

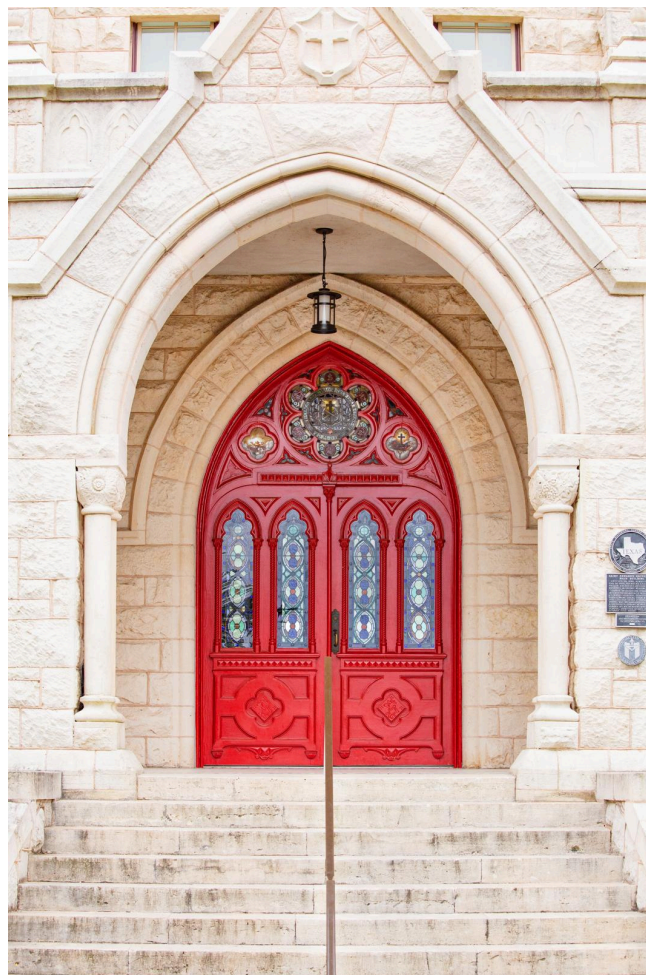


ST. EDWARD'S[®]
UNIVERSITY

Master of Arts in Counseling

Student Handbook

last edited on Nov 10, 2025



WELCOME

Welcome to the Master of Arts in Counseling [MAC] program! Your decision to become a part of St. Edward's University [SEU] and to pursue one of our graduate degree programs is one of the most important decisions of your life. As a department, we understand how important that decision is, and we are pleased to work with you toward your goal.

We look forward to the successful completion of your chosen graduate program and we congratulate you on your commitment to helping others.

PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with information about MAC at SEU, the available concentrations of study [Clinical Mental Health Counseling - CMHC, or Marriage, Couples and Family Counseling - MCFC], the policies, regulations, and professional activities relevant to our program. Information about updates to this handbook will be made available in your classes through emails sent to our students and the MAC Canvas page. Students are responsible for reading and becoming familiar with the information contained in this handbook.

MAC CORE FACULTY

1. Sarah Agarwal, PhD, LPC, RPT Certified CCPT-S; Certified CPRT-S; IPT-CST Assistant Professor sagarwal@stedwards.edu
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12. Quinn K. Smelser, PhD, LPC, NCC, RPT-S Assistant Professor qsmelser@stedwards.edu
13. April Tinajero, PhD, LPC ahaney@stedwards.edu Visiting Assistant Professor

ADJUNCT FACULTY

The MAC program employs adjunct faculty on an as-needed basis. Please note that adjunct faculty course assignments are subject to change and should not be considered permanent assignments. While adjunct faculty do not maintain offices on campus, you can reach them through your Canvas course shell or the e-mail contact information provided in your course syllabus.

PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT AND PHILOSOPHY

The clinical mental health counseling concentration and marriage, couples, and family counseling concentration at SEU educate, train, and prepare highly skilled, ethical, compassionate mental health professionals grounded in humanistic values that focus on prevention, wellness, personal growth, and a commitment to respecting and promoting human dignity.

The MAC program emphasizes the client-counselor relationship, creative & experiential modalities, and reflects multiple and varied theoretical perspectives with guidance to support students in developing their own framework for community and clinical practice.

The program creates a transformative environment that allows students to enter their field with an understanding of their own social locations and the role of power, privilege, and difference within institutional, social, intimate, and therapeutic relationships.

SEU has a commitment to social justice which is embodied and embraced across the curriculum in content such as counseling with diverse populations, pro-social autonomy across the lifespan, and community/professional advocacy for the populations we serve.

These ideals and many more are fostered within a dynamic, multi-modal learning setting in which critical thinking and the creation and integration of knowledge and experience are celebrated.

The St. Edward's Master of Arts in Counseling graduate program takes pride in creating life-long learners.

PRINCIPLES WHICH GUIDE OUR PROGRAM MISSION

1. We will provide a safe, supportive, instructional environment for personal and professional growth.
2. We will have a curriculum that develops and fosters skills reflective of professional standards and ethics.
3. We will promote a collaborative environment that fosters creativity, critical thinking, and scholarship.
4. We will be proactive in creating an academic community that represents and recognizes diverse populations and worldviews.
5. We will model and encourage the integration of self, theory, experience, and practice.
6. We will have performance-based, measurable objectives that are integrated across the curriculum.
7. We will be proactive in promoting diversity among faculty, staff, and students.
8. We will utilize a variety of instructional strategies and assessment techniques.
9. We will share our beliefs, policies, procedures, and student expectations in a clear, timely, and open manner.

ACCREDITATION

The MAC program is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs [CACREP] and is reviewed on a regular basis as part of this body's renewal process. The vision of CACREP is to provide leadership and to promote excellence in professional preparation through the accreditation of counseling and related educational programs. As an accrediting body, CACREP is committed to the development of standards and procedures that reflect the needs of a dynamic, diverse, and complex society. CACREP is dedicated to

1. encouraging and promoting the continuing development and improvement of preparation programs; and
2. preparing counseling and related professionals to provide services consistent with the ideal of optimal human development.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The MAC program has identified foundational program learning outcomes as well as CACREP aligned outcomes.

Upon completing the MAC degree plan in either concentration, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical foundations of counseling, describe their own professional style and approach, and integrate theory and style into practice.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of applied ethical standards and the ability to practice counseling using ethical and moral principles.
3. Demonstrate the skills required for effective client evaluation and assessment, treatment planning, and implementation of appropriate counseling strategies and techniques and appropriate follow-up methods.
4. Understand the characteristics of various social, cultural and ethnic groups and the impact these characteristics have upon the counselor and counseling profession.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which behavior, attitudes and values, both their own and those of others, impact professional counseling relationships.
6. Demonstrate the ability to conceptualize, analyze, critique and report research data, studies and abstracts.
7. Meet the academic requirements to apply for a temporary license from the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors or the Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists. Students who meet the above requirements will receive a Master of Arts in Counseling degree from St. Edward's University.

CACREP Key Performance Indicators [KPIs]

1. Students will gain the knowledge and skills associated with professional orientation and ethics in counseling.
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of social and cultural diversity understanding through theories of multicultural counseling and the promotion of diversity amongst different communities and mental health settings.
3. Students will demonstrate knowledge of systemic and environmental factors that affect human development, functioning, and behavior.
4. Students will demonstrate counseling skills and dispositions necessary to establish therapeutic relationships with clients.
5. Students will demonstrate knowledge of various theories and models of counseling and begin to formulate their own theoretical orientation.
6. Students will apply knowledge in group counseling processes and demonstrate competency in preparing and facilitation of group counseling.
7. Students will demonstrate an understanding of career development, including theories, assessments, career resources, and the interrelationship between career and other life roles.
8. Students will gain and apply knowledge in the use of assessment in counseling.
9. Students will demonstrate understanding and application of quantitative and qualitative research
10. methods as well as program evaluation to inform evidence-based practice.
11. Students will demonstrate the knowledge necessary to address a wide variety of circumstances within the context of clinical mental health counseling. [CMHC]
12. Students will demonstrate the development of treatment plans, clinical documentation, and conceptualization skills appropriate to the practice of clinical mental health counseling. [CMHC]
13. Students will demonstrate the knowledge necessary to address a wide variety of circumstances within the context of marriage, couple, and family counseling. [MCFC]
14. Students will demonstrate the development of treatment plans, clinical documentation, and conceptualization skills.[MCFC]
15. Students will demonstrate the appropriate counseling dispositions and behaviors expected of professional counselors.

ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

All students are expected to understand and demonstrate their understanding of the following:

1. ACA Code of Ethics: <https://www.counseling.org/resources/ethics>
2. IAMFC Code of Ethics: <https://www.iamfconline.org/public/department3.cfm>
3. AAMFT Code of Ethics:
https://www.aamft.org/AAMFT/Legal_Ethics/Legal_Ethics.aspx?hkey=3f960f51-842c-4f3c-8cad-473c78172fac
4. Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council Board Rules [TX LPC and TX LMFT]:
<https://www.bhec.texas.gov/statutes-and-rules/index.html>

All students are expected to understand and demonstrate their understanding of the standards of conduct and the St. Edward's University rules and regulations for student conduct, including those identified in the St. Edward's University Student Handbook here: [Student Conduct | St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas](#)

The Master of Arts in Counseling program at St. Edward's University, as well as the counseling profession in general, has high expectations of students, and violations of University rules or professional ethical standards could render a student unable or unfit to continue in the program.

Students are expected to periodically review the rules and regulations for student conduct and the ethical standards for their chosen field to ensure continued understanding and practice.

OVERVIEW OF THE MASTER OF ARTS IN COUNSELING GRADUATE PROGRAM

The Master of Arts in Counseling degree program offers two concentrations: Clinical Mental Health Counseling - CMHC, and Marriage, Couples and Family Counseling - MCFC. The clinical mental health counseling concentration prepares students to become licensed as a licensed professional counselor [LPC]. The marriage, couples, and family counseling concentration prepares students for the licensed marriage and family therapist designation [LMFT] in Texas, including the requirement of 75 system hours completed by the end of Internship II. For Texas LPC and LMFT licensure, students must complete post-master's supervised work hours and pass the applicable national licensing exam. For either license, candidates must complete 3,000 hours of post-master's supervised work experience and supervision from a board-approved supervisor. For more information on the process of obtaining an LPC or LMFT license, contact the Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council at [512] 305-7700 or [Contact Us – Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council](#).

Clinical Mental Health Counseling [CMHC]

The Master of Arts in Counseling with the CMHC designation includes 60 credit hours and is CACREP accredited. Following completion of the majority of coursework, students have the opportunity to apply coursework into Practicum and Internship field experiences. Students in this concentration complete three semesters of field experience at approved sites and, upon graduation and passage of the National Counseling Examination [NCE], are eligible for licensure as an LPC Associate in the State of Texas.

Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling [MCFC]

The Master of Arts in Counseling with the MCFC designation includes 60 credit hours and is CACREP accredited. Following completion of the majority of coursework, students have the opportunity to translate coursework into Practicum and Internship field experiences. Students in this concentration complete three semesters of field experience at approved sites and, upon graduation and passage of the AAMFT National Exam, are eligible for licensure as an LMFT Associate in the State of Texas.

ADMISSION INFORMATION

All admissions decisions are based on a complete application submitted by the student including:

- Application [[Graduate Students | Application Deadlines & Checklist](#)]
- Statement of Purpose [essay]
- Résumé
- Official Transcripts
- IELTS/TOEFL [if degree was earned in language other than English]
- Foreign Credential Evaluation [if degree earned in country outside of USA]

The admission criteria considered by the faculty include:

1. Bachelor's degree or its equivalent from a regionally accredited institution.
2. Demonstrated scholastic achievement at the college level evidenced by a minimum GPA of 3.0 on the last 60 semester hours of work or a 2.75 GPA on all college-level work.
3. Applicants educated at the college level in a language other than English must demonstrate English proficiency by attaining a minimum TOEFL score of 79 on the Internet-based test, its equivalent in other formats, or a score of 6.0 on IELTS.
4. Evidence of the potential to responsibly and successfully complete a program of rigorous graduate studies.
5. Evidence of ability to assume responsibility in the work environment; professional work experience is highly desirable.
6. Complete an application form with supporting documents and application fee submitted to the Office of Admission.
7. Complete an interview with the MAC admission committee.

Admission Categories

Students are admitted to the Master of Arts in Counseling [MAC] program in one of the following categories:

1. **Unconditional Admission:** All admission formalities have been completed. Minimum stated criteria for admission are met.
2. **Conditional Admission:** Applicants may be admitted to the MAC program conditionally if they do not meet the GPA requirement. To be considered for conditional admission, the applicant must have at least three years of full-time work experience. Students admitted conditionally whose cumulative graduate GPA falls below 3.0 at the end of the term in which they meet or exceed 12 hours of credit will be dismissed from the MAC program. The department will monitor this and inform the student of concerns but it is also the student's responsibility to self-monitor.
3. **Non-degree-seeking:** Persons holding an earned master's degree from an accredited institution may enroll in approved MAC courses to meet the academic coursework requirements of the Texas State Board of Examiners for the Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) or to meet coursework required for the Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT). St. Edward's University admission standards are free of discrimination on the grounds of race, color, creed, gender, age, disability or national origin. For admission, non-degree-seeking students must complete an appropriate application and provide official transcripts to the Office of Admission. Those accepted as non-degree-seeking are subject to the following academic policies:
 - a. Non-degree-seeking students may take MAC content courses for which they meet the prerequisites.
 - b. Non-degree-seeking students who are not graduates of the program may not take the courses CNSL 6367, CNSL 6368, or CNSL 6369.
 - c. Coursework completed by non-degree-seeking students at St. Edward's will apply toward a MAC degree program only with written permission of the dean of the School of Behavioral and Social Sciences.
 - d. The academic performance of all non-degree-seeking students is reviewed at the completion of each term, after which students receive written notification of any change in status. Non-degree-seeking students whose cumulative St. Edward's graduate GPA falls below 3.0 will be automatically dismissed.
 - e. A request for admission as a degree-seeking student will require separate application, and the same policies that govern regular admission will apply.
 - f. Tuition is at the regular graduate rate.
4. **Transient Students:** Applicants who are registered at another accredited graduate school and have written permission from the dean of that school to take specific courses at St. Edward's University may take departmentally approved courses. Tuition is at the regular graduate rate. Transient students should have already completed at least 12 hours of graduate work at their residential university and have successfully completed the equivalent courses in the MAC program of CNCO 6351 (Counseling Skills and Techniques) and CNCO 6352 (Counseling Theories).

Readmission

Students who do not attend courses for three consecutive semesters after completing one or more MAC courses must apply as a returning student if they wish to continue in the MAC program. Students accepted into the program may defer their admission to the next long term available [example: fall or spring]. Students who wish to defer to any term beyond the next available long term must reapply for admission.

To apply, students must submit a returning student application, application fee and pertinent supportive documents [e.g., transcripts of any academic work completed during the interim, current résumé and letter of intent]. The admission decision will be based on admission criteria current at the time of reapplication and the student's most recent academic or admission status.

Reactivation

Students who do not enroll for one or two long semesters [fall or spring, not required for summer] are asked to submit a temporary withdrawal form on MyHilltop to become inactive but can contact their advisor for guidance on reactivation. A student's original degree plan may need to be adjusted upon return depending on length of absence.

Auditing

The MAC program does not permit auditing of any courses except with special approval and permission.

Transfer of Credit

New Students

The MAC program can accept a maximum of 12 semester hours of graduate credit earned at another regionally accredited college or university. A grade of B or higher is required for the course to be considered for transfer credit. Coursework completed more than six years prior will not be accepted as transfer credit toward the MAC degree at St. Edward's University. The transfer of CNCO 6351, Counseling Skills and Techniques, is not allowed because MAC faculty must directly observe student's counseling skills in this course at SEU. No transfer of credit will be allowed after a student has enrolled in the MAC program except under specific circumstances and with approval of the MAC program director.

Current Students

Once students have enrolled in the MAC program, they will not be allowed to enroll for courses at other universities except under specific circumstances where the student must obtain prior approval from the MAC program director. If approved, transfer credit requires a grade of B or higher and must be documented by receipt of an official transcript mailed directly to St. Edward's University by the granting institution. If approved, students may not transfer more than one elective from another university. Students may not request to take courses at another university for courses that are offered every semester at St. Edward's. Such requests are rarely granted and will be approved only under extenuating circumstances.

MAC Assessment of Students

Comprehensive Data and Assessment Plan

Assessment of Students

The following outlines a systematic evaluation plan aligned to eleven key performance indicators [KPIs]. Data collection methods [i.e. exams, written work, skills evaluations, projects] are outlined, as are specific points of measure to evaluate the KPIs. Rubrics have been developed for all key assessments [data collection methods]. At minimum two different points of measure have been outlined for each KPI, including dispositions, knowledge, and skills. Data collection will be ongoing and used in the retention, remediation, and dispositional dismissal of students. Results arising from the aggregate analysis will also be part of the program evaluation annual report.

The MAC Assessment of Students policy is in accordance with the informed consent that all students sign in the first core class in the MAC program and also follows the language of the American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics [2014], specifically, Section F.3.a [pages 45–46], which states:

Counselors [educators], through ongoing evaluation and appraisal, are aware of the academic and personal limitations of students and supervisees that might impact performance. Counselors assist students and supervisees in securing remedial assistance when needed and dismiss from the training program supervisees who are unable to provide competent service due to academic or personal limitations. Counselors seek professional consultation and document their decision to dismiss or refer students or supervisees for assistance. Counselors ensure that students and supervisees have recourse to address decisions made to require them to seek assistance or to dismiss them.

Such recourse exists through a formal and written appeal to the department chair, which must be received by the chair within 10 working days of the dispositional dismissal. If the chair denies the appeal, a subsequent written appeal can be made to the dean of the school. The decision of the dean will be final. Academic Dismissals are separate and are guided by the University. Please see the institutional policy for academic appeals in the Graduate Bulletin.

The MAC Assessment of Students policy is also in accordance Section C.2.g of the American Counseling Association Ethics Code [2014], Professional Competence, which states:

Counselors refrain from offering or accepting professional services when their physical, mental, or emotional problems are likely to harm a client or others. They must address the signs of impairment, seek assistance for problems, and if necessary, limit, suspend, or terminate their professional responsibilities.

MAC Assessment Plan

Subject Areas	CACREP Standards	Key Performance Indicator [KPI]	Measures	Points of Measure
Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice	F.1. [a-l]	Students will gain the knowledge and skills associated with professional orientation and ethics in counseling.	Ethical Decision-Making Model Paper Self Care Project/Plan Final Exam	CNCO 6363
Social and Cultural Diversity	F.2. [a-h]	Students will demonstrate knowledge of social and cultural diversity understanding through theories of multicultural counseling and the promotion of diversity amongst different communities and mental health settings.	Final Paper	CNCO 6355
Counseling and Helping Relationships	F.5. [a-n]	Students will demonstrate counseling skills and dispositions necessary to establish therapeutic relationships with clients.	CCS-R CCS-R Site Supervisor Evaluation	CNCO 6351 CNSL 6367,68,69 CNSL 6367,68,69
Human Growth and Development	F.3. [a-i]	Students will demonstrate knowledge of systemic and environmental factors that affect human development, functioning, and behavior.	Development Narrative	CNCO 6356
Counseling and Helping Relationships	F.5. [a-n]	Students will demonstrate knowledge of various theories and models of counseling and begin to formulate their own theoretical orientation.	Theory Paper	CNCO 6352

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Subject Areas	CACREP Standards	Key Performance Indicator [KPI]	Measures	Points of Measure
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Group Counseling and Group Work	F.6. [a-h]	Students will apply knowledge in group counseling processes and demonstrate competency in preparing and facilitation of group counseling.	Group Proposal	CNSL 6353
Career Development	F.4. [a-j]	Students will demonstrate an understanding of career development, including theories, assessments, career resources, and the interrelationship between career and other life roles.	Career Portfolio	CNSL 6362
Assessment and Testing	F.7. [a-m]	Students will gain and apply knowledge in the use of assessment in counseling.	Final Assessment Project	CNSL 6361
Research and Program Evaluation	F.8. [a-j]	Students will demonstrate understanding and application of quantitative and qualitative research methods as well as program evaluation to inform evidence-based practice.	Research Project-Research Proposal	CNCO 6317
Clinical Mental Health Counseling [CMHC only]	CMHC C.1. a-e, 2 a-m, 3. A-e.	Students will demonstrate the knowledge necessary to address a wide variety of circumstances within the context of clinical mental health counseling.	Comprehensive Case Study Site Supervisor Evaluations	CNSL 6355 CNSL 6367,68,69
Clinical Mental Health Counseling [CMHC only]	CMHC C.1. a-e, 2 a-m, 3. A-e.	Students will demonstrate the development of treatment plans, clinical documentation, and conceptualization skills.	Comprehensive Case Study Case Summary Site Supervisor Evaluations	CNCO 6355 CNSL 6367,68,69
Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling [MCFC only]	MCFC F.1 a-f, 2 a-p, 3. a-e.	Students will demonstrate the knowledge necessary to address a wide variety of circumstances within the context of marriage, couple, and family counseling.	Family Life Cycle Final Paper Site Supervisor Evaluations	CNSL 6372 CNSL 6367,68,69

Subject Areas	CACREP Standards	Key Performance Indicator [KPI]	Measures	Points of Measure
Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling [MCFC only]	MCFC F.1 a-f, 2 a-p, 3. a-e.	Students will demonstrate the development of treatment plans, clinical documentation, and conceptualization skills.	Couples Counseling Treatment Plan Case Summary	CNSL 6374 CNSL 6367,68,69
Professional Dispositions		Students will demonstrate the appropriate counseling dispositions and behaviors expected of professional counselors.	PPFE CCS-R	CNCO 6318 CNCO 6317 CNSL 6361 CNSL 6355 CNSL 6367,68,69 As needed

Comprehensive Examination

Beginning with Fall 2024 entering students, the SEU MAC program requires successful completion of the Counselor Education Comprehensive Examination [CECE] to graduate. The CECE covers the eight common core curriculum areas defined by CACREP as common core areas in their Standards for Preparation. The exam is administered in CNSL 6368, Internship I. This examination is required for all students to complete effective Fall 2024 and is a graduation requirement for those entering in Fall 2024.

If a student does not pass the exam on two attempts or the resulting alternate form of assessment, the MAC program will complete a holistic review and determine a final decision. The MAC chair will then inform the student of the final decision and discuss their options. The chair will present options that may include the following:

1. The program does not certify the student to graduate and implements a remediation plan that includes repeating coursework.
2. The program does not certify the student to graduate with the MAC degree but pursues an alternate degree option as coordinated with the St. Edward's University Office of the Registrar.
3. The program does not certify the student to graduate and recommends program dismissal.

Academic Information and Policies

Good Standing

A student who is not on academic probation is in good standing.

Policy for student retention, remediation, and dismissal from the program

The department conducts at minimum a semesterly review of students for both disposition and academic performance. Those who are identified as at risk by ongoing departmental referral or from such regular reviews are put on a formal remediation plan that is facilitated by a two faculty member team until the plan is completed. Those who are on academic probation will either be monitored or placed on a remediation plan based on policies in the Bulletin and Student Handbook. Those who do not meet academic or dispositional requirements as outlined in the Bulletin and Student Handbook are dismissed from the program.

Academic Probation

To remain in good academic standing, MAC students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above. Students are automatically placed on academic probation at the end of any term in which their cumulative GPA falls below 3.0. Students also will be placed on academic probation should they earn two grades of less than a B. Students who earn three grades of less than a B are automatically dismissed from the MAC program. The academic review committee assesses the academic records of students on probation at the conclusion of each term. The committee informs in writing each student who is on academic probation of the conditions that must be met by the student to return to good standing and avoid dismissal from the MAC program.

Students who are placed on University academic probation will also be reviewed as follows for a possible MAC departmental remediation plan:

1. At the end of each full semester, the Department will review all students on academic probation to determine if a departmental remediation plan is required.
2. If the Department does not put them on an automatic remediation plan, the student must meet with their advisor for informal remediation and monitoring of the student's progress. If the student is still struggling, the advisor will then refer the student to a formal remediation committee.

Students may also be placed on dispositional probation by the Faculty Review Committee in response to assessment regarding their professional fitness and performance in the form of a remediation plan. The [PPFE](#) and [CCS-R](#) are assessments used to determine goodness of fit in the areas of skills and professional dispositions [see end of this document].

Advising

Each student is assigned a faculty advisor, a faculty member from the MAC department. Students are assigned an advisor upon admission to the program. It is the student's responsibility to know who is serving as their advisor and to meet with their advisor regarding their program of study, choice and sequence of courses and registration questions. Fall and spring program meetings will provide group advising opportunities. Since each faculty advisor has many students to advise, the department encourages students to take the initiative to foster this relationship and also to make use of tools on Canvas and MyHilltop that are available to help with their degree planning.

Degree Requirements

1. Completion of the required 60 hours of coursework with a cumulative graduate GPA of 3.0 from St. Edward's University for the Clinical Mental Health or Marriage, Couple and Family Counseling concentration.
2. Intent to Graduate on file through My Hilltop the semester prior to the term the student intends to graduate.
3. Certification for Graduation by the School of Behavioral and Social Sciences.
4. Satisfaction of all financial obligations to the university in order for the diploma to be granted and transcripts to be issued

Participation in Commencement is based on verification of eligibility by the certification officer. Students should check the Registrar's Graduation website. Failure to meet the published verification deadline will preclude participation in the ceremony.

NOTE: Diplomas conferred by St. Edward's University will indicate that the student has graduated with a Masters of Arts in Counseling. The diploma will not indicate the student's concentration. Your transcript will reflect the Concentration.

Academic Load

Students will typically carry an academic load of six to nine credit hours. Students may not take more than nine credit hours [three courses] during a given term unless authorized by the department through the formal request process. Students who wish to complete their degree in 7 semesters must have one 12-hour semester in their third or fourth [non summer] term. They must receive prior approval from the School of Behavioral and Social Sciences using the form available on Canvas.

Student Disability Services

The office of Student Disability Services (SDS) coordinates a variety of resources, accommodations, and support for students with documented disabilities (medical, learning, psychological, etc.). If students have any questions about accessing accommodations based on the impact of a disability or if they are seeking information about disability services, they can call (512) 448-8561, email sds@stedwards.edu, or stop by Moody Hall 102 to schedule an appointment with a disability counselor. Please see the Roadmap to Disability Accommodations for more information.

While accommodations will be honored, CACREP requirements must be completed to receive credit for courses (completion of KPIs). If your accommodations will not allow you to complete course requirements, please reach out to your instructor and advisor.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and Accommodations Statement

In alignment with the mission of the Office of Student Belonging and Inclusive Excellence and the Holy Cross mission, courses are dedicated to fostering a learning environment where all students feel respected, seen, heard, and valued. We recognize the importance of diverse perspectives, identities, and experiences in preparing ethical, culturally responsive counselors. In class, all students are expected to engage with openness, professionalism, and respect for others. We encourage honest dialogue, critical thinking, and accountability as we examine the systems that affect individuals and communities. If you encounter any barriers to inclusion or participation, please communicate with the instructor. For more information, visit the Office of Student Belonging and Inclusive Excellence website.

Pass/No Pass Grading

Practicum, and Internship I, and Internship II in the MAC program are graded on a pass/no pass basis only. Pass/no pass graded courses are included in the cumulative hours but not in the GPA.

CNCO course grade requirements

A student who does not pass a core course final examination or final project, or who receives a final grade below a B for the course, will be required to repeat that course. The MAC department reviews grades each semester and will inform the student if there is a concern in this area. However, students are responsible for reviewing their academic progress and talking to their faculty advisor should they have any questions about their specific situation. This is in effect for Fall 2024 onward for all students and is not retroactive.

Course outlines for both concentrations

Guide to Course Sequence in the Master of Arts in Counseling Program

Clinical Mental Health Counseling

[60 Credit Hours]

Core Curriculum: *In the degree plan you will see that some courses are identified as being “Core Courses”. These courses have been identified as having basic and core information that will lay the foundation for the rest of your coursework and program. For this reason, it is imperative, and required, that you complete your core courses first before taking the Advanced Courses.*

Foundational Courses

- Professional Orientation Counseling Theories
- Legal & Ethical Issues in Counseling
- Abnormal Human Behavior and Psychopathology
- Critical Evaluation of Research
- Counseling Diverse Populations
- Human Growth & Development
- Counseling Skills & Techniques

- Introduction to Systems Theories in Counseling

Advanced Curriculum: Courses identified as being “Advanced” build on previous knowledge and increase the amount of attention on the application of professional counseling skills and approaches. Because these courses are anchored in concepts and constructs taught early in the program, students must complete a majority of the core course curriculum first. Additionally, some advanced courses require other advanced courses as a prerequisite.

- Group Counseling
- Addictions Counseling
- Advanced Psychopathology & Psychopharmacology
- Assessment Techniques
- Career Development & Planning
- Advanced Electives [1 of 2]
- Crisis & Trauma Management
- Advanced Electives [2 of 2]

Practicum & Internship: The field of counseling is clinically-oriented. Therefore, the culminating educational piece to a student’s degree are the experiential learning opportunities provided through your Practicum/internship. This three-course sequence [Practicum, Internship I, and finally Internship II] is to be taken in your final three semesters and after completion of 39 hours. The program does not allow students to take Practicum and Internship I concurrently; nor does it allow students to enroll in both Internship I and Internship II in the same semester. Prior to Practicum enrollment, students must complete the Practicum application process in the Experiential Learning Cloud [ELC] the semester before according to the application deadlines. Once approved students are then cleared for Practicum registration. Starting Spring 2023 all students will complete their Practicum on site at the St. Edward’s Community Counseling Clinic. For Internship I and II students are required to secure a field placement at an approved site as detailed in the Practicum Handbook on Canvas.

- Counseling Practicum
- Internship I
- Internship I

Guide to Course Sequence in the Master of Arts in Counseling Program

Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling [60 Credit Hours]

Core Curriculum: In the degree plan you will see that some courses are identified as being “Core Courses”. These courses have been identified as having basic and core information that will lay the foundation for the rest of your coursework and program. For this reason, it is imperative, and required, that you complete your core courses first before taking the Advanced Courses.

Foundational Courses

- Professional Orientation Counseling Theories
- Counseling Diverse Populations
- Legal & Ethical Issues in Counseling
- Human Growth & Development
- Abnormal Human Behavior and Psychopathology
- Counseling Skills & Techniques
- Critical Evaluation of Research
- Introduction to Systems Theories in Counseling

Advanced Curriculum: Courses identified as being “Advanced” build on previous knowledge and increase the amount of attention on the application of professional counseling skills and approaches. Because these courses are anchored in concepts and constructs taught early in the program, students must complete the core course curriculum first. Additionally, some advanced courses require other advanced courses as a prerequisite.

- Group Counseling
- Marriage, Couples, and Families in the Life Cycle
- Career Development & Planning
- Relationships and Sexuality in Couples Counseling
- Crisis & Trauma Management
- Addictions Counseling
- Assessment Techniques
- Overview of Treatment in Child and Adolescent Counseling

Practicum/Internship: *The field of counseling is clinically-oriented. Therefore, the culminating educational piece to a student's degree are the experiential learning opportunities provided through your Practicum/internship. Therefore, the three-course sequence [Practicum, Internship I, and finally Internship II] are to be taken in your final three semesters and after completion of 39 hours. The program does not allow students to take Practicum and Internship I concurrently; nor does it allow students to enroll in both Internship I and Internship II in the same semester. Prior to Practicum enrollment, students must complete the Practicum application process in the ELC the semester prior according to the application deadlines. Once approved students are then cleared for Practicum registration. Starting Spring 2023 all students will complete their Practicum on site at the St. Edward's Community Counseling Clinic. For Internship I and II, students are required to secure a field placement at an approved site as detailed in the Practicum Handbook on Canvas.*

- **Counseling Practicum**

- **Internship I**

- **Internship I**

Field experience evaluation procedures

The required CCS-R, required supervisor midterm evaluation, and required supervisor end of term evaluation are utilized as evaluation procedures for students during their field experiences of Practicum, Internship I, and Internship II. Additionally, the faculty supervisor as departmental representative will consult with the student's field placement site at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester to assess student progress. Ad hoc contact will be made as needed.

Policy for Endorsement on Behalf of Students

Students may request letters of support/verbal recommendation from faculty members. MAC faculty reserve the right to provide letters of support/ verbal recommendation on behalf of students at their discretion. The decision by a faculty member to provide a letter of support/ verbal recommendation resides solely within the purview of individual faculty members.

Gatekeeping and Student Remediation

Gatekeeping is an important role taken on by faculty and supervisors in the counseling field. Gatekeeping ensures that high quality future counselors are recruited, retained, and graduated who are prepared to serve diverse groups of clients. As a result, counseling students will be evaluated throughout the program to ensure academic benchmarks, dispositions, and professional behaviors are developed and assessed. The Counselor Competency Scale- Revised [CCS-R] is used for this purpose. The CCS-R is an evidence-based assessment aligned with the 2016 CACREP standards and is accessed via ELC. The use of the CCS-R allows for opportunities for feedback from faculty and supervisors for the duration of the program.

When a counseling student is struggling to meet competency, it is possible for remediation processes to be employed by faculty and supervisors. Remediation is a strengths-based, educational, and structured process that helps counseling students attain competencies expected for a counselor-in-training at their developmental level. Remediation is not a punishment, but rather a process that supports students in meeting the high standards of the profession. Upon identification of a concern for a student, the program faculty use the following process: Remediation Process adopted by MAC Faculty in 2018 and reviewed and revised in 2024. To learn more about the MAC gatekeeping process see: <https://prezi.com/fvoea3b3vjon/mac-program-gatekeeping-practices/>

1. Informal communication with the student about concerns-either in person, or over email. If further action is needed, then a Professional Performance Fitness Evaluation [PPFE] is filled out by faculty or supervisor regarding the incident or behavior.
2. If ineffective, the concern will be discussed with the student again and the concerned faculty/supervisor will staff with at least two colleagues [who are not the chair] about concerns.
3. If formal remediation is deemed necessary, faculty will first consult with the graduate bulletin for guidelines. Following, a Professional Performance Fitness Evaluation [PPFE] form and Counselor Competencies Scale-Revised [CCS-R] will be completed and a plan will be written up and presented to student. This plan will be created by a panel

of at least two faculty members [the committee]. This plan will be housed with all other remediation plans which are organized by a single staff member. Most importantly, this plan is educational in nature, not punitive. It is to help the student acquire the necessary skills, attitudes, and knowledge of a competent, ethical counselor. The plan will be made within 7 days of the panel meeting.

4. Student will have a sit-down meeting with the remediation team lead and concerned faculty member[s] to discuss the plan. Student will sign the plan and receive a copy. Student will also receive a letter stating concerns and steps moving forward. Student can appeal to the Chair, if desired.
5. Student will meet with the remediation team lead to revisit the plan and discuss progress on the plan.
6. When the criteria of the plan have been met, the faculty panel will meet to discuss the issue and agree plan has been met. An additional PPFE and CCS-R will also be completed and presented to the student at this time. Lastly, a letter will be sent to the student confirming the resolution of the plan within 7 days.
7. If the plan has not been met, the faculty team will meet to discuss next steps to take. This could be an increase in remediation or potential dismissal from the program. Upon dismissal, the student will be dropped from their courses by Academic Affairs. If students are dismissed for remediation reasons and wish to appeal this decision, they may do so as follows in writing via email: Chair; If denied and student wants to pursue further, then to Dean the final step in the appeal process for remediation dismissals.

ELC

ELC is a professional placement and development management portfolio. All MAC students are required to purchase a subscription to ELC. Students will receive a registration email from the ELC during the first semester. The cost can be paid directly on the ELC website via credit/debit card. Once students have registered, they will have lifetime access to the system and any information they have uploaded during their graduate studies and throughout their career. Student activities in the ELC include:

1. Complete key program assignments
2. Upload professional documents related to your program of study and future career
3. Search for approved field sites that complement your professional interests and personal strengths
4. Apply for and confirm your field placement online
5. Track your hours toward both graduation and licensure [your one-time payment includes use of the ELC for documenting and storing all logs generated during the MAC program as well as during your 3,000 hour post graduate supervised work]. Supervisors and students will monitor progress toward hours per the Field Manual.
6. Run time tracking reports for your field instructors to sign
7. Automate the process for submitting site evaluations and other program assessments
8. Track your CEUs upon licensure completion

To learn more about the ELC visit the [knowledge base](#).

*Note that all students are required to complete the MAC Informed Consent [sample at end of this Handbook] in the ELC during their first semester when they enroll in CNCO 6318 Professional Orientation.

Professional Organizations

Students in the MAC program will greatly benefit from identification with professional counseling organizations. Students are strongly encouraged to engage in professional organizations throughout their program and beyond. The following organizations are examples of counseling entities that we recommend for continuation of activities in and beyond our counseling program.

1. [American Counseling Association | A professional home for counselors](#)
2. [Texas Counseling Association \[txca.org\]](#)
3. [International Association for Marriage and Family Counselors \[IAMFC\]](#)
4. [American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy \[aamft.org\]](#)
5. [Texas Association of Marriage and Family Counselors \[txca.org\]](#)
6. [NBCC | National Board for Certified Counselors](#)

Professional Licensure

Individuals in the counseling profession who practice in the state of Texas may seek licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor [LPC]. Depending on their academic program, they may also be eligible for licensure as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist [LMFT]. The MAC Program makes every effort to ensure that graduates meet all academic and pre-graduation clinical requirements for licensure; thus, if a student adequately completes the courses required for graduation in the MAC program, they should be well prepared to seek licensure in the state of Texas. After graduation, students must still obtain additional clinical supervised experience. They must also take the licensure examination and the jurisprudence examination for either license desired. The examinations must be taken and passed before obtaining the designation of LPC Associate or LMFT Associate. Accumulation of clinical hours may not begin until the license has been granted. Details of licensure procedures, including testing information, may be found on the websites for the regulatory boards.

For LPC Associate information, students may visit

<https://bhec.texas.gov/texas-state-board-of-examiners-of-professional-counselors/>

For LMFT Associate information, students may visit

<https://bhec.texas.gov/texas-state-board-of-examiners-of-marriage-and-family-therapists/>

Changes to licensing rules and academic requirements can and do occur. Timelines for changing the St. Edward's Graduate Bulletin and the consideration and publication of rules for licensure do not coincide; thus, you may be required to take additional or alternative coursework from what appears on your degree plan if you wish to pursue licensure as an LPC or LMFT in the State of Texas. The MAC program communicates information to students as it is received.

Communicating with Students

Students are required to set up and utilize their stewards.edu e-mail account. This e-mail address is the one the University requires faculty and staff to use when communication originates from the University. The stewards account can be set to forward automatically to the student's preferred e-mail address so that communication from the department and the university is not overlooked. Students requiring assistance in setting up their e-mail accounts should contact [OIT Support](#).

Canvas is the contracted Learning Management System [LMS] used by St. Edward's University. A Canvas MAC Program course has been created to house important news and notes for MAC students. All students currently enrolled have access to the Canvas MAC department course. Throughout the semester, faculty may post news and announcements to Canvas. Students are expected to check the course regularly to ensure they are not missing any important updates or pending deadlines.

MASTER OF ARTS IN COUNSELING INFORMED CONSENT

All students are required to review and complete the MAC program Informed Consent within the ELC as part of their Orientation course requirements. The document provides a review of MAC program expectations and gatekeeping that require informed consent. A replica of the contents follows here.

For access to the [PPFE](#) & [CCS-R](#) consult the ELC or pdf versions linked here

The course content and experiential activities in the Master of Arts in Counseling Program are designed to afford students the opportunity to advance their personal, intellectual, and professional development and functioning. Throughout the counseling specialization 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. Not meeting professional standards could result in dismissal from the specialization.

The expectations of the counseling curriculum are that you will explore and recognize the effect that your personal beliefs, values,

issues, emotions, and behaviors have on your ability to function as a counseling professional. The various “techniques” courses and field experience will require that you develop and demonstrate your counseling skills as you work with classmates in role-play situations and with clients in actual counseling sessions. You will be asked to examine your behaviors, beliefs, and emotions in relation to your counseling activities and experiences on an ongoing basis. The 2014 American Counseling Association Code of Ethics [Section F.8. and F.9] addresses the responsibilities of counselor educators and counselor education programs. Counselor educators do the following: assist students and supervisees in securing remedial assistance when needed, seek professional consultation and document their decision to dismiss or refer students for assistance, and ensure that students have recourse in a timely manner to address decisions requiring them to seek assistance or to dismiss them and provide students with due process according to institutional policies and procedures [ACA, F.9.b].

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 coursework, Practicum, and internships], a faculty review committee will be called to review the performance and behavior of the student and to make recommendations to the chair. The following guidelines will be used by the MAC program.

Plan for Remediation – 7 Steps

1. Informal communication with the student about concerns-either in person, or over email. If further action is needed, then a Professional Performance Fitness Evaluation [PPFE] is filled out by faculty or supervisor regarding the incident or behavior.
2. If ineffective, the concern will be discussed with the student again and the concerned faculty/supervisor will staff with at least two colleagues who are not the chair about concerns.
3. If formal remediation is deemed necessary, faculty will first consult with the graduate bulletin for guidelines. Following, a Professional Performance Fitness Evaluation [PPFE] form and Counselor Competencies Scale-Revised [CCS-R] will be completed and a plan will be written up and presented to The student. This plan will be created by a panel of at least two faculty members [the committee]. This plan will be housed with all other remediation plans which are organized by a single staff member. Most importantly, this plan is educational in nature, not punitive. It is to help the student acquire the necessary skills, attitudes, and knowledge of a competent, ethical counselor. The plan will be made within 7 days of the panel meeting.
4. The student will have a sit-down meeting with the remediation team lead and concerned faculty member[s] to discuss the plan. Student will sign the plan and receive a copy. Student will also receive a letter stating concerns and steps moving forward. Student can appeal to the Chair, if desired.
5. The student will meet with the remediation team leader to revisit the plan and discuss progress on the plan.
6. When the criteria of the plan have been met, the faculty panel will meet to discuss the issue and agree the plan has been met. An additional PPFE and CCS-R will also be completed and presented to the student at this time. Lastly, a letter will be sent to the student confirming the resolution of the plan within 7 days.
7. If the plan has not been met, the faculty team will meet to discuss next steps to take. This could be an increase in remediation or potential dismissal from the program. Upon dismissal, the student will be dropped from their courses by Academic Affairs. If The students are dismissed for remediation reasons and wish to appeal this decision, they may do so as follows in writing via email: Chair; If denied and The student wants to pursue further, then to Dean the final step in the appeal process for remediation dismissals.

I have read the above statement and reviewed a copy of the Professional Performance Fitness Evaluation [PPFE] and Counselor Competencies Scale-Revised [CCS-R] and I understand that they will be used to evaluate my performance throughout the Master of Arts in Counseling program. I am willing to adhere to the principles and requirements as described. I am also willing to participate fully in the courses and requirements of the counseling specialization.