

**WESTERN CONNECTICUT
STATE UNIVERSITY**



**COUNSELOR EDUCATION
STUDENT HANDBOOK**

2022-2023

Education and Educational Psychology Department
School of Professional Studies
Western Connecticut State University
181 White Street
Danbury, CT 06810

This handbook is provided to students and applicants for their general information and guidance only. It does not constitute a contract; either expressed or implied, and is subject to revision at the University's discretion.

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WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY COUNSELOR EDUCATION PROGRAM

This handbook is designed to provide information regarding the Counselor Education Program at Western Connecticut State University. The School and Clinical Mental Health Counseling concentrations are offered through the School of Professional Studies. Classes are taught by the faculty of the Department of Education and Educational Psychology. In addition to courses within this department, students are also able to enhance their experience by taking courses within other divisions of the University.

Our program is informed by research and shaped by the needs of the communities and schools who require the services of professional counselors. A strong theoretical thread runs through the core courses and the advanced courses. Theory also drives skill development with an initial exposure to the cornerstones of the counseling relationship followed by exposure to skills and intervention techniques important to major theories of counseling.

The experiential thread begins in the first semester as students interact with counselors from a variety of settings and learn about counseling in communities and schools. In their subsequent coursework, they add depth and breadth by engaging in experiences that allow them to practice individual and group counseling skills, both on and off campus, with diverse populations. These experiences culminate in the Practicum and Internship, which are designed to provide supervised professional experiences for the counselor-in-training in schools and agency settings.

The MS in Counselor Education Program is an online program that uses a combination of asynchronous, digital synchronous learning for all of our courses and supervisory activities. Please note that our skills courses do have an in-person synchronous learning component associated with the online course. In these courses (EPY 602, EPY 604, EPY 605, EPY 603, EPY 606), students are required to meet on campus three Saturdays per semester while enrolled in these courses to participate in clinical labs. Dates will be published in advance at the time of enrollment. Students who need an alternative option for clinical labs due to religious or health reasons must notify their instructor at the start of the semester.

NAVIGATION OF DIGITAL DELIVERY OF SERVICES

Technical Knowledge Requirements

Students are expected to be proficient with installing and using basic computer applications, navigating the internet, and have the ability to send and receive email attachments to successfully participate in the Counselor Education Program.

WCSU Student Accounts

All students must create a student user account and email account. This account will serve as the log-in for all applications you will use during the program such as Outlook, Blackboard, and

Library Services. All communication from our program once you have enrolled comes through your university email. Here is the link to obtain a WCSU student user account:
https://support.wcsu.edu/?ht_kb=how-do-i-obtain-a-wcsu-user-account.

Educational Platforms and Applications

Blackboard Learn

All courses are taught using Blackboard Learn as the interface. To access Blackboard students will need a WCSU student account. Once logged into Blackboard, students will find a course shell for each course in which they are enrolled. Clicking on course shell will direct students to all the materials necessary for participation in that course including items such as syllabi, instructor contact information, discussion boards, portals to submit assignments, grades/feedback, and tests/quizzes. Students will also find the link to the virtual classroom where synchronous meetings will occur. Links for academic and technology support are found on the Blackboard home page.

Special note to Mac/Apple Users, Blackboard does not interface well with Pages. Assignments will need to be saved as a pdf, submitted as a google link, or must be submitted in Word otherwise your instructor will not be able to open your document.

Virtual Meeting Spaces

Students can expect to meet synchronously with professors for classes and for advisement via one of four virtual meeting spaces, Zoom, Collaborate Ultra, Microsoft Teams, or WebEx. Course instructors will post links to the meeting space on the Blackboard page associated with the class. Students will have access to Microsoft Teams and Collaborate Ultra (housed within Blackboard) via their WCSU student user accounts. Students may join Zoom and WebEx meetings as guests using the course meeting link.

Data Collection and Internship Applications

Students are expected to purchase a license to Typhon, a secure platform that will be used throughout the Counselor Education Program to manage and collect performance data and fieldwork documents. Students will upload key assessments, track fieldwork hours, and manage fieldwork contracts using Typhon. Subscriptions must be purchased in the fall of the first year. The cost is approximately \$100 for a five year subscription. Dr. Monte is the contact for questions and technical assistance for Typhon. She can be reached at montel@wcsu.edu.

DIGITAL REQUIRMENTS

Authentication

WCSU has a two-factor verification process for system log ins. Two-factor verification helps you to use your accounts more securely because passwords can be forgotten, stolen, or compromised. Two-factor verification uses a second factor like your phone to make it harder for other people to break in to your account. All users will need the following pieces of information:

- WCSU student email
- Password

- A cell phone installed with [Microsoft “Authenticator” App](#)

System Requirements/Software

- [Mozilla’s Firefox \(latest version; Macintosh or Windows\)](#)
- [Google Chrome \(latest version; Macintosh or Windows\)](#)
- [Apple’s QuickTime plug-in \(latest version\).](#)
- Virus protection Software ([Click here for various options](#))
- Microsoft Office ([WCSU’s Software link](#))

Blackboard

The Counselor Education Program at WCSU uses Blackboard as our classroom interface. Blackboard supports the following browsers:

	Desktop Browser Versions	Mobile Browser Base Versions¹
Chrome	87+	33+
Edge ²	87+	46+
Firefox	78+	33+
Safari	13+ (desktop, Mac OS only)	On iOS 12+

1. Mobile browsers are also supported for the Original experience. Older themes are not supported on these browsers even though users may have success using them. [Blackboard App](#) and [Blackboard Instructor](#) are supported native apps for mobile and tablet devices that interact with Blackboard Learn servers. These apps may have their own device requirements.

2. A known Microsoft Edge issue has caused problems attaching and submitting open Microsoft Office files in Blackboard Learn courses. To help prevent file submission problems, if you use Microsoft Edge, Learn warns you that you should close files before uploading them. The message only displays the first time you encounter a file upload workflow in a Learn session.

Blackboard Learn does not require any other browser plug-ins.

ASSISTIVE SOFTWARE AND ACCESSIBILITY WITHIN BLACKBOARD

For the best Blackboard Learn experience with your screen reader, use Chrome™ and Jaws on a Windows® system. On a Mac® use Safari® and VoiceOver.

To learn more about assistive technologies through Blackboard Learn visit <http://access.blackboard.com>

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Blackboard Support

Explore Blackboard Learn through the [On Demand Learning Center](#) which includes: short videos, Getting Started Guides, and other documentation. You may also wish to check the knowledge base at <https://help.blackboard.com/>.

Black Board Support Services

Blackboard Support Services provides 24/7/365 supplemental support for Blackboard Learn and general technical issues. Please continue to call our local Service Desk phone numbers (203-837-8467) for technical issues or questions. Calls will be forwarded to the Blackboard Support Help Desk, if for any reason, our local team is not available. Blackboard will forward any unresolved tickets to WCSU's Service Desk for Tier II support.

Zoom Technical Support

WCSU has limited support for Zoom users. Please call the local service desk for assistance. In the event the WCSU Service Desk is unable to assist, please visit the Zoom Customer Support site at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us>

WCSU Service Desk

The hours of operation during regular semester are Monday through Thursday 8:30am- 8:30 pm and Friday 8:30-4:30 pm. The hours of operation during the summer, spring break, and winter intersession are Monday through Friday 8:30-4:30. Email the IT Service Desk at RequestIT@wcsu.edu or call 203-837-8467.

MISSION & VISION STATEMENTS

University Mission

Western Connecticut State University changes lives by providing all students with a high-quality education that fosters their growth as individuals, scholars, professionals, and leaders in a global society. To achieve this, we:

1. Offer undergraduate and graduate programs that weave together liberal arts and professional education and instill a desire for life-long learning.
2. Sustain a vibrant, inclusive campus that connects individuals through co-curricular programs, cultural events, and service to the community.
3. Attract student-centered faculty who are passionate teachers and accomplished scholars.
4. Establish partnerships that create opportunities for internships, research, and experiential learning.

Values

Excellence. We value outstanding achievement through persistence, effort, honest feedback, and self-reflection.

Curiosity. We value the questions that drive learning, innovation, and creativity, which serves as the beginning and the desired outcome of education.

Dialogue. We value the conversations that explore diverse perspectives and encourage shared understanding.

Engagement. We value the interactions with ideas, peers, and community that are essential to a vibrant university environment.

Opportunity. We value the possibilities created by affordable, accessible educational environments in which students can grow into independent thinkers and confident leaders.

Respect. We value the right of all people to be treated with dignity and fairness and expect this in our policies, classrooms, and community.

Mission and Vision Statement for School of Professional Studies

The Mission of the School of Professional Studies is to prepare students as highly competent professionals in careers of education, health, and human services, who are also culturally competent advocates and professional leaders. The objective of the School is to provide students with a foundation of knowledge in the liberal arts, as well as professional coursework and community-based experiential learning opportunities which values open communication, respect for others, and fosters creative and critical inquiry.

The School recognizes the critical role that technology will continue to play in preparing students for education, health, and human service careers. Faculty is committed to a

curriculum that reflects the important role and impact that technology will have on these professions. In the 21st century the fields of education, health and human service professions must be uniquely positioned in the 21st century. As society becomes more complex and more technologically oriented, these professions will become more critical.

The School of Professional Studies recognizes that traditional approaches to the delivery of instruction must change. Limited funding for higher education, significant changes in career patterns (e.g. greater numbers of nontraditional and second career students), and changing demographics in the state are factors likely to impact the ways in which students learn.

The faculty within the School will continue to actively contribute to the body of knowledge of the education, health, and human service fields through applied research and scholarly activities, and will continue to challenge students in scientific inquiry and performance-based practice. The faculty remains committed to lifelong learning in response to changes in the education, health and human service professions by offering continuing education for its alumni and practicing professionals.

Departments in the School of Professional Studies must be responsive, as well as creative in providing best practice teaching methods in each of their disciplines, including evidence based experimental learning practices, and interdisciplinary and collaborative efforts with other units within the University, and the professional communities. With this as the goal, the School of Professional Studies is becoming the leading education center for Western Connecticut in the disciplines of education, health, and human services.

Mission Statement and Objectives for the Education and Educational Psychology Department

The mission of the Education and Educational Psychology Department is to prepare candidates for careers in teaching and counseling professions. We believe in initiating and maintaining professional relationships with the broader educational community and are committed to the continuous support and development of cooperative projects and services with area schools and community agencies. We embrace the broader mission of Western Connecticut State University to empower students to "...attain the highest standards of academic achievement...personal development, and ethical conduct." Candidates in our teacher and counselor preparation programs must achieve the following objectives:

Education and Educational Psychology Conceptual Framework at Western Connecticut State University: Shared Vision and Theme of the Education Unit

A conceptual framework captures the shared vision of the unit, guides the activities of faculty and candidates, and becomes the vehicle through which the unit's goals are articulated to the broader community.

The vision of the Western Connecticut State University Education Unit is reflected in the term **EDUCATOR** (Expertise in content knowledge, Diversity, Unity, Classroom and school leadership, Attitudes, Technology, Organize knowledge and facilitate learning, Reflective practitioner) and the theme *Preparing teachers and counselors to facilitate student growth and achievement in the 21st Century*.

EDUCATOR

E Expertise in content knowledge,
D Diversity,
U Unity,
C Classroom and school leadership,
A Attitudes,
T Technology,
O Organize knowledge and facilitate learning,
R Reflective practitioner)

The components of our Conceptual Framework underscore our belief that teachers and counselors in the new millennium must understand how to use information technologies and how to work effectively with the diversity of students found in public schools in order to prepare all students for success in a technological, multicultural, and global society. Teachers and counselors must know how to work collaboratively with colleagues and communicate with a variety of constituencies in order to be classroom and school leaders capable of effecting change and ensuring quality educational programs for all students. They must be reflective practitioners who continually evaluate and modify their practice, not only to meet the learning and developmental needs of students, but also to keep pace with a rapidly changing society and world.

Mission of the Counselor Education Program

We are committed to standards of excellence in the counseling profession. The graduate program in counselor education acknowledges a commitment to the students who will pursue professional preparation as school and clinical mental health counselors and to the larger public served by these graduates. We believe in and respect the inherent worth and dignity of each person. Our preparation program incorporates the need to develop throughout the life-span a greater sense of self-realization with a commitment to serve a diverse society. We are committed to the service of others for the prevention and remediation of life's problems. We seek to meet the larger goals of Western Connecticut State University, which serves as an accessible, responsive, and creative intellectual resource for the people and the institutions of Connecticut. We strive to meet the needs of a diversified student body through instruction, scholarship, and service.

ADMISSION TO THE COUNSELOR EDUCATION PROGRAM: CRITERIA AND PROCESS

Counselor Education Student Recruitment Policy

The graduate program in counselor education believes that the needs of a diverse society can only be met by encouraging diversity in the counseling professions. Thus, the program actively recruits students who represent a variety of cultures, ethnicities, races, genders, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic classes. Counselor education faculty recruit students by speaking to undergraduate classes and student organizations. They also meet with personnel in local organizations and schools as part of the outreach program to recruit diverse students.

The Counselor Education Program faculty seeks to admit only those who are personally and academically prepared to complete the master's degree in Clinical Mental Health or School Counseling successfully. Within these parameters, the faculty is committed to admitting students who represent diverse backgrounds and/or who have special abilities (i.e. bilingual competence) to serve a diverse population as school or community counselors.

Admission Criteria

WCSU uses a cohort model. We have a deadline for applications of January 10 each year. Candidates are invited to group interviews in mid-January and are expected to begin in the summer (Mid-May) if admitted.

Admission to the program is competitive and is based on the criteria listed below. In order to be matriculated, the student must:

1. Present evidence of academic ability and potential for graduate-level study; cumulative undergraduate GPA 3.0 or higher. *If candidate does not meet the 3.0 GPA, the Miller's Analogy Test score or an alternate assessment under advisement from the graduate office, will provide an alternative route for admittance;*
2. Have completed an undergraduate program which includes a general education distribution of courses in English, mathematics, science, social studies, and behavioral sciences, foreign language, and fine arts;
3. Demonstrate proficiency in English as demonstrated in a letter of application setting forth the reasons for wanting to enroll in a counselor education program, emphasizing relevant experience, and suitability for online learning;
4. Present three recommender rating sheets testifying to personal dispositions as a prospective counselor;
5. Interview with the Program's Admission Committee;
6. Demonstrate the potential for forming effective interpersonal relationships in individual and small group contexts;
7. Have appropriate vocational goals and objectives relevant to the Program;

8. Demonstrate openness to self-examination and personal and professional self-development;
9. Have had paid or volunteer experience indicative of an interest in the helping profession documented on a resume or CV; and
10. Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively

Additional School Counseling Admission Requirement

The State of Connecticut requires all persons seeking certification through the Department of Education to complete a 3-credit introductory course in special education that includes study of the gifted and talented. If applicants have not completed this prior to admission, they may complete EPY 509 Exceptional Learners as part of their planned program.

Background Checks and Fingerprinting

All school districts and some clinical placements require candidates to be fingerprinted prior to the start of your field work; students must pay for the cost of the fingerprinting. Each site supervisor retains the right to withdraw a placement if the fingerprinting indicates information that is problematic for the site. In addition, some placements also mandate drug testing, and/or vaccinations prior to interactions with students or clients. Faculty in the counselor education program should be informed of any concerns you may have with regard to your background, and will assist you in finding appropriate field placements. However, counselor education faculty will not allow candidates who are currently impaired to engage in a field placement course. Working as an impaired counselor is a violation of the ethical code.

Criminal History Record Check - (Fingerprinting)

Fingerprinting

The State of Connecticut requires that any person who observes in a public school as part of a teacher preparation program submit to a state and national criminal history record check within the first 30 days of the date of the first observation.

The process includes the checking of fingerprints by the State Police Bureau of Identification and the F.B.I. The results of the criminal history record checks (both state and federal) are reported to the employing school district. If the district receives notice of a conviction of a crime by a person holding a certificate, authorization or permit issued by the State Board of Education, the district shall notify the Bureau of Education Standards and Certification.

Candidates must complete the fingerprinting and background process as required by their sites.

OVERVIEW OF THE SCHOOL AND CLINICAL PROGRAMS

Counselors are skilled professionals who are trained to enable others to gain an understanding of their lives, make decisions, resolve problems, and be active. While the primary duty of the School Counselor and Clinical Mental Health Counselor (CMHC) is to

the individual, their responsibilities extend beyond the individual client to parents, schools, their community, and to the counseling profession. The School Counseling major prepares students to work as counselors in elementary and secondary schools. School Counseling graduates are also prepared to engage in crisis intervention. Graduates of the CMHC major are prepared to work in a variety of human service settings, including mental health centers, substance abuse, residential programs, and other agencies offering counseling services.

Both the 48-credit School Counseling Program and the 60-credit Clinical Mental Health Counseling program are accredited by *CACREP* (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs). *CACREP* is a specialized accrediting body recognized by the Council on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA). Graduation from a *CACREP* accredited program includes the following benefits:

- Graduates of *CACREP* accredited programs are allowed to sit for the NBCC exam immediately upon graduation, instead of providing documentation of two years of post-graduate supervision. NBCC recognizes the necessity for counselors to demonstrate proficiency in the *CACREP* core areas of study and utilizes the core as a basis for its national exam.
- Many states, including Connecticut, recognize the significance of *CACREP* standards through requirements of passage of the NBCC exam or through statements or options in their regulations which give preference to *CACREP* graduates.

The School and CMH Counseling Programs are accredited by the New England Commission on Higher Education (NECHE), the Board of Governors of Higher Education, State of Connecticut, and the Connecticut State Board of Education. We subscribe to the Policy Statement on Graduate Education, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, New England Commission on Higher Education, Inc., a nongovernmental, national organization recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA).

The School Counseling Program is approved by the State of Connecticut and prepares the student to be eligible for the Initial Educator Certificate (explained in this handbook and in the Graduate Catalog). While New York students cannot be certified by Connecticut to be school counselors in New York State, they can meet the requirements that allow them to apply for certification in their own state.

The Master of Science in Counselor Education with a focus on School Counseling is a 48-credit curriculum with 39 credits of coursework, 3 credits of practicum, and 6 credits of internship. The Master of Science in Counselor Education with a focus on Clinical Mental Health Counseling is a 60-credit curriculum. Both school and CMHC tracks enable students to take electives for additional experience in areas of individual interest. Students attend part-time, taking two courses a semester and courses in the summer in order to complete the program in three years. Courses are offered during the academic year in the late afternoon and evenings, Monday through Thursday. There are three summer sessions, two five-week sessions, one in June and one in July, followed by time-condensed sessions

in August during which counseling elective courses may be offered. Electives may also be available in the Winter Intersession if there is student need.

All full-time faculty have doctoral degrees in counselor education or related fields. In addition, part-time faculty hold a minimum of a master’s degree in their respective field. Part-time faculty from our education department, and from the professional community at large provide our students with a wide variety of theoretical and experiential perspectives regarding the role of professional counselors.

PROGRAM GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Table below lists the key assessments aligned with the 2016 CACREP standards, program goals, and program learning objectives.

M.S. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling Program Goals & Learning Objectives (2018)				
Program Goals	Program Learning Objectives	CACREP Core Standards	Key Assessments	Courses
1. The Counselor Education Program provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful professional counselors.	1. A. Students will demonstrate an understanding of professional identity and be able to apply ethical standards.	1	Fitness to Practice, Professional Identity Project, CPCE, Practicum & Internship Evaluation	ED 572 ED 585-587 EPY 600-606, 618
	1. B. Students will demonstrate counseling skills necessary to develop, maintain and manage a helping relationship.	5	Individual Counseling Project, Fitness to Practice, Practicum and Internship Evaluations, CPCE	EPY 602, 604, 605
	1. C. Students will demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to identify and successfully practice as professional counselors.	1	Site Supervisor Assessments, Employer Survey, Alumni Survey, CPCE	EPY 610-614
	1. D. Students will demonstrate their ability to research evidence-based practices and create interventions for counseling issues.	5,8	Group Counseling Project, Practicum and Internship Evaluations, CPCE, Fitness to Practice	EPY 603
	1. E. Students will demonstrate career theory knowledge and students will be able to demonstrate contemporary approaches in career assessment and practice.	4	CPCE, Career Advisement Session & Case Conceptualization	ED 572
	1. F. Students will demonstrate skills and knowledge in group counseling and group work.	6	Group Counseling Project, Practicum and Internship Evaluation, CPCE	EPY 603, 606, 610, 612-615
2. The Counselor Education Program prepares students to consider each client as unique, multi-dimensional individuals, throughout the counseling relationship.	2. A. Students will be able to apply multicultural competencies in both the individual and group counseling settings.	2	Site Supervisor Assessment for Practicum and Internship; Group Counseling Project; Individual Counseling Project; Assessment Project, CPCE	ED 587, EPY 603-605, EPY 610-614
	2. B. Students will demonstrate the ability to select, conduct, and interpret assessments, and to use the data to formulate culturally and developmentally appropriate goals and interventions.	3,7	Assessment Project, Practicum and Internship Evaluation, Individual Counseling Project, CPCE	EPY 600, 602
3. The Counselor Education program assures students have developed dispositions aligned with the legal, ethical and humanistic parameters of the American Counseling Association and/or the American School Counseling Association.	3. A. Students will demonstrate disposition in line with the humanistic, legal, and ethical parameters of the counseling professions.	1	Fitness to Practice (3x), Site Supervisor Assessment for Practicum and Internship, CPCE	ED585/EPY618, EPY604/605, EPY 610/611

Curricular Requirements

The Counselor Education Program fully endorses the 2016 Standards adopted by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (*CACREP*). The following list of the eight common core areas as established by *CACREP*, and the National Board of Certified Counselors, are addressed by courses that produce the identified knowledge and skill. Although the courses specified are targeted to offer the student information and skill relating to the identified standard, this is not meant to imply the standard will not be addressed in other courses, or that content may extend beyond stated standards. The Counseling Program provides students with the *Eight Common Core* curricular experiences and opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and skills in each of these common curricular areas (*CACREP* 2016 Standards). These eight core curricular areas (listed below) are common to both the School and Clinical Mental Health Counselor Programs.

1. **PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATION AND ETHICAL PRACTICE**—studies that provide an understanding of all of the following aspects of professional functioning.
2. **SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY**—studies that provide an understanding of the cultural context of relationships, issues, and trends in a multicultural society.
3. **HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**—studies that provide an understanding of the nature and needs of persons at all developmental levels and in multicultural contexts.
4. **CAREER DEVELOPMENT**—studies that provide an understanding of career development and related life factors.
5. **HELPING RELATIONSHIPS**—studies that provide an understanding of the counseling process in a multicultural society.
6. **GROUP WORK**—studies that provide both theoretical and experiential understandings of group purpose, development, dynamics, theories, methods, skills, and other group approaches in a multicultural society.
7. **ASSESSMENT**—studies that provide an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation in a multicultural.
8. **RESEARCH AND PROGRAM EVALUATION**—studies that provide an understanding of research methods, statistical analysis, needs assessment, and program evaluation.

In addition to the *Eight Common Core* curriculum areas, program area standards specific to the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program option and the School Counseling program option ensure that those students preparing to work as clinical mental health counselors and school counselors, respectively, will demonstrate the knowledge, skills and practices necessary successful professional practice in their chosen fields. Additional information about the *CACREP* Standards can be found at www.cacrep.org

PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY, AFFILIATION AND LIABILITY INSURANCE

Matriculated students in the CMHC and School Counseling programs are urged to consider affiliation with the professional association serving the counseling profession, e.g., the American Counseling Association (ACA), the American School Counseling Association (ASCA). Benefits of membership include receiving the professional journal(s) published by ACA, identification with current professional issues, opportunity to attend state, regional and national meetings, and professional liability insurance. Student membership in ACA is available at a reduced membership cost. Applications require a faculty member endorsement. Students will also be encouraged to join the Connecticut Counseling Association (CCA) and the Western Connecticut Counseling Association (WCCA) and the Connecticut School Counselor Association (CSCA) or New York State School Counselor Association (NYSSCA).

Announcements for state and regional professional meetings are posted on social media feeds, and emails to student WCSU email accounts. All students are required to obtain liability insurance before engaging in field experiences, Practicum or Internship. Liability insurance is available to ACA members or through HPSO at special student rates. A copy of the student's liability insurance form must be presented to the Practicum or Internship faculty supervisor for inclusion in student's clinical folder.

ADVISEMENT

When a student is admitted into the Counseling Program, he or she is assigned an advisor who is the coordinator for the option in which the student is enrolled (either School or CMHC). It is the student's responsibility to make regular contact (usually once a semester) with his or her advisor regarding courses to be taken and overall progress in the program. Among the advisor's responsibilities are the following:

1. To develop a plan of study with each advisee for timely completion of the degree requirements.
2. To advise the student each semester about courses to take in the subsequent semester.
3. To communicate any corrective feedback to the student as a result of faculty evaluations of students.
4. To review the advisee's records at the time that the student registers to graduate to determine that the student has met all Program requirements.
5. To serve overall as a liaison between the Program and the advisee.

Advisement days for the 2022-23 school year shall be as follows but students may make appointments at any time when the need arises:

- Wednesday, August 31, 2022 between 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm
- Wednesday, December 7, 2022 between 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm

Advisor Assignments

Cohort	School Counseling	Clinical Mental Health
2020	Dr. Nicole DeRonck deronckn@wcsu.edu	Dr. Davide Mariotti mariottid@wcsu.edu
2021	Dr. Lorrie-Anne Monte montel@wcsu.edu	Dr. Davide Mariotti mariottid@wcsu.edu
2022	Dr. Nicole DeRonck deronckn@wcsu.edu	Dr. Diana Naddeo naddeod@wcsu.edu

ORIENTATION MEETINGS

An orientation meeting for new students is held within the first weeks of enrollment. The purpose of the meeting is to review the student handbook, outline professional and ethical expectations, determine license/certification requirements, and discuss point of assessment to measure growth. Orientation meetings for students receiving the HRSA grant (2017-2024) are held each semester for students starting internship.

EVALUATION OF STUDENTS

Graduate students at WCSU must maintain a 3.0 cumulative grade point average to be in good standing. Credit will not be awarded for course grades below a C. Students must retake the course. All grades are calculated in the cumulative GPA.

The Counselor Education program systematically assesses student learning of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) identified from the core curriculum and area of program specialization, aligning with program objectives. KPIs are assessed by faculty and stakeholders (e.g., site supervisors) at multiple points during the student's academic program, measuring both content knowledge and applied knowledge/skill. Types of data collected include standardized test scores (CPCE), checklists (FTP) and assessment rubrics. Data is collected using the Typhon software system.

The Counseling faculty meets regularly to evaluate the progress of each matriculated student. The Program uses the Fitness to Practice Instrument to gauge professional dispositions (See below). The student's advisor is responsible for collecting relevant feedback from the faculty about a particular student. When a student's progress is not satisfactory, based either on academic criteria or professional criteria unrelated to academic performance, she or he may be placed on probation. In this event, the following process will occur:

1. The student will receive a letter from his or her advisor (usually following a conference) outlining the faculty's concerns and stating that the student has been put on probation.
2. Furthermore, the letter will delineate what conditions the student must meet to be removed from probationary status. In addition, the student will be informed of the consequences should the faculty's conditions not be met, including the possibility that the student will be removed from the Program.
3. Finally, the letter will state how long the probationary period is to last. Usually, a probationary period is one semester.
4. At the end of the probationary period, the faculty will again assess the student and will inform the student (in writing) of their evaluation. Usually, a student is either reinstated into the Program fully or is terminated from the Program at this time. However, it is possible for probation to be extended if the student has met prior conditions outlined by the faculty but has shown evidence of new deficits.
5. Should a student continue to present work that is of marginal quality, academically or professionally, she or he will not be recommended for continuation in the Program.

FITNESS TO PRACTICE

The Counselor Education Program implemented a Fitness to Practice (FTP) policy in the summer of 2016. The FTP is designed to ensure that candidates are not impaired and are prepared for field placement. The FTP policy is an addendum to this handbook and should be reviewed with your advisor. (See Appendix A)

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If a student believes that he or she has been treated unfairly, either in a particular course or as a result of the formal evaluation process, it is the student's right to initiate a grievance process.

Grade Appeal Policy

Taken From Western Connecticut State University Student Handbook

When disagreements occur between student and instructor on the accuracy of a grade, the university regards it as important for the matter to be settled within a reasonable period of time. A specific procedure is in place that ensures students will get an impartial hearing of such a complaint. Academic grading reflects careful and deliberate judgment by the course instructor. Academic evaluation of student performance requires expert consideration of cumulative information and is to some extent subjective.

The university recognizes that in rare instances there may be "palpable injustice(s)" in the determination of a final grade. Students may use the appeal process when they believe there is evidence to show that 1) a final grade was determined by methods and criteria different from those used for determining final grades for others in the same class or 2) the evaluation was made as the result of bias or caprice.

The grievance procedure consists of the following steps that students can take to have their matter settled. Please know it is not necessary to continue to the next step if the complaint is settled.

1. Student confers with instructor:

The student shall first confer with the instructor who awarded the grade no later than the end of the fourth week of the next regular semester. In the case of half-semester courses, students shall have the right to begin the appeal process at the conclusion of the course.

2. Written grievance to professor:

If no amicable settlement is reached, the student shall present the instructor with a WRITTEN copy of his/her grievance along with any supporting documentation which shall be considered confidential. The instructor shall respond in writing to the student within five working days. (It is suggested that students prepare a packet of information for the instructor, the chairperson and the dean).

3. Ability to choose a mentor/adviser:

Students, if they wish, shall have the right to choose a mentor/adviser for the purpose of guiding them through the appeal process. Students shall have the right to present their case at each stage of the appeal process. At the student's request, the mentor/adviser may accompany the student to meetings related to the appeal process as an observer.

4. Written grievance to department chair:

If the student is not satisfied, the student, within five working days of receipt of the instructor's response, may present the case in writing to the appropriate department chairperson who may effect a mutually agreed-upon settlement with the instructor. The department chairperson shall respond in writing to the student within five working days with a copy sent to the instructor.

5. Written grievance to academic dean:

If the student is not satisfied, the student may, within five working days of receipt of the department chairperson's response, present the case in writing to the appropriate academic dean who may effect a mutually agreed-upon settlement with the instructor and department chairperson. The academic dean shall respond in writing to the student within ten (10) working days, with copies of the decision sent to the instructor and the department chairperson.

6. Written grievance submitted to university senate president by dean (for ad hoc committee):

If the student is not satisfied, the student may ask, within five working days of receiving the dean's decision, that the dean contact the president of the University Senate to convene the Ad Hoc Committee on Grade Appeals. The dean shall forward the request to the senate president within five working days of receipt. The dean shall also notify the Provost/Academic Vice President, in writing, that the senate is being asked to convene an ad hoc committee.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Grade Appeals shall be composed of three members of the instructional faculty in the ranks of tenured professor or tenured associate professor presently serving on the senate, selected in alphabetical order each time the committee is appointed.

The senate president shall appoint the ad hoc committee within five working days and shall notify the student and the instructor of that fact. The senate president shall not discuss the details of the case with the ad hoc committee. The ad hoc committee will convene within five working days. It is the responsibility of the student to present three copies of all material, including any additional material submitted later in the process and relevant to the case to the chair of the ad hoc committee.

7. Professor submits materials as requested by ad hoc committee:

The instructors shall submit such materials as requested by the committee and shall have the right to present their case at any stage of the appeal process. The committee shall consider the case and reach a decision within 15 working days of its convening by the senate president.

8. Committee Decisions and Next Steps:

Denial:

Following its deliberations, the committee may deny the appeal, in which case the matter shall be closed.

If Palpable Injustice is Found:

If the committee finds that the grading constituted a palpable injustice, as defined above, the case shall be remanded to the instructor for reconsideration. If the instructor disagrees with the finding of the committee, the instructor shall inform the committee and the student within five working days of that fact.

9. Student Requests Committee to Recommend to Provost:

If the student disagrees with the grade change as effected or with the refusal by the instructor following the remand, the student shall request within five working days that the committee make a recommendation to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.

If either the student or the instructor has disagreed, the committee shall then forward its recommendation for a grade to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, who will implement the recommendation of the committee within five working days.

10. Action of the provost is final and binding upon all parties:

The action of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs shall be final and binding upon all parties and shall be communicated by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs to the student and the instructor.

COURSE WAIVERS AND TRANSFER CREDITS

The WCSU Counselor Education Program accepts only graduate level courses that meet Program curriculum requirements. Course waivers are limited in number and done under careful advisement. Students who wish to use transfer credits toward any of Western's graduate programs must make this request at the time of initial application to the university. The amount of graduate credit transferable into a master's degree program from other accredited institutions is limited to nine semester credits for programs less than 36 credits, programs 36 credits or greater can transfer up to 25% of the total credits. Student must complete half the program (50% of the total credits) in residence at Western (including thesis requirements, alternative research project, departmental seminar, internships, practicums, culminating projects and/or comprehensive examination) as required for particular programs.

SCHOOL COUNSELING CERTIFICATION ONLY STUDENTS

Students holding earned master's degrees from other graduate level counseling or teacher certification programs may apply to the School Counseling program as "Certification-Only" students. They must meet all entrance requirements (including a survey course in special education) and follow a planned program in school counseling services developed with the school counseling program advisor that includes completion of a 100 hour practicum in a K-12 school setting.

Students seeking certification in school counseling who are certified teachers with an earned master's degree but lack three years of teaching experience *must complete a full-time, 10-month internship*. This 10-month internship must involve at least 600 hours in a school setting. Certification regulations in New York State differ from those currently in effect in Connecticut. Students seeking certification in New York State are advised to contact the New York State Department of Education in Albany for information about these requirements for certification only candidates.

CREDIT HOURS FOR CLINICAL INSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

All students in the program complete a practicum of at least 100 hours and an internship of at least 600 hours. All school counseling students who are not certified teachers with three years of teaching experience and who are seeking certification in Connecticut or in New York must complete a full-time, 10-month internship (in addition to practicum). This 10-month internship must involve at least 700 hours. We strongly advise all Clinical Mental Health students to complete 9 credits of clinical instruction (Practicum and Internship). However, a small percentage of students, with the consent of the counseling faculty, take 6 or 12 credits to complete the required number of clinical hours. Please note that students must have flexibility to complete the field experiences at an approved site during the field work portion of their training. Students who are employed at a school or a clinic/agency and wish to do field work at your place of employment should obtain approval prior to admission to the counselor education program.

Early in the program, all students must contract to complete a full-time or a part-time Internship, i.e., whether the Internship is to be completed in three (3) credit hours or six (6). This decision will depend upon whether the student is a certified teacher with three (3) or more years of teaching experience and whether the student is a candidate for certification in Connecticut or New York. It is crucial that students understand that contracting for one semester means that both the total 600-hour requirement and the 240-hour direct service requirement must be fulfilled in one semester. This also means that any School Practicum or Internship experience that is contracted over a summer cannot occur during a regularly scheduled university semester. Summer clinical experiences usually need to extend over a three (3) month period and be approved by a faculty supervisor.

It is the faculty's prerogative to require any student to repeat Practicum for credit if it is the faculty's judgment that this is in the student's best interest. If the student then contracts for two semesters of part-time Internship, the student will use 12 credit hours to complete the clinical instruction component of the program.

PRACTICUM

Didactic instruction and pre-practicum are intended to prepare the student to be placed in a counseling setting (school or agency) that matches the student's career objectives. The Field Placement Coordinator assists all students in obtaining both practicum and internship placements. The Coordinator also acts as a liaison between the students and site supervisors to assist with initial and evaluation paperwork required by the Program.

1. **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** There are three (3) requirements for the practicum that are necessary to consider in identifying an appropriate site.
 - a. Student complete 100 clock hours at the site to meet the requirements of Practicum.
 - b. Direct service hours involve "face-to-face interaction with clients which includes the application of counseling, consultation, or human development skills." Ten (10) of the forty (40) direct hours must consist of group counseling.
 - c. Supervision of practicum and internship students includes program-appropriate audio/video recordings and/or live supervision of students' interactions with clients.
 - d. One hour per week of individual and/or triadic supervision throughout the practicum provided by a program faculty member, or a site supervisor who is working in biweekly consultation with a program faculty member in accordance with the supervision contract. Faculty supervisors must document contacts with site supervisor in Typhon
 - e. The student meets for a minimum of one (1) hour per week for individual or triadic supervision and a minimum of one and one-half (1 ½) hours per week of group supervision with other students.
 - f. *Formative Evaluation* of the student's counseling performance throughout the practicum, including documentation of a formal *Summative Evaluation* after the student completes the practicum.

2. **SUPERVISION:** Practicum represents the first opportunity for the student to engage in direct service with "real" clients. The school site supervisor must be a certified school counselor with a minimum of two (2) years of professional experience. The CMHC site supervisor must have a minimum of a master's degree in counseling or a closely related field and appropriate certification and/or licenses as well as a minimum of two (2) years of pertinent experience. All site supervisors must have documented training in counselor supervision. Supervisors who do not have documented training in counselor supervision and must take the online training provided by WCSU's Counselor Education Program and pass a quiz with a

minimum of 80%. The faculty assumes primary responsibility for the student's supervision. The site supervisor is asked to:

- a. Organize the practicum experience and assure that the student will have an opportunity to work with appropriate clients.
- b. Help orient the student to the site.
- c. Provide appropriate space for the student to meet with clients.
- d. Monitor the practicum generally in order to determine that the student's needs and to ensure that the clients' needs are being met.
- e. Connect with the faculty supervisor regularly throughout placement to discuss student's progress in meeting fieldwork expectations assessed in the fieldwork evaluation.
- f. Provide the faculty supervisor with evaluation of the student's overall performance and professionalism during the practicum.
- g. Be available to the student in case of emergency.
- h. Provide any additional supervision for reasons of necessity or preference. (In other words, the university faculty welcomes the site supervisor's involvement in supervision above and beyond the minimum expectations listed above.)
- i. Observe the student on site to provide feedback as needed.

3. **EARLY PLANNING FOR PRACTICUM:** Practicum should not be viewed as other courses in terms of the amount of time required to prepare adequately for the experience. At the time of matriculation into the program, when a student first meets with his or her advisor, it would be appropriate to begin planning for the approximate time of Practicum. Later, after the student has taken several prerequisite courses, more deliberate planning should begin to take place. Practicum proposals are distributed in classes, one year prior to Practicum. Students should work with the Field Placement Coordinator one semester prior to beginning Practicum. **Practicum Agreements should be submitted to the Field Placement Coordinator no later than November 1 for School Counseling and April 1 for Clinical Mental Health.** Be aware that:

- a. It can be a time-consuming process finding a practicum site, and this should not be delayed until the beginning of the Practicum semester.
- b. Because of the amount of supervision required for Practicum, faculty assignments will be determined by the number planning to enroll in the course. Staff planning takes place a few months before the beginning of each semester.
- c. With other counseling programs in our geographic area, there is competition for Practicum sites and early contracting with a site is recommended. Please note that students must have flexibility to complete the field experiences at an approved site during the fieldwork portion of their training.
- d. Site Supervisors must complete the WCSU supervisor training or submit their documentation of supervisor training prior to the start of practicum.

- e. Students who are employed at a school or agency and wish to do field work at the place of employment should obtain approval prior to admission to the counselor education program.
 - f. Fieldwork placements in private practices are strongly discouraged.
4. **FINDING A PRACTICUM SITE:** During the initial meeting with the student's advisor, the discussion will center on the student's career objectives. Usually, the Field Placement Coordinator will be able to recommend sites that the student might consider. The student may be aware of a site that he or she is hoping will be acceptable for Practicum. It is the student's responsibility to keep the Field Work Coordinator current until the student has successfully contracted with a Practicum site. *Although the Field Placement Coordinator assumes the role of guiding the student toward appropriate Practicum sites, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to find an appropriate site.*
 5. **SITE VISIT:** During the course of the semester, the Practicum instructor along with the student assigned will meet with the site supervisor to review requirements for the course and the site supervisor's role. The purpose of this meeting is for the faculty instructor to be assured that the site offers opportunities consistent with CACREP and Program Standards and to gauge student progress. Documentation of the visit and any contact between site supervisor and the faculty supervisor will be documented in Typhon.
 6. **THE PRACTICUM AGREEMENT FORM:** This document must be signed by all parties where indicated and kept in the Typhon. It should be submitted no later than **November 1 for School Counseling** and by **April 1 for Clinical Mental Health**. There is also an orientation meeting at the University, as well as supervision instruction for all site supervisors and students the semester prior to the Practicum experience.
 7. **STUDENT LIABILITY INSURANCE:** Students must provide proof of Student Liability Insurance at, or before the signing of their Practicum Agreement Form at the Site Visit. The evidence shall be uploaded in Typhon.

INTERNSHIP

Following successful completion of the counseling Practicum, students must complete a counseling Internship either in a school counseling or in a clinical mental health counseling facility. This internship is a two semester, full-time commitment for those students who do not hold a Connecticut Teaching Certificate but wish to be certified as school counselors. For all others, the Internship will be completed in one or two semesters (see master's Credit Hours for Clinical Instruction for details). Please note that school counseling students seeking NY certification must complete internship fieldwork with a combination of placements in K-8 and 9-12 settings. This can be broken down by semester or doing two placements, each part-time for the school year.

1. **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** There are five (5) requirements for Internship that are necessary to consider in identifying an appropriate site.
 - a. The student must commit 600 (700 for school certification candidates in Connecticut who are not certified teachers with 3 years of experience, and NY students) clock hours to the site to meet the requirement of Internship.
 - b. Of these 600 (or 700) hours, 240 must be direct service hours. Direct service hours involve “face-to-face’ interaction with clients which includes the application of counseling, consultation, or human development skills.”
 - c. If the site does not allow the intern to audiotape (or videotape) direct service hours for the purposes of supervision, students will be observed at the site. The site (School or CMHC) must provide supervision by a counselor or clinician acceptable to the counseling program. The identified site supervisor must be a certified school counselor or, in the case of a CMHC setting, hold a minimum of a master’s degree in the program emphasis area and possess appropriate certification or licenses. In addition, the site supervisor must have a minimum of two (2) years of experience as a counselor.
 - d. The site must permit the student intern to participate in a variety of professional activities in addition to direct service work. These activities should be those that a regularly employed staff member in the setting would expect to perform.
 - e. The student must meet for a minimum of one and one-half (1 ½) hours per week for group supervision with the program faculty supervisor throughout the internship.

2. **SUPERVISION:** All site supervisors must have documented training in counselor supervision. Supervisors who do not have documented training in counselor supervision and must take the online training provided by WCSU’s Counselor Education Program and pass a quiz with a minimum of 80%.
 - a. The site supervisor is the primary supervisor for the student intern and must commit to a minimum of one (1) hour weekly of individual supervision to the intern. Clinical supervision should include supervision of counseling cases and related professional activities. This site supervisor will be asked to provide the counseling program with evaluations of the student intern’s overall performance and professionalism during the Internship.
 - b. Supervision also takes place on campus with a faculty supervisor on a weekly basis. The faculty supervisor is responsible for making at least one site visit per semester for each student supervised and maintaining regular communication with the site supervisor. Faculty supervisors must document contacts with site supervisor in Typhon.
 - c. Group supervision for one and one-half hours (1 ½) includes peer feedback.

3. **EARLY PLANNING FOR INTERNSHIP:** Students should be in contact with the Field Placement Coordinator to begin planning for Internship. Few internship sites are ideal.

The search for an acceptable site involves a number of variables, including mission of the site, qualifications of the site supervisor, availability of experiences that will enhance the intern's professional growth, and physical proximity of the site to the student intern's residence and to the University. Sometimes a site will appear acceptable to the intern but not to the Coordinator; at other times the intern may find the site unacceptable; and sometimes the site supervisor will not find the intern to be a good fit for the site. For all of these reasons, it is important that the student not delay the search for a best fitting site. Anticipating when the Internship will begin is as important as planning when other required courses will be taken. Early in the program, the student, with his or her faculty advisor, should identify approximately when he or she will reach the Internship. In the first month of the student's Practicum, he or she should be informing the Coordinator of plans for Internship (expected semester to start Internship, sites under consideration, etc.). In other words, if you are beginning Practicum in the fall semester, you should make contact with the Coordinator in September. **Internship Agreements are due no later than April 1 for School Counseling and July 1 for Clinical Mental Health.**

Please note: CT School counseling interns who do not have three (3) or more years of public-school teaching and NY students must contract with a site for a full-time position, i.e., over a 10- month academic year and consisting of at least 700 hours on site. CT Students who do not have a master's degree but have been teaching successfully for 30 months must do a minimum of 600 hours.

4. **FINDING AN INTERNSHIP SITE:** The Field Placement Coordinator is available to meet with students prior to contacting any potential internship site to discuss the program's requirements for the site. As with the Practicum placement, this discussion will center on the student's career objective, the availability of Internship sites within the student's area of interest, and the level of client services provided by the potential site. *As with the Practicum site selection, the Field Placement Coordinator stands ready to offer suggestions, but the ultimate responsibility for finding an acceptable site remains with the student.*
5. **SITE VISIT:** During the course of the semester, the Internship instructor along with the student meets with the site supervisor to review requirements for the course and the site supervisor's role. The purpose of this meeting is for the faculty instructor to be assured that the site offers opportunities consistent with CACREP and Program Standards and to gauge student progress. This meeting will be documented in Typhon.
6. **THE INTERNSHIP AGREEMENT FORM:** The Internship Agreement Form describes the responsibilities of both parties. The document is signed by all parties and uploaded in Typhon. This document must be submitted no later than **April 1 for School Counseling and July 1 for Clinical Mental Health.**

7. **STUDENT LIABILITY INSURANCE:** Students must provide proof of Student Liability Insurance at, or before the signing of their Internship Agreement Form at the Site Visit. Evidence of insurance shall be uploaded in Typhon.

GRADUATION

Students registering for their final course in the program should apply for graduation in the Graduate Office, Warner Hall. This should be done at the same time that they register. **It is the student's responsibility to submit an "Intent to Graduate" form prior to the deadline set by the University. This deadline appears each semester in the *Course Schedule bulletin*.**

COUNSELING SERVICES, FINANCIAL AID AND GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

The WCSU **Counseling Center**, located in the Student Center on the Midtown Campus offers free counseling services to all WCSU students. The Counseling Center main office phone number is 837-8652. Both in-person and telemental health services are available. Additional information can be found in the University's Graduate Catalog and on the Counseling Center website, <https://www.wcsu.edu/counseling/>.

WCSU collaborates with the **The Center for Empowerment and Education** (formerly the **Danbury Women's Center**) to offer domestic violence and sexual assault resources for our campus community. They can be reached at 203-837-3939 and online at <http://www.wcsu.edu/thecenteree/>.

WCSU offers a **CHOICES program (cultivating healthy opportunities in college environment) to assist students with substance use and abuse**. They can be reached at 203-837-8898 or online at <http://www.wcsu.edu/CHOICES/>.

Additionally, please see the appendix of this document for a list of local service providers that offer mental health and counseling services in the Danbury area.

The WCSU Office for **Accessibility Services** assists students with disabilities in accessing their program of study. They can be reached at 203-837-8225 or at <http://www.wcsu.edu/accessibility/>.

The **WCSU Career Success Center** offers career testing, career counseling, and other related services. They can be reached at 203-837-8263 or online at <http://www.wcsu.edu/careersuccess/>.

The **WCSU Financial Aid office** offers assistance for qualified students to meet their financial obligations. They also manage work-study employment. They can be reached at 203-837-8528 or online at <http://www.wcsu.edu/finaid/>.

Students receiving financial assistance under the federal supported Title IV Programs must comply with the following criteria to be eligible for such assistance.

1. Quality of academic performance: Students must be matriculated and must maintain a 3.0 GPA to remain a matriculated graduate student in the University.
2. Speed of completion of the graduate program, i.e. satisfactory progress.
3. Students who do attain the levels of satisfactory progress indicated above may complete the required credits in summer school without Title IV financial assistance. Students who increase the number of semester hours required for satisfactory progress will not be eligible for any Title IV financial assistance for the following an academic year.
4. Upon presentation of evidence of medical emergencies or other legitimate personal or family emergencies, students who have been denied financial assistance under this policy may appeal to the campus officer designated by the President.
5. Title IV Programs are:
 - a. College Work-Study Program (CWSP)
 - b. Carl D. Perkins National Direct Student Loan
 - c. Guaranteed Student Loan Program (GSLP)
 - d. Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students Program (PLUS)/Supplemental Loan Program (SLP)

The Financial Aid Office is located in room 301 Old Main at the Midtown Campus. The office will assist you in obtaining information on how to apply for grants, work-study, and loans.

Several Graduate Assistantships are available to matriculated graduate students. Students should see the counseling faculty who will address questions. Application forms can be from the Office of Graduate Studies. The program coordinator will send out a call for interest when positions are announced.

ENDORSEMENT

Students who successfully complete all requirements for the master's degree in Counselor Education will receive formal endorsement in their area of concentration, Clinical Mental Health Counseling or School Counseling by the faculty of the training program or university certification officer. Formal endorsement includes recommendation for state certification and employment for those students successfully completing the program in school counseling, or recommendation for employment as a CMH counselor in a setting consistent with the training provided by the CMHC counseling program. Students will receive formal program endorsement only in that program for which they have met training requirements. Successful

completion of a program means the completion of all didactic and experiential coursework including practicum and internship and marked by performance sufficient to ensure that the candidate possesses the skills and competencies necessary for ethical provision of services to clients in the setting for which endorsement is made. Completion of all requirements means that the candidate has completed the 48 or 60 credit master's Degree as required by *CACREP*. Candidates must maintain a 3.0 (B) average.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR CERTIFICATION

All students in the school counseling program may apply for Connecticut certification as a school counselor, grades K-12, under the Initial Educator's Certificate at the completion of internship. The student must request an application for certification from the Program Coordinator or University's Certification Officer. The completed application is then returned to the Certification Officer. Once processed, the application is sent back to the student who must send it to the SDE, along with the required fee. The Western Connecticut State University School Counseling Program meets all the educational requirements for certification as a school counselor in Connecticut.

Students who want to be certified in New York State must apply through the New York State Education Department in Albany using the "Individual Evaluation Pathway" ([click here for details](#)). The Connecticut State Department of Education cannot grant certification in New York. Students seeking New York State certification will require an additional twelve credits that may be taken at WCSU to meet certification requirements. In addition, student must attend three state sponsored workshops on the following topics: Dignity for All Students (DASA), Child Abuse Identification & Reporting, and School Violence Prevention and Intervention. Information on where and how to take these workshops is located on the New York State Department of Education (NYSED) website. Beginning in 2023, all graduates seeking school counseling certification in New York will be required to sit for a certification exam. Information will be made available once it is released by NYSED.

Students pursuing certification in another state should notify the program coordinator of the state they wish to be certified to confirm the educational requirements before starting the program.

LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR

The State Department of Connecticut, Department of Public Health, accepts applications for licensure as a Professional Counselor.

- Successful completion of 60 graduate semester hours in the discipline of professional counseling at a regionally accredited institution of higher education, which includes the core and clinical curriculum of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (*CACREP*) (Western's program is *CACREP* approved). At least 42 of the graduate credits must be an earned a

master's degree from a regionally accredited institution with a major deemed to be in professional counseling by the NBCC.

- Acquisition of three thousand (3000) hours of post graduate degree supervised experience in professional counseling performed over a period of not less than one year, that included a minimum of one hundred (100) hours of direct supervision by a Connecticut licensed mental health professional.
- Successful completion of the National Counselor Examination (NCE) for those in CT or the National Clinical Mental Health Counselor Exam for Licensure and Certification (NCMHCE) for students in NY or CT.

The Western Connecticut State University Clinical Mental Health Program meets the educational requirements for both the Connecticut Department Health for licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and the New York State Office of the Professions for licensure as a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC).

Students seeking licensure in another state should notify the program coordinator of the state in which they wish to be licensed in to confirm educational requirements before starting the program.

THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR CERTIFIED COUNSELORS

The National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) is an independent, not-for-profit organization whose primary purposes are to establish and monitor a national certification system, to identify to professionals and the public those counselors who have voluntarily sought and obtained generic counselor certification, and to maintain a registry of these counselors. This process grants recognition to counselors who have met predetermined NBCC standards in their training, experience, and performance on the National Counselor Examination. A counselor who is certified by the NBCC uses the designation NCC, National Certified Counselor.

Criteria for Certification as an NCC:

1. Graduate degree in counseling or a closely related field from an accredited university.
2. At least two years post-masters professional counseling experience. (This requirement is waived for graduates of a *CACREP*-Approved Program.)
3. A documented supervised counseling experience.
4. Assessment of counseling experience by two professionals in the field.
5. Many states administer the National Counselor Examination as a component within their respective licensure processes.

NCC's are certified for a period of five years. In order to be re-certified at the conclusion of the five-year cycle the counselor must demonstrate completion of 100 contact clock hours of approved continuing education or re-examination as well as adhere to the NBCC Code of Ethics in professional practice.

Students enrolled in a *CACREP*-accredited master's degree program may register to take the NCE or NCMHCE after graduation, or either the semester they get their degree, or the semester right after they have earned their degree. This enables students to be Nationally Certified Counselors at the same time they are earning their M. S. degree in Counselor Education. The NCE or the NCMHCE is also one of the requirements for licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in Connecticut. Candidate in NY must take the NCMHCE.

Elective Course

Electives are offered throughout the program but most typically in the winter and summer sessions. Clinical Mental Health students will need to select 6 elective credits (typically 2 classes) to complete the degree. School Counseling students will need to select 3 elective credits (typically one class).

Elective courses focus on contemporary topics that are relevant to students in both tracks, such as evidence-based counseling, telemental health, counseling individuals with disabilities, and grief and loss counseling. Electives are offered on a rotating basis. School Counseling students who need electives may take any of the approved clinical courses to fulfill their elective requirements. School Counseling students who have not taken EPY 405 Intro to Special Education or its equivalent prior to enrollment, may take EPY 509 Exceptional Learners as their elective. Students should see their advisor to determine which electives are appropriate for their plan of study.

Bridge to LPC Program

School Counseling students have the opportunity to participate in a bridge program to earn the necessary educational components to be eligible to apply to become a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). Students must take an additional 18 to 21 credits of course work including an internship in a clinical mental health setting. The courses required for the bridge program are EPY 618, EPY 619, EPY 620 or 625, EPY 614/615, EPY 630, and EPY 621. EPY 621 can be substituted with any of the following: PSY 591, PSY 592, PSY 593, or PSY 594.

Assessments and Related Fees

Accredited institutions of higher education are charged with the responsibility of collecting data on student work. These data are used for a variety of purposes, such as exhibits for visitors from accreditation site teams, and for portfolios of student work. These data show evidence of competence, knowledge, and skill among our counseling students. While we employ multiple methods of data collection, one of these result in fees for students. These fees are required for all students and are not negotiable.

- 1 TYPHON: This is a data collection system that is used to archive major projects from core courses. All students must pay a one-time licensing fee to obtain an account. The fee must be paid in the first semester and the account will remain active throughout your training or for 5 years. The cost is approximately \$100.

- 2 CECE: The Counselor Education Comprehensive Exam is administered to all students in their final year during the spring semester beginning 2019. The CECE assesses all of the required CACREP training areas. This exam is helpful in both program assessment as well as student preparation. The CECE is often viewed as a practice exam for National Counseling Exam and the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Exam, offered by the National Board for Certified Counselors. The exam is free to students. Students are required to pass the CECE within 2 standard deviations of national mean.

Program Sheets for MS in Counselor Education

Program sheets for both the option in School Counseling and in Clinical Mental Health Counseling can be found in the graduate catalog. The link is <http://www.wcsu.edu/graduate/programsheets/>

Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) Sequence of Courses

YEAR	SUMMER	FALL	SPRING
1	<p style="text-align: center;">ED 587 Counseling Diverse Populations SSI</p> <p style="text-align: center;">EPY 620 Marriage & Family Counseling SSII</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">EPY 618 Introduction to Clinical Mental Health Counseling</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ED 586 Theories of Counseling</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">EPY 600 Assessment for Counselors</p> <p style="text-align: center;">EPY 602* Interviewing and Consultation Across the Lifespan</p>
2	<p style="text-align: center;">EPY 619 Crisis Counseling in the Community and School SSI</p> <p style="text-align: center;">EPY 621 Drug and Alcohol Counseling (PSY 592, 593, 594, 595)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">EPY 605* Clinical Mental Health Counseling Skills</p> <p style="text-align: center;">EPY 603* Group Work Foundation: Theory and Practice</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">EPY 630 Introduction to Psychopathology</p> <p style="text-align: center;">EPY 606* Advanced Group Work: Theory and Practice</p>
3	<p style="text-align: center;">EPY 611 Practicum in CMHC</p> <p style="text-align: center;">EPY 601 Fundamentals of Statistics & Research Design SSII</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">EPY 614 Internship in Clinical Mental Health Counseling</p> <p style="text-align: center;">EPY 608 Clinical Mental Health Counseling: Case Management and Delivery</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">EPY 615 Internship In Clinical Mental Health Counseling SSI-II</p> <p style="text-align: center;">EPY 572 Career Education</p>

Note: This 60-credit program includes 54 hours of required coursework and 6 hours of electives (18 additional hours of course electives are provided during this program sequence).

CMHC students should note the courses listed above are offered only in the semesters indicated. Any student-initiated changes in plans of study may result in your inability to complete your program within the three-year sequence.

*Indicates course has a Saturday in-person clinical component

School Counseling Sequence of Courses

YEAR	SUMMER	FALL	SPRING
1	<p>ED 500 Contemporary Educational Issues</p> <p>EPY 509 Exceptional Learners</p>	<p>ED 585 Introduction to School Counseling</p> <p>ED 586 Theories of Counseling</p>	<p>EPY 602* Interviewing and Consultation Across the Life-Span: Principles And Techniques</p> <p>EPY 600 Assessment for Counselors</p> <p>ED 572 Career Education and Development</p>
2	<p>EPY 601 Fundamentals of Statistics & Research Design</p> <p>ED 587 Counseling Diverse Populations</p>	<p>EPY 603* Group Work Foundation: Theory and Practice</p> <p>EPY 604* Individual Counseling in The Schools</p>	<p>EPY 606* Advanced Group Work: Theory and Practice</p> <p>EPY 610 Practicum in School Counseling</p>
3		<p>EPY 612 Internship in School Counseling</p> <p>EPY 607 Pupil Personnel Services: Philosophy & Organization</p>	<p>EPY 613 Internship in School Counseling</p>

Note: One elective must be taken to complete this 48-credit program if waived from either ED 500 or EPY 509. NY Students will need to take additional 12 credits to be eligible for professional certification upon renewal.

*Indicates course has a Saturday in-person clinical component

PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

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Counselor Education Handbook Signature Page

(Will be completed in Typhon)

I affirm that I have read the WCSU Counselor Education Student Handbook and the Graduate Studies Catalog. I understand the program policies and procedures. I have been given opportunities to ask questions about policies and procedures with regard to the Counselor Education program.

Student Name

Date

Student Signature

Faculty Advisor's Signature

Appendix A

FITNESS TO PRACTICE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

As part of meeting the program objectives set forth in the Department of Counseling Program Student Handbooks and Graduate Catalog, students are expected to conduct themselves in an ethical, responsible, and professional manner. This conduct is evaluated through the Fitness to Practice (FTP) policy as an element of students' academic performance. The purpose of the FTP review process is to regularly monitor students' professional and personal development (CACREP, 2001) to ensure students demonstrate appropriate progress towards developing the necessary behaviors, attitudes, and professional competencies to practice as a counselor-in-training. Student progress is routinely monitored and discussed during faculty meetings, in consultation with other faculty members and field supervisors.

At the onset of their academic program, students are directed to review these standards and seek clarification when needed.

In order to successfully complete the program and be endorsed for any relevant certifications or licensure, students must demonstrate academic performance meeting or exceeding department standards in all settings, including classes, advising sessions, clinical sites, and all verbal and written communication, including:

1. Maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better and present grades of a C or higher in all required courses, 2. Demonstrate fitness in their interactions with others as measured on the Fitness to Practice Standards, which include the following competencies: 1. Follows ethical and legal considerations 2. Displays multicultural competence 3. Open to new ideas 4. Aware of own impact on others 5. Responsive, adaptable, and cooperative 6. Receptive to and uses feedback 7. Responds to conflict appropriately 8. Accepts personal responsibility 9. Expresses feelings effectively and appropriately 10. Dependable in meeting obligations, and 11. Conforms to the codes of ethics of professional associations in counseling and all related national and state licensure and certification boards.

The FTP Evaluation Process: Students' competence is evaluated using the Fitness to Practice Standards and documented with the FTP Evaluation Form. All students will be reviewed by individual faculty using the Fitness to Practice Standards during Introduction to Community or School Counseling (ED 585 or EPY 618), Counseling Skills (EPY 604 and EPY 605), Practicum (EPY 610 and EPY 611), and as necessary throughout the program. Admission to the program does not guarantee fitness to remain in the program. In addition, a FTP review may be initiated on any student at any time if a faculty member, staff, course instructor, program advisor or field supervisor believes the student has displayed behavior which suggests the student does not possess sufficient competency on one or more FTP criteria. Faculty also may initiate a FTP review at any time for: a. Students who engage in illegal or unethical behaviors, b. Students who present a threat to the wellbeing of others, or c. Students who violate the WCSU or CSCU Student Code of Conduct, any other applicable WCSU policies or procedures, or any other WCSU Counselor Education policies or procedures. In such cases, depending upon the circumstances, the fitness to practice process may result in the student being dismissed from the WCSU Counselor Education program without the opportunity for remediation. However, students should be aware that faculty in the WCSU Counselor Education program will make strong efforts to remediate students who show desire and/or potential to improve and correct the competency deficit(s).

Faculty members, staff, course instructors, program advisors, and field supervisors may evaluate all students according to these standards. Students will have the opportunity to participate and respond at each step of the FTP process.

Performance on the FTP standards will be rated on a scale of 0 (unacceptable) to 1 (acceptable) as described in the Fitness to Practice Standards. A rating of 1 on all FTP standards will indicate competence. The FTP Evaluation Form then will be shared with the student and a copy placed in the student's file. A rating of 0 on any of the FTP standards will initiate the following procedure:

(1) The student will be contacted to schedule a meeting to review the FTP Evaluation Form. The meeting will be held with the issuing faculty member, unless the FTP process was initiated because the student engaged in illegal or unethical activities, presented a threat to the wellbeing of others or violated the WCSU Student Code of Conduct or the Handbook of Operating Procedures (in which case, the meeting will be held with a review committee comprised of faculty, as outlined in Step 3 below).

The student has five business days to respond to the request to schedule a meeting. If the student does not respond by the close of business on the fifth business day, the matter will proceed to step 3 below.

(2) At the meeting, the issuing faculty will review the FTP Evaluation Form with the student and discuss a remediation plan. Within fifteen business days after the meeting, the issuing faculty will provide a final copy of the remediation plan (incorporating any changes agreed upon at the meeting) to the student for review and signature. The student will have ten business days to review, sign, and return the remediation plan. Failure of the student to sign and/or return the remediation plan by the close of business on the tenth business day will not impede the process and may be considered during the fitness to practice process. Faculty may place an academic hold on course registration for students do not resolve concerns using the FTP process.

The remediation plan may include 1. Specific competency(ies) from the Fitness to Practice Standards which require(s) remediation, 2. Specific recommendations to achieve remediation, 3. Specific requirements to demonstrate remediation efforts have been successful, and 4. A specific deadline for subsequent monitoring to evaluate progress. Both the student and issuing faculty may retain copies of the signed FTP Evaluation Form and remediation plan and copies will be placed in the student's folder. At any time during the remediation process, the issuing faculty member may refer the student to a faculty review committee.

(3) A faculty review committee will be convened if: a. The FTP process was initiated because the student engaged in illegal or unethical activities, presented a threat to the wellbeing of others, or violated the WCSU Student Code of Conduct or the Handbook of Operating Procedures, b. A student fails to respond to the issuing faculty's request to schedule a meeting to review the FTP Evaluation Form, c. A student fails to show reasonable progress in the remediation plan, or d. A student receives more than one FTP Evaluation Form rated 0 during his or her Program of Study. The committee will be comprised of faculty in Education and Educational Psychology, appointed by the Department Chair. The student will be required to meet with the faculty review committee in accordance with the procedures described in #1 and #2 above. The faculty review committee may consult with any of the full Department of Education and Educational Psychology faculty, including adjunct faculty, regarding the development of alternative remedial strategies and/or evaluation of the student's fitness for continuation in the Counselor Education program.

The faculty review committee will monitor the student's progress on the remediation plan. If at any time the student is determined not to be making satisfactory progress, the faculty review committee may either modify the remediation plan or dismiss the student from the program.

(4) All faculty review committee decisions for a student's dismissal from the Counselor Education program will be forwarded to the Department Chair. The Department Chair will forward the committee's decision to the Associate Dean of the School of Professional Studies. The student may appeal the committee's decision to the Associate Dean of the School of Professional Studies. Decisions by the Associate Dean may be appealed in accordance with the general policy of the university.

Appendix B

LIST OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE PROVIDERS IN THE DANBURY AREA

<p>Family Study Center, Inc. 57 North St., Danbury (203) 778-2020 http://www.family-study-center.com familystudycenter@yahoo.com Dr. Gelinas, MD - Child,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescent & Adult Psychiatry • Team of Counselors as well • Psychiatric and therapeutic services (treatment modalities/populations include individual, families, couples, teens, adults, and group work) 	<p>Associated Neurologists Dr. Yorns 69 Sandpit Rd., Danbury 203-748-2551</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services provided: diagnostic and treatment services for all neurological conditions (Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADD/ADHD, executive functioning difficulties, depression, anxiety, learning disabilities)
<p>Perspectives Center for Care 66 West St Suite #1 Danbury 203-778-0004 ext 324 Fax- 203-756-0008 www.pcc4me.com</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual therapy, families, and couples; outpatient, IOP, substance use treatment, parenting support, med management, pet assisted therapy. • Treatment can address following concerns: parenting struggles, developmental disabilities, ADHD, depression, anxiety, self esteem, trauma, grief/loss, transitions, divorce, anger, stress, mood disorders, personality disorders, co-occurring disorders 	<p>The Center for Empowerment and Education (Formerly The Women’s Center Danbury) 203) 731-5200 https://thecenterct.org</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services provided: crisis services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault (including 24-hour hotline), advocacy for victims, community education/training, individual and group therapy for victims of DV or sexual assault
<p>CPC Associates, Inc. Comprehensive Psychiatric Care (CPC) 2 Locations: 84 Hospital St, Danbury, CT 57 North St, Suite 218, Danbury (203) 792-0400 http://cpc-associates-inc.edan.io/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychiatric med management 	<p>Newtown Youth and Family 15 Berkshire Rd. Sandy Hook (203) 270-4335 www.newtonyouthandfamilyservices.org</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual, group, and family therapy utilizing a variety of treatment modalities, including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Motivational Interviewing (MI), play therapy and behavioral interventions; psychiatric evaluations and med management

<p>Danbury Youth Services, Inc. 91 West St, Danbury (203) 748-2936 http://www.danburyyouthservices.org</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychiatrists and Therapists/Counselors for all school aged children 	<p>Family and Children’s Aid 75 West St, Danbury www.fcaweb.org (203) 748-5689</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychiatrists and Therapists/Counselors
<p>Western Connecticut Medical Group Psychiatrists 1-800-516-3658</p>	<p>National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-784-2433 Spanish Language line 1-888-628-9454 Interpreters also available in 150 languages Available 24/7</p>
<p>Center for Child and Adolescent Treatment Services https://www.danburyhospital.org/departments/behavioral-and-mental-health-at-danbury-hospital/behavioral-health/outpatient-services 203-791-5110</p>	<p>CIFC's Institute Headquarters 152 West St., Danbury (203) 743-9760</p>
<p>KidSense Therapy Group 29 Federal Rd, Danbury (203) 874-5437</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services provided: OT, speech and language therapy, mental health therapy, executive functioning coaching, PT, social cognition therapy, feeding therapy. • Individual and group treatment. • Interactive and interdisciplinary approaches (sensory gym, kitchen, as well as individual treatment rooms). 	<p>Connecticut Junior Republic 4 George St (203) 797-8575</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellness Center provides individual, family, and group therapy for all school aged youth, concerns addressed can include: parenting struggles, developmental disabilities, ADHD, depression, anxiety, self-esteem, trauma, grief/loss, anger, stress, mood disorders
<p>Catholic Charities of Fairfield County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual, group, and family therapy for all people regardless of religion or socio-economic status. Telemental health appointments available. 2 Locations: 405 Main St. Danbury, CT 06810 T: 203 743.4412 ext. 243 F: 203.738.1188 E: rmadwid@ccfc-ct.org <p>120 East Avenue Norwalk, CT 06851 T: 203.750.9711 ext. 22 F: 203.750.9651 E: rmadwid@ccfc-ct.org</p>	