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Program Mission

The mission of the Counseling Program is to prepare interpersonally skilled and culturally competent professional counselors who facilitate the psychological growth and development of those they serve. These counselors also help those who experience difficulties in overcoming or resolving interpersonal, vocational, and emotional adjustment problems associated with modern living.

The program prepares students to be employed as counselors in schools, community/mental health agencies, and private practice. The major goals of the program are to train practitioners who:

- Preserve the integrity of the counseling field and who demonstrate knowledge and skills in each of the eight common core areas of counseling.
- Serve as effective counselors in schools, community agencies, and private practice.
- Provide leadership in educational and human services settings.
- Implement effective programs and interventions that enrich the quality of life for individuals, families, groups, and organizations.
- Strive to enhance the worth, dignity, self-respect, and positive development of themselves and of individuals and groups within their employment context.

Values of the Program

The values of the Counseling Program are consistent with the mission and values promoted by Montana State University. These values include:

- Excellence in teaching, research, service, and support activities.
- Free exchange of ideas in the spirit of academic freedom and professional responsibility.
- Contributions to the greater understanding and resolution of societal problems.
- An open and trusting environment in which individuals can expect ethical treatment and civility in all interactions.
- Respect for human diversity, pluralism, and community.
- Shared governance, teamwork, and collaboration in decision-making.
- Personal commitment and contribution to the university's greater good.
Program Objectives & Student Learning Outcomes

Program objectives and student learning outcomes are developed and revised when necessary through self-study on a regular schedule. This evaluation process is based on input from program faculty, current and former students, and personnel in cooperating agencies. Program objectives and outcomes are based on the eight core areas of study as designated by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP):

- Professional Identity
- Social and Cultural Diversity
- Human Growth and Development
- Career Development
- Helping Relationships
- Group Work
- Assessment
- Research and Program Evaluation

Students will:

- Be able to conceptualize clients and apply concepts from the eight common core areas in their work with clients.

As measured by:

- Successful completion and passing of the comprehensive exam;
- Feedback from internship supervisors and employers;
- Feedback from current and former students;

Students will:

- Learn to be effective counselors in schools, community agencies, and private practices.

As measured by:

- Successful completion and passing of the comprehensive exam;
- Feedback from internship supervisors and employers;
- Feedback from current and former students;

Students will:

- Learn to provide leadership in educational and human service settings.

As measured by:

- Feedback from internship supervisors and employers;
- Feedback from current and former students;

Students will:

- Learn to implement effective programs and interventions for individuals, families, groups, and organizations.

As measured by:

- Grades of ‘B’ or better in practicum and internship courses;
- Feedback from internship supervisors and employers;
- Feedback from current and former students;

Students will:

- Learn to enhance the worth, dignity, self-respect, and positive development of themselves and of individuals and groups within their employment context.

As measured by:

- Intermittent and exit interviews conducted by committee members;
- Grades of ‘B’ or better in counseling skills, practicum, and internship courses;
- Feedback from current and former students;
Introduction

We would like to congratulate you on your admission to the College of Graduate Studies here at Montana State University. Our faculty in the Department of Health & Human Development would like to welcome you. We hope that you will have a meaningful learning experience as you work towards your graduate degree. It is important for you to understand that as a graduate student you belong to a college and a department. Officially, you are a graduate student in the Division of Graduate Education (DGE) who is planning and working on a program of study in the Department of Health and Human Development. Consequently, you have the responsibility of keeping apprised and following the policies and guidelines of two entities on campus. While this document outlines guidelines of our department, it is essential that you read, understand, and follow the guidelines and policies of the DGE. You can access their policies and guidelines in the Graduate Studies section of the Montana State University Bulletin or in the DGE section of the MSU homepage: http://www.montana.edu/wwwdg/ Our department has a variety of disciplines and a diverse faculty with many different research interests. The following is a list of our core and adjunct faculty members.

Core Faculty in Counseling

John C. Christopher, Ph.D., Professor; Mental Health Counseling
Office: 220 Herrick Hall
Phone: 994-6943
E-Mail: jcc@montana.edu

Mark D. Nelson, Ed.D., Professor; Graduate Coordinator; School Counseling
Office: 121 Hosaeus RSFC
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Adina Smith, Ph.D., Associate Professor; Director, Human Development Training & Research Clinic; Marriage & Family Counseling
Office: 1501 S. 3rd
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Rebecca Koltz, Ph.D., Assistant Professor
Office: 205B Herrick Hall
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E-Mail: rebecca.koltz@montana.edu
Adjunct Faculty

Cheryl R. Blank, Ph.D., Training Director; Counseling & Psychological Services
  Office: Counseling and Psychological Services, 211 Swingle
  Phone: 994-4531

Patrick M. Donahoe, Ed.D., Director, Counseling & Psychological Services
  Office: Counseling and Psychological Services, 211 Swingle
  Phone: 994-4531

Wendy Bianchini, M.S., Mental Health Counseling
  Office: 122 Herrick Hall
  Phone: 994-6075
  Email: wendyb@montana.edu
Guidelines for Graduate Students

The following guidelines have been developed to facilitate your progress from admission through graduation. Responsibilities are outlined regarding the role of the student, the committee chair, and the graduate committee. Expectations and procedures for theses and professional papers are listed.

Responsibilities

Role of the Student

To reiterate, all graduate students in our department are matriculated into the Division of Graduate Education (DGE) and design their program of study within the Department of Health & Human Development. Consequently, students must follow and meet the expectations/policies of both the DGE and our department. Prior to enrollment, the student may be assigned a temporary advisor to assist with registration for the first semester of classes. Generally, program leaders serve as temporary advisors for students who have been selected into a particular program. For example, if you have been accepted into mental health counseling, the program leader for mental health counseling will serve as your temporary advisor.

The DGE requires that by the end of the second semester a graduate committee be formed and a Program of Study be filed in their office. Students failing to submit a Program of Study by this date will be seen as failing to achieve satisfactory progress. Consequently, the student will be placed on academic probation and will become ineligible for financial aid, including graduate assistantships and work study. The student will select a professor to chair his/her graduate committee and contact additional faculty members to serve as committee members. The graduate committee is usually comprised of two faculty members in addition to the committee chair (referred to as the “chair”) with a majority (2 of the 3 required) of members from the major program area. Committee members will be chosen in consultation with the student's chair. In addition, signatures are required on your graduate program from the Department Head and the Vice Provost of the DGE.

Within the limits of university regulations and program requirements, the student is the chief architect of his/her program of study. The student must be aware of all procedures, forms, and deadlines required by the department and the DGE. His/her chair and committee are available for guidance and consultation. Please consult the University Bulletin from the College of Graduate Studies for forms and specific information.

It is the student's responsibility to arrange periodic conferences with his/her chair to review progress and deal with questions that may arise. It is expected students will meet with their chair at least once each semester to review their progress and plan the next semester's course work and activities.

Registration Information

There are several items regarding registration for classes that require your attention. In order to register, you will first need an advisor code (sometimes called a “PIN”). New incoming students, please either call or e-mail milana@montana.edu for the PIN number to use in both summer and fall semesters; in the future, a “personal data form” with that
number will be available for you during preregistration for each successive semester to pick up in the Main Office, 218 Herrick Hall. Please go to www.montana.edu and click on "MyInfo" and then click on "Registration/Advising Information" for the current semester.

From time to time, faculty will distribute e-mail messages to your MSU e-mail account. One is automatically set up for you when you register for classes. You are expected to check this account for important messages but can forward it to your preferred e-mail address if you wish.

Incoming students are often interested to know if there are any activities that they can undertake before the first day of classes. Faculty will expect you to read the Graduate Student Handbook http://www.montana.edu/hhd/academicprograms08/graduate/counseling/counseling.htm sometime during the summer semester. I would like to personally encourage you to read the Graduate Student Handbook before the first day of class. Summer semester in your first year can be very busy and you may find it to be a struggle to read the handbook later.

*Role of the Committee Chair*

The chair helps the student plan his/her program and serves as a liaison between the student and the College of Graduate Studies. The chair advises the student in selecting committee members with reference to faculty expertise that will be most helpful to the student's objectives. In addition, the chair typically serves as thesis or professional paper chair.

The chair has a responsibility to be available for periodic consultations with the student. During these consultations, the chair will review the student's concerns and assist him/her in planning future activities.

Counseling students are reviewed every semester by the department faculty regarding their personal development, professional development, academic progress, counseling skill development, and career orientation. The review is discussed with each student each semester during academic advising in preparation for the next semester. Problems that arise through this review or from any other source will be addressed in a manner that is described in the *Policies* section of this handbook.

*Role of the Graduate Committee*

The purpose of the committee is to provide guidance and to protect the students' interests throughout the completion of the graduate program. The committee has the responsibility of approving the student's program of study, proposal for the thesis or professional paper/project, and the final thesis or professional paper/project.

The committee has a duty to observe the standards and protect the interests of the university regarding the academic quality of work being done under its supervision.

If a committee member must be replaced, the new member is bound by the agreements of the previous committee. Any professor who disagrees with prior agreements should not accept an assignment to that committee.
Academic Standards & Program Progression for Counseling Students

The primary objective of the Counseling Programs is the education and training of persons entering the counseling profession. Graduates of the program may be recommended for certification as school counselors or be able to pursue post-graduate clinical practice and supervision in pursuit of state licensure as a professional counselor. As educators, faculty members have a responsibility to provide students appropriate educational experiences and sufficient guidance and supervision. As licensed professional practitioners, faculty members also have a responsibility to the public (future clients) to ensure that counseling students who care for them are competent to do so with effectiveness and a high standard for quality care. This legal responsibility also extends to mental health agency and school administrators, to all licensed and credentialed professionals providing care within those agencies, and to the counseling students themselves. As helping professionals we must be committed to safeguarding client safety and providing quality care.

The student, upon admission to any of the counseling programs, assumes the obligations of performing and behaving according the standards set by the Counseling Programs. Mere satisfactory academic performance does not, in and of itself, constitute a successful progression throughout the counseling programs.

In keeping with the standards of the counseling profession, the counseling programs expect students to demonstrate ethical behavior. Expected behaviors include but are not limited to abiding by the guidelines for academic integrity; respecting the privacy and confidentiality of clients, students, and faculty members; placing priority on the health, safety, and welfare of clients; and avoiding prejudicial or discriminatory behavior in relationships with clients, students, and faculty members.

Some examples of misconduct would be sharing confidential information, fabrication or falsification of information in the classroom or clinical sites, any form of cheating, including plagiarism, misrepresentation of one’s qualifications, and aiding or facilitating dishonesty or unethical behavior in others. Any violation of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the American Counseling Association will result in disciplinary action and may be grounds for immediate dismissal from the program.

Where there is failure on the part of the student to meet reasonable standards of performance or behavior, or when, in the judgment of a faculty member, reasonable supervision is inadequate to ensure client welfare, the faculty member has the authority to remove a student from the clinical setting.

The criteria which will be considered in denying the student access to clients are: demonstrated emotional instability, indifference or insensitivity to client safety and progress, lack of professional judgment, any unethical conduct as outlined in the current Code of Ethics of the American Counseling Association, any health condition which makes it impossible for the student to carry out her/his work without jeopardizing client safety and progress, or any other condition or circumstance which constitutes an unreasonable risk to the safety and well being of the client. A student in a counseling program may be referred to appropriate resources for assistance with problems which are non-academic in nature but which might impair the student’s effectiveness as a professional counselor.
Whenever, pursuant to the foregoing, denial of student access to a clinical setting results in the student being dismissed from the counseling program, the student shall be fully informed of the decision and its consequences and shall be afforded the right to a meeting with his/her graduate committee. Appeals are to be conducted according to the Student Academic & Conduct Guidelines and Grievance procedures (MSU-Bozeman).

Program Plans

Master's degree seeking students will take their degree under one of two plans. Plan A (Thesis) requires the completion of a research based thesis and Plan B where the program of study requires additional coursework/training and defers original research to the doctoral level of study. Counseling faculty emphasize practical application and clinical preparation in all three counseling programs. Consequently, students are encouraged to pursue Plan B in their program of study.

Students interested in pursuing doctoral programs may choose the Professional Paper or Project Counseling graduate students interested in a scholarly writing experience or an eventual doctoral program are encouraged to consult with their chair to pursue a Professional Paper/Project, which promotes inquiry and academic scholarship into a variety of areas and methodologies. Theses and Project are electives that would be pursued in addition to the 48 or 60 credit degree requirements. If you would like to pursue Plan A, you must discuss this option with your chair. Processes and procedures for both options are outlined below.

Thesis Option

The chair and committee must be chosen, and a tentative thesis topic should be identified before the student enrolls for HDCO 590.

Preparation of thesis proposal

1. The thesis proposal will include the following:
   a. Title page that provides space for signatures of all committee members.
   b. Introduction to the study or project; purpose and objectives of the study; and questions to be answered.
   c. Complete review of literature; hypothesis of the study.
   d. Complete explanation of methods and procedures.
   e. Time plan.

2. The thesis proposal will follow the format and guidelines of the Montana State University's Guide for Preparation of Theses, Dissertations and Professional Papers. The thesis proposal will form the basis for the first section of the thesis. The committee may require revisions.

3. The student will:
   a. Select a convenient meeting time for all committee members to discuss the thesis proposal.
   b. Inform each committee member of the thesis defense in writing.
   c. Provide each committee member a copy of the proposal at least two weeks before the proposal defense.
4. Upon approval by the full committee, an approved copy of the proposal shall be distributed to all committee members.

**Subsequent semesters of thesis registration**

The rate of progress through a thesis is highly variable. The time involved in the literature review, selection of measurement techniques, data collection, analysis, and final draft depend on many factors. It is assumed that as the thesis is being written completed portions will be submitted to the chair who will constructively critique the document prior to presentation to the full committee.

**Final semester of thesis registration**

1. After your chair has read and suggested revisions to the completed thesis, copies of the final draft are to be distributed to each committee member. You may also wish to have these committee members read your rough draft and make suggestions before typing the final draft. This may save the need for later revisions.

2. Schedule your examination and defense of thesis, and notify committee members in writing. Provide a final copy to committee members, and allow at least two weeks for them to read your thesis.

   A notice posted on the graduate students’ bulletin board and in faculty boxes should invite all faculty and students to your presentation of results, which precedes your thesis defense before your committee.

3. Prior to the comprehensive/defense, students should obtain and prepare the appropriate forms for use by the committee upon completion of the examination.

4. Corrections or revisions may be made in the thesis up to the day of the defense as well as after the defense, according to the requests of the committee. If changes are required following the defense, the other committee members may sign the forms, but the chair will not affix his/her signature until the requested changes have been made. This eliminates the need for the total committee to meet again.

5. Following the thesis defense/approval and at least seven days prior to the submission of the thesis to the College of Graduate Studies, the student will provide the department head with a copy of the completed thesis for review and signature.

6. After the final approval of your thesis by the Graduate Office, students must submit their theses electronically to the DGE and should present a bound copy to the university library, the department, and your chair. Committee members may also request a copy.

7. See the current *University Bulletin* and the DGE homepage for specific due dates.
The thesis format

The format of a written thesis in the department shall be taken from the most current edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA) and Montana State University’s *Guide for Preparation of Thesis and Professional Papers*.

Submission

All theses will be submitted to electronically to the DGE. This process will provide world wide access to the student’s thesis and does not require any printing or hard copies of the thesis to be submitted. For details and submission guidelines, please see [http://www.montana.edu/etd/](http://www.montana.edu/etd/)

Research or Professional Paper/Project (HDCO 575)

HDCO 575 Research or Professional Paper/Project (with 1-4 variable credits) is an option for students interested in designing and writing a professional paper or project on a topic that is of interest to the student.

What is it?

A professional paper is a piece of scholarly writing that serves as a culmination of the graduate program. The format of the paper is very flexible to provide students with individuation of their subject area interest. To initiate the writing of the paper, all students will be required to:

1. Define the problem (area of interest).
2. Support the problem by a review of literature.

The next step of the professional paper is very individual. Students may develop a piece or section of curricula, a handbook for counselors on a certain topic, collect and analyze quantitative or qualitative data, write a research paper, or simply develop a longer theoretical “position” piece. Maximum flexibility is to be encouraged by the student's graduate committee.

The student should format the paper according to the Montana State University’s *Guide for Preparation of Thesis and Professional Papers* and the most current edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.

Who supervises it?

Generally speaking, the chair of the graduate committee supervises the writing of the professional paper. There may be instances where students elect to do a paper in a content area somewhat different than their specialization and desire another faculty to assist in developing the paper. Students, therefore, may have two faculty members co-chair a graduate committee in order to facilitate the interdisciplinary nature of their professional paper.

What is the process?
1. The student enrolls in HDCO 575 in consultation with their committee chair regarding time frame. The student will contract with the chair for determining what work will be necessary to earn the specified credits each semester.

2. The student in consultation with their chair prepares a 2-3 page abstract or prospectus outlining the plan of the professional paper. The student circulates the abstract to the full graduate committee one week prior to a proposal meeting.

3. The graduate committee meets with the student and provides input regarding the proposed professional paper. Guidance is offered for direction and revision as necessary. The committee then approves the plan for the professional paper or counsels the student to prepare a new plan and to schedule a committee meeting in the future.

4. After the proposal for the professional paper has been approved, the student is expected to work closely with his/her chair and to complete the paper as approved. Any major changes in the direction of the paper should be brought before the committee for review and approval. It is the expectation of this department that the student will rewrite various parts of her/his paper several times to meet the quality standards of the committee. The student will need to give the chair at least one week in which to review and make comments on each draft of the paper.

5. Once the professional paper meets standards of a scholarly piece of work agreed upon by her/him and the chair, the student will submit a copy to each of the committee members at least five weeks prior to the end of the term in the semester the student wishes to graduate. The committee members are expected to return the paper to the student with suggestions within one week after receiving the student's paper. If faculty comments and suggestions are substantive, the chair may convene the committee to meet with the student to provide clarity for the revisions. The student, with the advice of the chair, will then incorporate any changes deemed necessary to produce the final draft of the professional paper.

6. A public presentation upon completion of the paper is required. The format of the presentation is arranged in consultation with the graduate committee. For example, the presentation may be held in Herrick Hall with faculty and students or in the community with extension agents or other community groups.

What about the final product?

For a student to be considered to have completed the professional paper he/she must earn a grade of B or higher. Earning a grade of B- or lower on the professional paper will not be considered meeting the standards of scholarly performance expected of a graduate in our programs. If the student fails to meet the expected standards within the confines of the semester he/she expects to graduate, the student must enroll for additional credits under the graduate consultation rubric the following semester. It is the responsibility of the graduate students' committee to approve the professional paper and to assign a final grade. Once the professional paper has met the above standards and a public presentation has been made, the student may choose one of two options:
1. The professional paper is completed and is shelved in the departmental office. Faculty and students may check out thesis and professional papers shelved in the department.

2. The professional paper is completed and is submitted through the College of Graduate Studies for review in the same manner as the thesis, at least two weeks prior to the end of the term in the semester that the student wishes to graduate. All professional papers submitted to the DGE will be submitted electronically. This process will provide world wide access to the student's professional paper and does not require any printing or hard copies of the professional paper to be submitted. For details and submission guidelines, please see http://www.montana.edu/etd/
Policies

*University Bulletin Policies*

All graduate students in our programs are expected to review the policies and procedures for successful completion of master's degrees in the current *University Bulletin*. This information can also be found on MSU's homepage.

*Grading Policy*

The department maintains high academic standards for admission and retention in the program. Careful evaluation of students' performance and feedback to students are seen as essential components of a quality graduate education. Assigned grades for course work is one important form of feedback students receive. Grading criteria vary across several considerations (type of course content, length of course, number of credits, etc.). In general, grades reflect the following range of assessments of students' performance in a course:

*Excellent to outstanding performance.* “A” is the highest grade possible and is an indication of an outstanding level of performance. “A-” is considered to be an excellent level of performance. It is not expected that all students will achieve this level of performance, nor is it expected that students will achieve this in every course.

*Good to very good performance.* “B+” is considered very good performance, “B” is considered to be good performance, and “B-” is considered adequate performance. Grades of a “B” in graduate courses are not indicative of reservations about student's preparation for continuing in the program or entering the profession.

*Not the level of mastery expected in graduate education.* Students earning “C” grades or lower will be required to repeat the course and/or do extra work to increase their mastery of the course material. Repeating the course and/or extra work may be required in courses that are considered essential to the students' continuation in the program and entry into the profession.

*Inadequate mastery of course content.* “D” grades may bring into question the appropriateness of the student continuing in the program and entering the profession. Repeating the course and/or extra work will be required.

*Failure.* “F” grades are cause to question the appropriateness of the student continuing in the program and entering the profession. If the student's graduate committee decides that the student will be allowed to continue in the program, repeating the course and/or extra work will be required.

While grades are an important form of feedback and evaluation, they do not provide a complete picture of student performance. Grades serve as a single indicator for what is usually a complex array of performances. Also, one grade is usually required to cover a continuum of quality of performance. For example, “B” grades may be assigned for performance ranging from “adequate for graduate-level work” to “very good performance.” For this reason it is important that students receive other forms
of quantitative and qualitative feedback from faculty and peers (e.g., written comments, conferences, letters of recommendation, etc.).

Students are encouraged to seek additional feedback from faculty and peers in areas where they feel they would benefit from more information. Students are also encouraged to seek further information from faculty if they are uncertain about grading criteria or the meaning of a grade.

**Leave of Absence, Withdrawal, & Problem Remediation of Graduate Students**

Students wishing to withdraw from graduate school may do so at any time. Please let your advisor know if you are withdrawing so that your position in the graduate program can be made available to another student. Students should contact the DGE to pursue the withdrawal procedure.

Students wishing to take a leave of absence need to reach an agreement with their chair concerning the leave. The student should write a letter to the chair describing the leave, and a copy should be filed with the DGE. The letter should include the reasons for the leave of absence and its duration.

Students who do not have an agreement for a leave of absence with their chair (and a letter documenting that agreement) and do not take classes for one semester will be withdrawn from the graduate program to allow opportunities for other students. Students who are withdrawn for nonattendance will need to reapply for admission to graduate school if they desire to resume their program.

Problems may arise regarding student progress through the graduate program. Potential problems include inadequate academic performance (grades lower than a “B”); inadequate skill development (lower than a “B” grade in competency development, practicum, and/or internship courses); inadequate progress on the graduate program (average of less than one sixth of the total credits needed to graduate completed per year); impairment of functioning (causes could include health problems, stress, mental illness, substance abuse and/or dependence); or violations of standards of ethical conduct. These and other problems will be addressed in the following manner:

First, the chair will discuss the problem with the student and develop plans for remediation. If the student is in agreement with the plans for remediation, then there will be a follow-up meeting at a designated time at which point progress regarding problem remediation will be assessed. The chair will keep documentation of the discussion addressing the problem and the discussion concerning progress and its remediation. If the student and the chair cannot reach an agreement about the problem in need of remediation, the manner in which the problem will be addressed, or an agreement about the assessment of progress in the remediation of the problem, the student will meet with the entire graduate committee. The student may also ask to meet with any other program faculty or the entire program faculty. If the student's committee is in agreement that the student is failing to remediate identified problems within an appropriate time span, the student may be counseled out of the graduate program and into alternative career or academic programs which are better suited to his/her needs and abilities.

Students wishing to contest problem remediation plans, or being counseled to withdraw from the program may do so by following the university’s student grievance procedures which are referenced in the *University Bulletin.*
Endorsement Policy

Program faculty members endorse students only for the professional credential and/or employment for which the student has been prepared. Preparation includes course work, practicum, and internship experiences related to the credential or employment position they are seeking. Information about the positions and credentials that each of the programs prepares students for is offered in the program descriptions at the end of this handbook. Further information can be obtained from faculty and the Career Services center on campus.

Program Evaluation and Improvement

The graduate programs are continually being evaluated and improved. Students offer evaluation on every course and the advising they receive. When students graduate, they are asked by the Department Chair to evaluate their entire program in a letter directed to the Department Chair. Former students are asked to again evaluate the quality of preparation they received in their program after they have been working in the field for several years. Agencies and schools that offer internships to students and agencies and schools that employ graduates are asked to evaluate the programs. Results of the comprehensive exams and reviews of students’ progress offer evaluative information regarding the quality of the programs. The programs undergo accreditation reviews during which they are evaluated in relation to regional and national standards. The faculty continually monitors the literature from professional and consumer organizations regarding graduate education and continually evaluates the programs in relation to the ideas presented by those organizations.

Information from all of the sources mentioned above provides guidance for improvement of the programs. This information and suggestions for improvements are presented in a meeting for all faculty and students, which occurs at least once each year. Students are encouraged to attend these meetings to gain information and to offer input on potential program improvements. Because some program improvements may take place while students are pursuing their programs, it is especially important that students be informed and have input. The date, time, and location of these meetings will be posted on the informational bulletin board and announced in classes.

Internship Placement Requirements

Students will be allowed to enroll in an internship course only after successfully completing one or two semesters of practicum, depending on the requirements of their particular counseling program. Typically, Marriage and Family and Mental Health Counseling students complete two semesters of practicum while School Counseling Students complete one semester of practicum prior to enrolling in internship. Students will only be allowed to enroll in internship during their last two to three semesters of study, depending on the requirements of their placement site. All internship placements must meet the approval of the prospective intern’s program leader.

Internship placement sites must meet the following requirements:

- An on-site supervisor who is licensed as a mental health professional must agree to meet with the student in a supervisory capacity an average of once per week throughout the duration of the internship. Supervisors for school counseling interns must hold the appropriate certifications for their field.
• The site must provide opportunity for the student to see an adequate number of clients in order to meet the direct service requirements for each program.
• Adequate space that allows for confidential counseling sessions must be provided to the intern.
• At no time will an intern be allowed to see clients on the premises of the internship site without someone, e.g. a supervisor, another student, or another professional, also being on site. Some students may wish to pursue an internship in a private practice setting. This will only be approved if the above conditions are met. On some occasions, a site will be able to offer clients but not supervision. These sites may be approved if an appropriate off-site supervisor is obtained and the intern adheres to the aforementioned policy regarding not seeing clients alone.

Internship is an important step in the development of the counselor in training, and there is an expectation that once approved for internship, the student will be able to act with some degree of autonomy. Interns should remember, however, that they are still in training and are, by no means, ready to counsel without supervision and consultation. At no time should a student in the counseling program engage in her/his own private practice, and at no time will students be allowed to engage in counseling practices without being enrolled in an appropriate clinical course, i.e. practicum or internship. Students can be removed from the program for engaging in unethical conduct should any of the above policies be violated.
Professional Affiliations

Given that all three of the counseling programs at Montana State University are CACREP accredited, we tend to follow the American Counseling Association (ACA) philosophy that students should be trained as counselors first and then as specialists in a particular area of focus. ACA is thus the parent organization of marriage and family counselors. Students who join that association will receive the Journal of Counseling Development and ACA Today, a newspaper dedicated to counseling issues and events.

As part of their professional development, students are strongly encouraged to participate in local, state, and national organizations that reflect commitment to the counseling field in general as well as their specified areas of interest. It is recommended that students join the Montana Counseling Association (MCA) and attend the annual conferences sponsored by MCA. Students are also encouraged to join the American Counseling Association and any ACA divisions that promote their area of specialty. Specifically, mental health counseling students should affiliate themselves with the American Mental Health Counselors Association (AHMCA); school counseling students with the American School Counselor Association (ASCA); and marriage and family counseling students with the International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors (IAMFC).

Professional Licensure

Upon successful completion of their programs of study, counseling students will have completed the educational component for licensure as a professional counselor in Montana. Up to 1500 hours of supervised counseling experience obtained during graduate training may be applied to the 3000 hours of supervised experience required for licensure. A minimum of 1500 remaining hours must be obtained during post-graduate work under the supervision of a licensed professional counselor, social worker, psychologist, or psychiatrist.

Professional Certifications

- National Certified Counselor

Graduates may obtain national counselor certification upon successful completion of the National Counselor Exam (NCE). As counseling graduates of a CACREP-accredited program, students may take the NCE during their semester of graduation. This exam is identical to the one used for Montana state licensure. In addition, qualified licensure applicants may only sit for the exam upon successful completion of their counseling programs and 3000 hours of supervised counseling experience. Contact the Testing Center in Reid Hall or the state licensure board for additional information and an exam schedule.

- National Academy of Certification for Family Therapists

Marriage and family counseling students qualify for certification by the National Academy of Certification for Family Therapists (NACFT) upon completion of their programs of study.
Faculty Expectations of Students

Students pursuing degrees in counselor education are expected to grow and develop in three areas:

Knowledge Base
Students are expected to increase their knowledge of facts, theories, and clinical procedures in counseling and related disciplines. In addition, students are expected to be able to think independently and utilize academic and professional resources. Students must learn to see themselves as part of a collaborative learning community that includes both higher education and community resources. Students must become proficient at understanding, analyzing, and critiquing the counseling research knowledge base.

Counseling Skills Development
Students are expected to master applied skills in communication, appraisal, conceptualization, treatment planning, and client-specific counseling techniques. Students are expected to understand and participate in the process of ethical decision-making and to recognize professional and ethical challenges. Students should recognize and be able to make appropriate referrals, seek supervision when necessary, and accurately identify personal and professional limits. At the completion of graduate studies, students must be able to form a working therapeutic alliance with a variety of clients, recognize mental disorders, and implement appropriate therapeutic interventions.

Personal Development
Counseling is a complex set of skills that involves the whole person. Students’ personal issues are invariably stirred during the development of counseling skills. Students must learn to keep personal issues from distorting the counseling relationship and attend to their personal issues by consulting with their chair, and possibly by seeking personal counseling. No trainee, however psychologically healthy, is without personal struggles – it falls on a continuum from blind spots to truly abusing the counseling relationship. In few other professions is one’s level of personal and psychological development so implicated in one’s work.

Developmental Concerns
Program faculty will not provide counseling to students because of the danger of special interests and dual roles. At the same time, when faculty members identify areas that may inhibit professional effectiveness, they will identify these concerns to the student and suggest resources that the student may use for assistance. In some instances, students will be asked to refrain from clinical practicum or internship until the identified issues are resolved. Ultimately, students may be asked to withdraw from the program for personal and/or academic reasons.
Human Development Training and Research Clinic

Purpose

The training and research clinic is established to involve counseling graduate students in supervised experiences offering the following services:

- Individual counseling
- Marriage and family counseling
- Consultation
- Professional Development
- Education & training workshops
- Referrals
- Group counseling
- Scientific inquiry

Services are available to individuals, couples, and families in Gallatin County and Southwest Montana. Graduate students will provide services under the supervision of licensed mental health professionals.

Cost and Limitations

In order to meet the costs of maintaining the clinic a small fee is assessed clients receiving services (per session, sliding scale based on the client's resources).

Because of the clinic's commitment to training and research, services provided at the clinic are not a substitute for those seeking services from a licensed counselor. Persons needing services that are not available at the clinic will be referred to appropriate resources. Clients receiving services at the clinic will be asked to sign a consent form indicating they understand the requirements and limits of receiving services at the training clinic.

Because the purpose of the clinic is to provide training and research, clients are expected to permit video or audio recording of counseling sessions and to complete assessment instruments. Clients with reservations about these expectations will examine alternatives with their counselor, but may not be suitable for receiving services. Only students in training and their supervisors will review information collected from clients. All information will remain confidential within the constraints of ethical guidelines.

Procedure for Requesting Services

Clients (or agencies acting on behalf of clients) and organizations seeking services will contact the Human Development Training and Research Clinic, 1501 South Third, phone 994-4113, and arrange an initial interview. All requests for service will remain confidential.

At the initial interview clients will be asked to describe the nature of their concerns and provide background information. The initial interview will also be used to explain clinic procedures and to determine if services available at the clinic are appropriate for a potential client. If services available at the clinic are appropriate for a client, determination will be made during the initial interview as to which services will be most useful. A counselor in training will be assigned and will contact the client to arrange mutually convenient meeting times.
Rights and Responsibilities

The Ethical Guidelines of the American Counseling Association (ACA) will govern all activities at the clinic.

Client's Rights

Clients of the clinic have the right to:
1. Appropriate services provided in a professional manner.
2. Confidentiality about their involvement with the clinic within the boundaries of the training environment and the ethical guidelines of ACA.
3. Refuse recording or completion of research instruments at any time. However, because recording and research are critical to the purpose of the clinic, client refusal to allow recording may necessitate referral.
4. Discuss their involvement at the clinic with their counselor’s supervisor and review with the supervisor any information collected concerning their involvement with the clinic.
5. Withdraw from services at the clinic at any time.

Clinic Responsibilities

The clinic has the responsibility to:
1. Assure clients’ rights as listed above.
2. Establish relationships with campus and community agencies to facilitate referrals to and from the clinic.
3. Refuse or withdraw services from clients for whom services are deemed by clinic staff to be inappropriate.
4. Ensure high quality preparation and continuous supervision of the student counselors in training.

Staffing

Faculty in the counseling program or other licensed mental health counselors will supervise internship and practicum students in the clinic by providing didactic information, assisting with assessment, reviewing and giving feedback on audio and video sessions, and advising students about their clients.

Clinic interns complete a yearlong internship and are advanced students in the counseling program. They are supervised by the counseling faculty. They will be responsible for client intakes, keeping records on clients, and managing follow-up evaluations by clients. Interns maintain a liaison between the clinic and other community and university service agencies (e.g. Battered Women’s Network, or Career Services). They conduct community outreach and participate in describing the clinic services available to community service agencies, health professionals, and private practitioners. Interns also act as mentors to student counselors and maintain forms necessary for practicum counselors such as consent forms, exchange of information forms, parent consent forms for minors, evaluation forms, and follow-up forms.

Several other counseling students also complete an internship at the Clinic during the Fall Semester of their second year. These interns are supervised by a licensed mental health counselor from the community. Interns are typically responsible for counseling
five to seven clients, but are not responsible for conducting intake sessions or community outreach. These interns may also be required to conduct group therapy or have additional responsibilities.

All students complete two semesters of practicum at the Clinic. Practicum students provide counseling to clients at the clinic under the supervision of faculty members. Each practicum student is screened and interviewed by the faculty to determine his/her readiness to enroll in the clinical practicum. They must have completed theory and counseling skill development courses to prepare them for a counseling practicum. They are responsible for keeping and maintaining client progress notes, attending weekly supervision, researching information if appropriate, audio/videotaping their counseling sessions, and complying with clinic policies.

All interns and practicum students who work in the clinic will maintain professional liability insurance.

_Counseling Practicum and Internship Policy_

The department only offers practicum and internship to students matriculated in an approved program or minor/supporting area within the unit. Because of the limited facilities and faculty dedication to programs, resource limitations preclude other options at this time. Individuals may apply to use the clinic for research purposes. Such requests will be considered on an individual basis.

Internships and Assistantships

_Internships_

All interns will follow guidelines for internships in Mental Health, School, or Marriage and Family Counseling. These guidelines stipulate that interns be enrolled for a minimum of two credits of HDCO 576, and serve a minimum of one semester. Students typically extend the internship over two semesters and may extend it over three semesters. The following activities are included in internships at the clinic:

1. Management of the clinic
   a. Intake and assignment of clients
   b. Preparation of practicum counselors
   c. Monitor files
   d. Public relations
   e. Maintenance of equipment
   f. Organize and lead clinic staff meetings
   g. Collection and banking of client donations

2. Instruction and training
   a. Teach undergraduate courses on counseling and adjustment
b. Assist in training of graduate students in counseling by providing practicum and training workshops for various courses including the Counseling Skills class

c. Offer adjunct supervision and mentor beginning practicum students

3. Provide counseling services to clinic clients
4. Offer consultation to campus and community agencies
5. Initiate and/or contribute to clinic research and grant writing activities
6. Receive supervision from clinic director
7. Conduct community outreach

Assistantships
There are potentially three paid assistantships available to clinic interns. The positions require a commitment of approximately 15 hours per week throughout the year (approximately 52 weeks). Interns holding these positions organize, implement, or delegate the clinic activities listed above. Interns holding an assistantship may receive a monthly salary of approximately $400 and fee waivers. The clinic director supervises the clinic interns. Hours spent fulfilling the responsibilities of a clinic assistantship are separate and in addition to the hours spent fulfilling the internship.

Requirements for Positions
Candidates for assistantships must be matriculated in a master's counseling program at Montana State University and have completed course work up to and including an initial counseling practicum. Students who have completed more course work will be more competitive. Candidates for staff positions must have been awarded clinic assistantships. Staff must have a GRE score of 480 or better on verbal. They will undergo periodic evaluations in accordance with the procedures stipulated for their assistantship.

Application Procedures
To apply for assistantships, applicants must complete the application form, write a cover letter describing their interest and experience in each of the areas of intern functioning listed above, provide a video sample of a counseling session, and provide a copy of their transcripts. Applicants must indicate which courses they intend to complete prior to and during the internship. They must also list addresses and phone numbers of at least three references. Students who are interested in paid assistantships should indicate their interest attaching a copy of their resume and sending the materials to:

Dr. Adina Smith
Human Development Training and Research Clinic
1501 S. Third
Montana State University
Bozeman, MT 59717-3540

Interviews will be scheduled for competitive applicants.
Comprehensive Examinations

Each candidate for a master's degree, including professional and/or seamless degrees, must pass a written and/or oral comprehensive examination. The examination covers subject matter included in the graduate program and any other materials which the examining committee considers to be pertinent.

On thesis plans, the defense-or-thesis examination is also required, but may be part of the comprehensive exam. A portion of the thesis defense is open to the university (MSU Bulletin).

Counseling students nearing completion of their programs are reminded that a comprehensive examination is a requirement for the degree. Please confer with your chair so that proper arrangements can be made to take your comprehensive examination. When planning your graduate program with your chair, be aware that Counseling Comprehensive Exams are administered once a year during the Spring semester.

After the first two weeks of the Spring semester Comprehensive Exam information will be posted on the Graduate Student Bulletin Board. Application forms and additional information will be posted for graduate students to plan and prepare for the Comprehensive Exam. You must complete an application form, which serves as notice of your intent to take the exam. In addition, be sure to read all information posted on the graduate student bulletin board.

Students must be enrolled for a minimum of three credits during the semester they are taking comprehensive exams. If a student has completed his or her course work, he or she is then eligible to enroll for HDCO 589 Graduate Consultation. Students will complete the comprehensive exam following all procedures listed below and in the format requested within the exam.

Examination Composition and Format

The exam will be administered as a take-home exam. It will require that students integrate and apply information from all aspects of their degree program. All students are therefore required to demonstrate that they understand and can apply knowledge from human development, counseling, and research.

The examination must be formatted following the guidelines of the current edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Students must complete the exam once they have received it. A student who does not submit an exam on the due date will receive a score of fail.

Preparation for the Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive exam serves three major purposes:

1. To allow an assessment of students' comprehensive understanding of the knowledge and skills thought by the counseling faculty to be a necessary basis for entry into the profession of professional counseling. Thus, the exam is one method through which faculty members seek to ensure that graduates are adequately prepared for future professional roles.
2. To offer an assessment of the quality of the curriculum. Deficits and strengths in the training offered by the faculty can be identified through the exam.

3. To determine whether students have adequately mastered the subject matter and have the ability to integrate and apply this knowledge adequately.

Preparation for the exam

1. The comprehensive exam is intended to assess knowledge that students have attained through their graduate studies. The best preparation for the exam is careful study in each of the graduate courses taken prior to the exam. Review of notes and readings from prior course work should be done several weeks prior to the exam to refresh students' awareness of the material. Material from any or all courses in the graduate curriculum will be applicable in preparing for answering exam questions. Students are urged to organize study groups to share materials, quiz each other, and offer emotional support during this period.

2. Most of the problems found in exam answers are not the result of students' lack of knowledge but the failure of students to convey their knowledge and understanding in the writing of the exam. Listed below are suggested guidelines for writing practice answers and writing answers during the exam.

   a. *Treat the exam as an essay.* Write an introduction, a body and a conclusion. In the introduction, state the exam question you will address in the body of your essay. The single most prevalent problem in students' responses to exam questions is that they do not answer the question that was asked. Given the pressure of an exam situation, students may present what they know even if the information was not requested in the question. While this information may be accurate or even profound, if it does not answer what was asked, readers will be unable to assess if the student knew the information that was requested and will consistently lower their evaluation of the answer.

   b. *Outline the question.* Another major problem with answers to questions concerns when a section or sections of an answer have been neglected or omitted. This may occur because students become over invested in the first part of their answer and either fail to save time for, or forget altogether, later parts of the answer. A rough outline will make clear all the parts that need to be addressed. It allows organization of which information fits best in which parts, reducing the likelihood of redundancy. Outlines free students to concentrate on the part of the question they are working on because the other parts are listed on paper rather than having to be carried in their minds. If some information relevant to a later part of the answer comes to awareness while working on an early part, it can be noted in the outline and recalled when appropriate. Outlining allows allotting a certain amount of space for each part of the question, helping to prevent overemphasis in one area.

   c. *Provide accurate information.* While this may seem obvious, it is sometimes overlooked. The evaluation of an answer is typically more severely damaged by presentation of inaccurate information than failure to present accurate information. Students are urged to concentrate their answers on what they are confident is accurate; omitting information which they are unsure is accurate.
d. **Reference key points.** Referencing demonstrates that information provided in an answer is derived from the common knowledge base of the profession as represented in published literature. Referencing allows readers to verify statements made in answers. If a reader disagrees with a point in an answer, referencing it redirects the argument from the reader and the student to the reader and the reference. Referencing must follow APA format, with the author’s name and date of publication essential.

e. **Write clear, short, simple sentences.** Introductory, transition, and summary statements may help ensure that major points will be clear to the reader. The comprehensive exam is not the time to demonstrate prowess at subtly conveying meaning buried in a richly textured atmosphere. Ensure that your reader will know what it is you are saying. A writing style that conveys a sense of mystery may result in readers thinking something is being hidden, perhaps ignorance. Writing directly to the point, emulating Hemingway as opposed to Steinbeck or Edgar Allen Poe, is considered preferable.

f. **Write a conclusion.** The conclusion will readdress the exam question and briefly note how it was handled. This serves to integrate and close the exam question. At times, writing the conclusion helps a student identify missing or weak areas. Thus, the student can rectify this problem before turning in the exam.

g. **Reread the answer.** This may be the third most important guideline. The unique situation of the comprehensive exam can generate remarkable misstatements, omissions, and contradictions in students’ writing. The student when rereading the answer prior to submitting it will identify most of these problems. When rereading, students should correct errors they identify.

3. The above recommendations regarding the preparation for and writing of comprehensive exams are offered as guidelines for directing enthusiasm and lowering the anxiety that students often experience when approaching this task. Remember that everyone evaluating the answers has taken comprehensive exams and has some empathy for the experience. At best, the comprehensive exam may be relished as the quintessential academic experience, a rite of passage, providing students with the opportunity to review and integrate what they have learned. At worst, it may be regarded as “just another sign along the road.”

*Evaluation of Exams*

The evaluation of exams will be done in the following manner:

The exam will be distributed to two faculty readers. These readers will score the exam as either pass or fail. If both readers score the exam as a “pass,” then the student and the DGE will be informed that the comprehensive exam was successfully completed. If one reader scores pass and the other scores fail, then a third faculty reader is used and their score determines whether the exam is a pass or fail. If both readers score the exam as a fail, then the student and the DGE will be informed that the comprehensive exam has not been successfully completed. Students who fail the comprehensive exam may take the exam for second time the following Spring semester and undergo the same examination procedure. Students are expected to provide a new and fresh set of responses to the exam. If a student
fails to successfully complete the comprehensive exam for a second time, then they will be dismissed from the Department of Health & Human Development and the College of Graduate Studies without receiving a graduate degree. The exam will be evaluated according to the following scale:

- **Pass**
- **Fail**

**Pass**
A score of pass will be assigned when in the professional judgment of the faculty reader:
- All questions are thoroughly addressed and the information included is correct, and well referenced.
- The student demonstrates breadth and depth of content as well as a high degree of integration and conceptual understanding of each question.
- The student must demonstrate clear, organized thinking, synthesis and analysis of material, good writing skills, and accurate referencing.

**Fail**
A score of fail will be assigned when in the professional judgment of the faculty reader:
- The major points of the question are either incorrectly presented or absent from the answer.
- The student fails to demonstrate both breadth and depth of content nor do they demonstrate an integration or conceptual understanding of each question.
- Although some of the response is correct, important information has not been included or has been incorrectly stated.

**Scoring policy**
The comprehensive exam must receive a score of pass by at least two readers. A failed comprehensive exam must be retaken within one year of the first administration of the comprehensive. College of Graduate Studies policy requires a lapse of at least 60 days before a failed exam can be retaken. Failure to pass the exam a second time will constitute failing the comprehensive and will result in being dropped from the program (MSU Bulletin).

**Upon Completion of the Comprehensive Exam**
Scoring of the exam will normally take 15 working days. The chair will inform his or her students regarding whether they passed or not. The chair will also notify committee members of the results and circulate required documentation for signatures.
Appendices

Graduate Program Prerequisites

Proposal Acceptance Form
Graduate Program Prerequisites

Students applying to graduate programs within the department will be evaluated for previous course work in human development, family science, psychology, sociology, research methods, and statistics. Each program has content areas that are critical to success of performance in graduate courses. Therefore, if students are found to be deficient in previous course preparation, they will be required to take approved course work prior to entering the program or during the first year of their enrollment and maintain a grade average of 3.0. Deficiency courses cannot be used as credit toward the degree program.

Marriage and Family Counseling
- Human Growth and Development
- Abnormal Psychology
- Upper Division Statistics and Research Design

Mental Health Counseling
- Human Growth and Development
- Abnormal Psychology
- Upper Division Statistics and Research Design

School Counseling
- Human Growth and Development
- Special Education or Exceptional Needs
- Upper Division Statistics and Research Design
Proposal Acceptance Form

The master's degree committee for:

________________________________________________________________________________________

Candidate in the following graduate program:

________________________________________________________________________________________

Graduate Committee hereby accepts the thesis proposal entitled:

________________________________________________________________________________________

Committee acceptance is contingent upon the candidate's fulfillment of procedures and commitments as contained in the proposal. Minor changes in the proposal may be approved by the candidate's Chair. Any major changes should be referred back to the entire committee.

Committee Member Signatures

Chair

Date

Member

Date

Member

Date

Member

Date