology faculty, who will serve as your direct supervisor for teaching. Students will be evaluated at least once during the semester they are teaching and written evaluations will be placed in the student’s file and submitted to the student by the conclusion of the semester. Instructors of record will also receive written student evaluations available the following semester in SOAR and should maintain both the faculty supervisor’s written feedback and the class evaluations for the Annual Evaluation. See the Department of Psychology Graduate Student Handbook for detailed expectations regarding serving as a course instructor.

**Letters of Recommendation**

Students often request letters of recommendation from program faculty for externships, scholarship awards, predoctoral internship, and employment. As the disclosure of student educational records is restricted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99), we must have written authorization in order to provide such information. Because it is not always feasible to obtain necessary authorization in a timely manner (e.g., a student on internship out of state lists a faculty member as a reference for a job), this requirement can create a hardship for students. Therefore, we request that all students sign a waiver authorizing program faculty to consult their academic records in writing recommendation letters or otherwise communicating their impressions as requested by the student. This [Recommendation Waiver](#) may be revised as needed, pending re-authorization by the signatory.

Please be aware that program faculty may disclose student records, without consent, to other departmental or university personnel with legitimate educational interest (34 CFR § 99.31). In addition, we may solicit and receive information from other parties involved in students’ education or professional development (e.g., off-site supervisors, etc.).

**Graduate Student Workspace**

Because lab space in the Department is limited, the counseling psychology doctoral students all receive a cubical space in a shared, locked office. Doctoral “cubes” are the dedicated work space for the students in the counseling psychology program. As such, students are required to make good use of this space by being mindful of their peers, and being frequently present in this space and accessible to faculty supervisors and instructors. Computers are provided in the doctoral cubes and in the Counseling Psychology Assessment Lab for clinic and research use. Please be mindful of the needs of the clinic when using these computers for research. Private space for meetings with peers, students, and supervisees is available for reserve in the Assessment Lab and Clinic as well. The Counseling Psychology graduate students may also use the lounge located on the second floor of Owings-McQuagge next to the Assessment Lab. A microwave and refrigerator are available for your use. A lock box has been placed on the door to increase security; you will receive the combination to the lock box during orientation. The lounge is typically used as a study space for students and for socializing. Be sure to check the schedule with the Program Administrative Assistant and sign out any room
being used. The doctoral cubicle area is meant to be for doctoral students’ work and research activities, and as such, socializing in this space is discouraged. Because Department space is at a premium, underused work spaces and cubicles are subject to reassignment following a written warning from the Director of Training. Similarly, students who are misusing this space (i.e., frequently loud or social interactions with peers) may also lose access to this space.

**Graduate Student Communications**

In an effort to avoid confusion, graduate students need to be cautious about how their title may be misunderstood by the general public. Therefore, graduate students need to correctly label their graduate student status on their CV by clearly identifying themselves as a student, as well as listing their anticipated/expected graduation date clearly. Examples are available. Additionally, in email signature lines, students should present themselves clearly as a student, regardless of their standing in the program or years of experience. Therefore, acceptable titles include, “Counseling Psychology Graduate Student” or “Counseling Psychology Doctoral Student”. Avoid titles such as “intern” or “extern” as your USM email is rarely, if ever, used to communicate about clinical work. Students may be given setting-specific titles and may use these in communications relevant to that setting only. Finally, students on pre-doctoral internship are permitted to change their signature lines or other correspondence to comply with the internship site guidelines. Regardless of the status of the dissertation, the student remains a “student” until after the grade of is assigned marking the completion of the pre-doctoral internship. At no point should “Dr.” be used until after the awarding of the grade for the pre-doctoral internship and the successful defense of the dissertation. Any question about this should be directed to the major professor or Director of Training.

**Technology Use Policies**

**USM Email Accounts**

Free email accounts are offered to each student available in the iTech office in the HUB. Please plan to utilize this account as it facilitates communication between students and faculty. You can set up your USM email account to forward all email to another personal email account at your preference – please see iTech personnel for assistance with establishing this account. All official correspondence (e.g., teaching, research, supervision) must be sent from the @usm.edu account. DO NOT send email from your personal account to students in your class or other university faculty/personnel. The CPY-all listserv connects all Counseling masters and doctoral students and faculty. Important messages are also posted on this listserv, and all students are expected to register at: [https://mailman.usm.edu/mailman/listinfo/cpy-all](https://mailman.usm.edu/mailman/listinfo/cpy-all).

Please ensure that your email signature line lists your current title as “Counseling Psychology Graduate Student”, “Counseling Psychology Master’s Student” or “Counseling Psychology Doctoral Student”. No other variations on this are acceptable.

You are expected to access your email daily during the academic year and at least several times a week during the summer. Faculty and staff often communicate with students using their university email address and delays due to lack of communication can impact financial aid, payroll, and impact research progress. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure they are regularly connecting with faculty and staff to ensure that the lines of communication are maintained. The expectation is that students will respond to emails within one-two business day. Persistent concerns with effective communication will affect annual evaluation Professionalism ratings.
Social Networking Sites

Students should be mindful of how the use of social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) may be perceived by clients, colleagues, faculty and other mental health professionals. As such students should make every effort to minimize material that may be deemed inappropriate for a professional counselor or psychologist. Additionally, students should set all security settings to private and should avoid posting information that may jeopardize their professional image. Students should consider limiting the amount of personal information posted on these sites. Students should never include clients or undergraduate students for who you served as an instructor, as part of their social network on these sites as that is a client-counselor boundary violation. **Changing your name is not an acceptable way to circumvent these expectations.** For the remainder of your professional career, you should avoid accepting requests from individuals that you do not know personally as these individuals could very well be or become clients, students, supervisors, employers, or otherwise represent a professional boundary crossing at some point.

Policy on the Use of Laptops and other Electronic Devices in the Classroom

Student use of laptop computers is permitted in class insofar as they are used for note-taking and in compliance with course syllabi and instructor guidelines. The use of laptops for other purposes (e.g., instant messaging, video chat, playing games, Internet browsing, etc.), except as explicitly authorized by the course instructor, constitutes unprofessional behavior. The use of other electronic devices during class is prohibited. Students misusing laptops or using other electronic devices during class (e.g., texting on cell phones, etc.) may be dismissed from class and may receive other disciplinary consequences at the discretion of the instructor and/or the Counseling Psychology program faculty. Students are reminded that professional behavior constitutes an important domain in faculty evaluation of student performance.

University Library Facilities

University Library resources and services are provided through the library’s extensive website and at facilities located in Hattiesburg and the Gulf Coast. University Libraries’ collections include print, microform, and audio visual items and provide online access to electronic journals, books, and databases. Services and resources provided by University Libraries include classes and workshops in the use of the library, online reference, self-paced online tutorials, Turnitin plagiarism detection software, electronic reserves, and online and physical delivery of library materials for students enrolled in distance education classes. Additionally, Cook Library provides over 150 student use computers, checkout of laptop computers, and access to teacher education materials in the Curriculum Materials Center. Students also have access to the University of Mississippi Medical Center Library in Jackson.

Private research carrels are available to assignment to graduate students on a space-available basis at a rental fee of $50.00 per semester. Additional information regarding the university libraries and available services for students may be found at [www.usm.edu/lib](http://www.usm.edu/lib).

Academic Integrity

All students at the University of Southern Mississippi are expected to demonstrate the highest levels of academic integrity in all that they do. Forms of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to):

- Cheating (including copying from others’ work)
- Plagiarism (representing another person’s words or ideas as your own; failure to properly cite the source of your information, argument, or concepts)
- Falsification of documents
• Disclosure of test or other assignment content to another student
• Submission of the same paper or other assignment to more than one class without the explicit approval of all faculty members’ involved
• Unauthorized academic collaboration with others
• Conspiracy to engage in academic misconduct

Engaging in any of these behaviors or supporting others who do so will result in academic penalties and/or other sanctions. If a faculty member determines that a student has violated our Academic Integrity Policy, sanctions ranging from resubmission of work to course failure may occur, including the possibility of receiving a grade of “XF” for the course, which will be on the student’s transcript with the notation “Failure due to academic misconduct.” For more details, please see the University’s Academic Integrity Policy. Note that repeated acts of academic misconduct will lead to expulsion from the University.

To ensure that students understand the nature of plagiarism, students must complete the tutorial found at http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/plag/plagiarismtutorial.php and have the results of the quiz e-mailed to the Director of Training by September 1 of their first year in the program.

Thesis and dissertation documents are also checked for plagiarism. See the Research section of this handbook for details.

**USM Office of Disability Accommodations**

The primary function and mission of the Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA), located at 114 Bond Hall (entrance on the south side), is to provide those services necessary to assure equal educational opportunity to all students pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you feel you have a disability that qualifies for accommodations under Section 504 or the ADA, please contact Suzy Hebert, Coordinator, at (601) 266-5024.

**Health Services**

The USM Student Health Services Clinic provides students, faculty, and staff with general medical services including laboratory testing, x-ray, pharmacy, dietary counseling, and educational services. The clinic is staffed by several physicians and nurse practitioners. The clinic is located on the west side of Kennard-Washington Hall. All students registered for classes at The University of Southern Mississippi are eligible to use the Student Health Services. Spouses of eligible students, who are not students themselves, and dependent children above the age of 12 may receive health care at Student Health Service on a fee-for-service basis. Students must present their student ID at time of service. Additional information, including information about mandatory student health insurance, may be obtained at www.usm.edu/healthservice .

**Personal Counseling Services**

Numerous services are available in the areas of personal, social, and marital counseling, and psychotherapy. On-campus services include the University Counseling Center, which is located in Room 200 of Kennard-Washington Hall. Off-campus facilities include Pine Belt Mental Healthcare Resources which is a publicly supported mental health facility, as well as a number of private practitioners in psychology and psychiatry. Personal counseling, while not a requirement of the program, often assists students in conceptualizing the counseling process, gaining insight, and provides support for the challenges of graduate school. Most students find that engagement in personal counseling assists them with both the personal and professional challenges of graduate school and thus most make frequent use of these services during their time in the program. Be aware that seeking personal counseling from a provider who may act as a supervisor will be discouraged, so students
are urged to seek consultation about appropriate referrals for personal counseling to avoid these dual relationships.

**Colloquia and Seminars**

The department, the counseling psychology program, and other departmental entities, sponsor speakers, colloquia, and seminars throughout the year. All counseling psychology graduate students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of those opportunities for learning and professional development. Attendance at such functions will not only expand students’ knowledge of areas outside of counseling psychology but also foster a greater sense of membership in the Department. Attendance at such events should be noted on the CV and included as part of the annual evaluation materials.

**Professional Development**

Doctoral students in Counseling Psychology are encouraged to become active in professional associations, such as the American Psychological Association (APA), the American Psychological Association of Graduate Students (APAGS), the Student Affiliate Group of APA Division 17 (SAG), and the Mississippi Psychological Association (MPA). Participation in these organizations provides an excellent way to connect with other students and psychologists at the state and national levels. Student membership fees for these organizations are nominal, and most memberships provide one or more publications as a benefit. Information regarding these organizations will be distributed through the CPY Student Governance Association and in the research seminar that all new students take during their first semester of enrollment.

**Counseling Psychology Student Government**

Students are also encouraged to become a member of the counseling programs student organization, the Counseling Psychology Student Government (CPSG). The CPSG provides a mechanism whereby counseling psychology master’s and doctoral students can provide mutual support and develop a consensus around issues that need to brought to the attention of the Directors of Training and/or the core faculty. To facilitate this process, the President of the CPSG or a designated representative is invited to attend “open” portions of regularly scheduled faculty meetings. Specifically, functions of the CPSG may include:

1. Providing input into matters such as curriculum planning, new faculty selection, and student admissions;
2. Planning social and recreational activities;
3. Providing a safe channel through which complaints and grievances may be processed and addressed on an informal basis (does not preclude use of formal channels identified previously);
4. Providing an opportunity for leadership development in a professional context;
5. Providing a mechanism through which student input may be channeled into program activities such as updating of publications and/or preparation of accreditation reports.

The President, or faculty liaison, is responsible for promoting open communication between the students and faculty, for voicing student concerns and for offering comment on the development of new policies and procedures or other matters of interest to students. The President/ liaison is encouraged to use this role judiciously and to bring forward concerns that have been formally discussed at regularly scheduled CPSG meetings. Similarly, the faculty will use the President and/or liaison to communicate programmatic issues which pertain to the student body as a whole.
Important University Services & Contact Information

Financial Aid
- David Williamson, Director, Financial Aid
  Kennard Washington Hall, 101; 266.4774
- [http://www.usm.edu/financialaid/](http://www.usm.edu/financialaid/)

ID Card
- Photo Services, Thad Cochran Center Lower Level
- 266.4149

Institutional Research Board
- JoAnn Johnson, IRB Administrator & Compliance Officer
  Weathersby Hall, Suite 215; 266.6820
- [http://www.usm.edu/irb/](http://www.usm.edu/irb/)

iTech
- HUB 104, 266.4357(HELP)
- Cook Library, 209 Help Desk
- [http://www.usm.edu/itech/](http://www.usm.edu/itech/)

Office of Disability Accommodations
- 114 Bond Hall, 266.5024, TTY 266.6837
- [http://www.usm.edu/oda/](http://www.usm.edu/oda/)

Graduate School
- Dr. Karen Coats, Dean
- McCain Library; 266.4369
- [http://www.usm.edu/graduateschool](http://www.usm.edu/graduateschool)

Payne Center & Recreation Services
- Free to all students
- Information, 266.5405
- [http://www.usm.edu/recsports](http://www.usm.edu/recsports)

Student Health Services
- Located on West Side of Kennard-Washington Hall; 266.5390
- [http://www.usm.edu/healthservice/](http://www.usm.edu/healthservice/)

Parking Management
- Located in 164 McLemore Hall; 266.5447
- [http://www.usm.edu/parking/](http://www.usm.edu/parking/)
Counseling Psychology Program Faculty

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- 601.266.4598

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- Emily.yowell@usm.edu
- OMH 213 A
- 601.266.6603

Program Administrative Assistant: Ms. Archie Brewton: archie.brewton@usm.edu (601.266.6224)
- Please visit www.usm.edu/counseling-psychology to find links to individual research pages.
The course content and experiential activities involved in the programs offered by the Department of Psychology are designed to afford students the opportunity to advance their personal, intellectual, and professional development and functioning. Through the program of study, you will be given feedback concerning your personal, academic, and professional strengths, weaknesses, and performance. This feedback will come from faculty, supervisors, peers, and clients. You will be expected to deal with this feedback in a mature and professional manner. By signing this agreement below, you recognize that as part of your professional training, the Director of Training and Counseling Psychology faculty will discuss your progress with interested parties including, but not limited to, graduate faculty, previous and current assistantship supervisors, previous and current clinical supervisors, peers, staff, and other parties in a position to comment on your personal and/or professional behavior.

The expectations of the Program's curricula are that you will explore and recognize the effect that your personal beliefs, issues, emotions, and behaviors have on your ability to function as a counseling psychologist. The various techniques or skills courses will require that you develop and demonstrate your professional skills as you work with classmates in role-play situations and with clients in actual sessions. You will be asked to examine your behaviors, beliefs, and emotions in relation to your professional activities and experiences on an ongoing basis.

The Department of Psychology and Counseling Psychology faculty members believe they have a responsibility to dismiss students who are unable to render competent service due to academic or personal limitations. They also recognize their obligation to assist students in obtaining remedial assistance as needed, to consult with colleagues and document their decision to refer students for assistance or to request that students be dismissed from the program, and to assure that students have adequate recourse to address decisions made.

If in the professional judgment of a faculty member, a student's behavior is deemed substandard, unethical, illegal, and/or professionally unbecoming at any time during the course of training (including course work, practica, and internships), a faculty review committee will be called to review the performance and behavior of the student and to make recommendations to the Department Chair.

I, ______________________________ (student name) have read the Doctoral Program Handbook. I agree that the faculty of the Counseling Psychology Program and the Department of Psychology have the right and responsibility to monitor my academic, professional, and ethical behavior.

I am willing to participate fully in the courses and requirements delineated in the Handbook. I also agree to abide by the policies set forth in the Handbook.

________________________________________
Student Signature

________________________________________
Date