Cynthia Ann Parker College of Liberal Arts
Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program

STUDENT HANDBOOK
2023-24

Program Director:
Randall Maurer, Ph.D. LMFT-S
HSU Box 16115
Abilene, TX 79698
rmaurer@hsutx.edu
325-671-1599

Administrative Assistant:
Christi Houghton
HSU Box 16115
Abilene, TX 79698
Christi.Houghton@hsutx.edu
325-670-1531

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1. CACREP & CMHC PROGRAM VISIONS & VALUES

A. CACREP

a. Vision

The vision of CACREP is to provide leadership and to promote excellence in professional preparation through the accreditation of counseling and related educational programs. As an accrediting body, CACREP is committed to the development of standards and procedures that reflect the needs of a dynamic, diverse, and complex society. CACREP is dedicated to:

1. Encouraging and promoting the continuing development and improvement of preparation programs; and

2. Preparing counseling and related professionals to provide services consistent with the ideal of optimal human development. CACREP maintains collaborative relationships with other groups that focus on accreditation, licensing, certification, and the professional development of counselors and related practitioners.

b. Mission

The mission of CACREP is to promote the professional competence of counseling and related practitioners through:

1. the development of preparation standards

2. the encouragement of excellence in program development; and

3. the accreditation of professional preparation programs.

c. Core Values

i. The CACREP Board of Directors believes in

1. advancing the counseling profession through quality and excellence in counselor education;

2. ensuring a fair, consistent, and ethical decision-making process;

3. serving as a responsible leader in protecting the public;

4. promoting practices that reflect openness to growth, change and collaboration; and,

5. creating and strengthening standards that reflect the needs of society, respect the diversity of instructional approaches and
strategies, and encourage program improvement and best practices.

B. **CMHC Program at Hardin-Simmons University**

  a. **Mission**
     
     i. The mission of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling graduate program is for faculty and students to collaborate in the pursuit of knowledge, clinical skills, and personal growth in an environment enlightened by faith, so that students will be prepared to provide the highest standard of professional counseling services to diverse populations.

  b. **Goals**

     i. Prepare students in understanding diverse views and cultures and promote ethical counseling with clients in a variety of work settings.

     ii. Provide students with knowledge and skills in counseling theory, developmental issues, assessment, empirically-based research (including interventions), helping relationships and basic skills, and a holistic model in providing mental health services for individuals, couples, families, and groups.

     iii. Promote and model a strong sense of professional identity, ethical clinical practice, and lifelong learning.

     iv. Model and encourage integration of self, theory and practice.

2. **ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM**

   A. Process – Each student seeking admission to the M.A. program in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) at HSU must be admitted to both the graduate school and the CMHC program. Guidelines and admission criterion are detailed in the current Graduate Catalog.
1. In addition to meeting the criterion, standards, application procedures and fees for the graduate school, each student must apply directly to the M.A. in CMHC via the Director of the Program. This requires the completion of a program-specific application form, writing sample, submission of a transcript of all undergraduate and graduate work, three letters of recommendation, background check and personal interview.

2. Following the receipt of all information and successful personal interview, faculty meets to review each applicant. Students applying for the M.A. in CMHC must receive favorable recommendation from the CMHC faculty.

3. Students may be admitted under one of several admission categories according to the Graduate Catalog. In the event a student is not given FULL ADMISSION, the deficit should be resolved during the student’s first semester, unless otherwise indicated. Failure to obtain FULL ADMISSION at the earliest time could delay or prevent the student from graduating.

B. Students entering the program will need basic working knowledge of computers. Personal computers are not necessary as HSU provides adequate access. Students are able to use computer labs in the Richardson Library, Johnson Building and HSU Psychology & Counseling Center. Richardson Library is home to the Help Desk where students can troubleshoot problems on their own personal computers. Students will be trained in programs specific to our program and clinic.

C. Changing Status - If a student is granted PROVISIONAL or POSTGRADUATE (non-degree status) the student must apply for a change in status if he/she wishes to continue his/her education. PROVISIONAL status is for one semester only, unless otherwise authorized by the Dean. A student must keep track of his/her status to insure proper credit for course work. Not more than 6 graduate hours taken in POSTGRADUATE (non-degree) status may be counted toward a degree. Consult the Graduate Catalog and the Office of Graduate Studies for complete information regarding admission status, categories, and procedures.

D. Changing Programs – Any student wishing to change to a
different program from the one to which he/she was admitted must reapply for admission to the new program. Admission to one program should not be taken as any indication of acceptance into another program.

3. SUGGESTED COURSE SEQUENCE FOR M.A. IN CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Sequence</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A. FALL – FIRST YEAR (12 HRS)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>FA 1 (8 wks.)</td>
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<td>CMHC 6304</td>
<td>Basic Skills and Techniques</td>
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<td><strong>F. FALL – SECOND YEAR (9 HRS)</strong></td>
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<td>CMHC 6370</td>
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G. SPRING – SECOND YEAR (9 HRS)

SP1 (8wks.)
CMHC 6351  Premarital & Marital Therapy
CMHC 6370  Internship II

SP 2 (8 wks.)
CMHC 6305  Advanced Research Methods
CMHC 6370  Internship II  (continued)

H. MAY TERM – SECOND YEAR (3 HRS)

CMHC 6356  Counseling Diverse Populations

I. SUMMER – SECOND YEAR (6 HRS)

CMHC 6360  Addictions
CMHC 6339  Developmental Issues

• ELECTIVES (You must have at least one 3-hour elective)

CMHC 6351  Elective Choice: Premarital & Marital Therapy
            (Offered every SPRING – needed for LMFT licensure)
CMHC 6353  Elective Choice: Advanced Human Sexuality
            (Offered every other SUMMER – needed for LMFT licensure)
CMHC 6170  Elective Choice: Play Therapy Using Sandtray

* NOTES:

1. There are options to do 6-hours per semester or less.

2. The above is a suggested schedule. Deviations may be required due to faculty and program needs. The above listing does not constitute a contract that these courses will be offered at the noted times.

3. Students must work closely with the program director to be certain that electives taken will fulfill requirements for licensure.

4. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS
The clinic director, graduate program director or graduate therapist’s supervisor may at any time suspend a graduate therapist from therapy privileges for non-compliance with any clinic or program policy including, but not limited to: failure to keep files up to date, failure to ensure necessary forms are filled out, failure to comply with legal and ethical requirements of the clinic and the profession, or failure to behave in any other professional manner.

5 CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

Each student must accumulate 700 hours of clinical experience which includes counseling (individual, couple, family, and group), assessment, consultation, supervision, case review, and other types of internship activities. Of those, at least 280 must be direct client hours over the course of the clinical sequence (typically a year). This clinical work is to be accomplished by providing services to clients at the Psychology and Counseling Center on the HSU campus, and also by engaging in clinical work through a required internship at an agency in the community. Students will complete this clinical requirement while enrolled in CMHC 6306 Practicum and CMHC 6370 Internship I and II. Guidelines and policies concerning clinical work can be found in the Clinical Experience Manual.

6 ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY

In accordance with the Graduate Catalog, students will be advanced to candidacy following a meeting of the graduate advisory committee.

Application for advancement to candidacy is due by the end of the semester in which a student is enrolled in Practicum (CMHC 6306). Any exceptions are to be requested in writing and approved, in writing, by the Program Director. Please consult the Graduate Catalog, the Office of Graduate Studies, or the Director of the Program for exact requirements. The Program Director will communicate to the student and to the Dean the committee’s decision in writing. The committee may recommend unconditional advancement to candidacy, advancement with certain conditions, or may deny advancement. If a student is denied advancement, they will have one semester to meet the conditions set forth in the letter. If those conditions are met, they may be advanced to candidacy. If not, the student will be dropped from the program. If the committee is considering either advancement with conditions or denial of advancement, a face-to-face conference with the student may be held.
7. COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION

A final evaluation is required for graduation. In the student’s last two terms before completion of the program, a comprehensive evaluation will be given. The graduate faculty in the CMHC program will review the student’s performance on the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam and clinical evaluation, meet with the student, and make a recommendation to the dean of graduate studies for final approval for graduation. The Program Director will communicate to the student and to the Dean the committee’s decision in writing.

A. Format for the Comprehensive Exam

1. Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE)

   a. A multiple choice written comprehensive exam will be administered covering all content and clinical courses. The cost of the exam is $75.00 (which is a fee charged to your student account in 6370 Internship II). Students will have a maximum of 4 hours to take the exam. A make-up date will be scheduled for students with extenuating circumstances or illness. The make-up exam must be completed within one week of the exam date. Exam results will be available immediately following completion of the test. However, determination of a passing or failing score on each section and overall will be determined following the exam and delivered in a written letter within two weeks following the test date.

   b. Students must receive a passing grade overall AND on ALL SECTIONS on the exam.

      • A failing grade on each section and overall is considered one standard deviation below the mean of national scores.

      • The student will be required to re-take any section they failed on the CPCE. This will be scheduled with the Administrative Assistant within two weeks following the exam. If a student passed some sections but failed the test overall, he/she will be required to re-take the entire exam.
• If the student fails the exam or any section the second time, they may be required to re-take courses corresponding to the sections failed or the student may be dismissed from the program.

2. Clinical Evaluation
   a. An evaluation of the student’s final clinical case presentation will take place in the last part of Internship II. See appendix. (CCS-R)
   b. A completed Clinical Hours Summary Form is to be turned in to the Director the before you may be considered for graduation.

B. Review for Comprehensive Evaluation

1. A portion of the Comprehensive Evaluation will focus on course materials from the program. The following areas/topics are the focus of the written (CPCE) exam.
   a. Human Growth & Development
   b. Social and Cultural Diversity
   c. Helping Relationships
   d. Group Work
   e. Career Development
   f. Assessment
   g. Research & Program Evaluation
   h. Professional Orientation & Ethical Practice

C. Scheduling of Comprehensive Evaluation

1. The Program Director schedules the Comprehensive Evaluations in the SUMMER and FALL semesters. The student is responsible to communicate with the program director any days on which they absolutely could not attend the evaluation. Attempts will be made to schedule the evaluation in keeping with the student’s limitations and preferences.

2. Students will be informed in writing as to the scheduled evaluation time. The time is NOT negotiable and must be observed by the student if he/she wishes to sit for the evaluation that semester.

D. Rescheduling/Counseling
If a student cannot sit for the evaluation at the assigned time, the student should notify the Program Director and Administrative Assistant. The student must then re-apply for an evaluation time for the following semester. Canceling the scheduled evaluation time will result in a semester delay of being allowed to sit for the evaluation.

If two faculty members agree that the student's written examination scores, professional conduct or therapeutic skills are significantly deficient, scheduling a comprehensive evaluation may be denied, or, if scheduled, may be canceled. Permission to resubmit for this comprehensive evaluation will be handled on a case by case basis.

E. Failure of Evaluation /Retaking Evaluations

If the student does not pass the written and clinical evaluations, he/she must retake the evaluation. The exact time frame or re-taking the exams will be contingent upon the reason for the failure. If the student fails to receive approval from his/her committee for the retake, the student must wait for the next evaluation administration. Any student who fails to receive the approval of his/her committee on the 2nd retake may be required to re-take courses corresponding to the sections failed or the student may be dismissed from the program.

8. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A. Professional Meetings – Students are urged to begin pursuing professional development opportunities. Information about upcoming professional conferences, seminars, workshops, etc. at the local, regional, state and national levels will be posted on the graduate student bulletin board, CMHC Canvas page, and emailed.

B. Presentations – Students are also encouraged to prepare and submit proposals for presentations at professional meetings/conferences. This reflects well on the program and facilitates future opportunities for the student upon graduation.
C. Research – Students are encouraged to develop and conduct research in areas of interest. Faculty research projects are often in progress, and interested students are advised to discuss the opportunity with the appropriate faculty member. Research ideas not in progress may be initiated, but the student is advised to consult with the Director of the Program before the project is begun.

D. Publication – Students are encouraged to consider submitting articles to professional journals for publication. Faculty members and the Director for the Program are available to assist students in preparation of manuscripts. Publication in professional journals will facilitate employment and further educational opportunities for the student.

E. Journal Subscriptions – Students are urged to select, subscribe to, and read appropriate journals. Suggested journals are: Journal of Counseling and Development, The Career Development Quarterly, Counseling and Values, Journal of Addictions & Offender Counseling, Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, The Family Journal, Journal of Marriage and Family Therapy, American Journal of Family Therapy, and Journal of Family Ministry. The library provides current subscriptions to these and other journals. Students are welcome to examine issues of each to facilitate their decision.

9. THERAPY FOR STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

A. Counseling for Students – if a student or member of the student's family is experiencing psychological/emotional difficulties, he/she is urged to consider counseling as a possible aid in the resolution of these problems. Faculty members teaching in this program are not appropriate sources for meeting this therapeutic need. Any faculty member will be happy to provide a student with a referral to a competent professional. Students are encouraged to be aware of their own personal psychological processes and issues, past and present, that may influence their ability to do quality work as a graduate student and as a therapist. If these matters become intrusive and unmanageable, the student should consult with a faculty member regarding the most appropriate course of action.
The CMHC program clinic is the primary referral source for both undergraduate and graduate students at HSU. Therefore, it is necessary for CMHC students to use one of the following options for personal counseling services.

• A list of referral sources for confidential personal counseling can be found at the front desk of the Psychology & Counseling Center. Included in this list of licensed counselors are local HSU alumni who have agreed to provide discounted services to students in the CMHC program.

• University Counselor: HSU employs licensed professional counselors, housed in the Psychology & Counseling Center. Their responsibilities include crisis management for the student body as well as counseling services that cannot be provided by the CMHC clinic due to a conflict of interest. CMHC students may be able to obtain counseling services from the university counselors free of charge based on the urgency of their need and the availability of the counselor.

• A list of referral sources for long-term or specialized counseling services can be obtained at the front desk of the CMHC clinic.

B. Counseling by Clinical Faculty – Consulting with the Director of the Program or another faculty member is acceptable and appropriate, but it is inappropriate for the faculty member to conduct therapy. Faculty members may suggest options or recommend other therapists who may be helpful to the student and/or family members.

C. COUNSELING BY GRADUATE STUDENTS – It is also not appropriate for fellow graduate students to provide therapy for one another. It is a clear violation of the ACA and AAMFT codes of ethics to enter into dual relationships.

D. DUAL RELATIONSHIPS – Dual relationships are generally those in which the members are involved in possible conflicting ways. Some examples relevant to the
issue of students receiving therapy are clinical supervisors providing therapy for supervisees, students providing therapy for peers, or academic faculty providing therapy for students enrolled in the program.

10. COMMUNITY AND CHURCH SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Community agencies and institutions as well as area churches issue requests for various family oriented programs, groups, or family-related activities. Graduate students are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities to develop their speaking and presentation skills, and to develop professional skills. One indicator of a competent professional (and in fact an ethical obligation) is to serve one’s community in an effort to improve the quality of life. Graduate students are urged to begin good citizenship habits while in graduate school. Informing the Director and other faculty members of interest in participating in community/church programs and presentations will facilitate opportunities as well. Students are encouraged to become active in a church and/or community service organization.

11. EMPLOYMENT

A. FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT – While it is understood that students often need to work to support themselves during the education process, students should also be aware that full time work, especially during the clinical training year, is exceptionally difficult. Students with financial difficulties are encouraged to consult with the financial aid office and the Director of the Program for possible options. Part time work, which offers flexible hours, is usually a viable option. A student is not generally precluded from admission or enrollment due to work, but he/she may be asked to wait a semester to stabilize his/her job and/or financial situation if the job significantly interferes with academic and therapeutic learning.

B. PAID CLINICAL EXPERIENCE – Occasionally clinical experience opportunities (which also include compensation) present themselves. Before accepting such a position, students are urged to consult with the Director of the Program. This can ensure that the student is properly informed about the nature of the work, what
effect, if any, the job will have on his/her education, and other factors which the student may need to consider. It is not the intention of the faculty or Director to control or “run” the student’s life, but rather to help them avoid problematic or unethical situations, or at least be prepared for them.

C. SCHOLARSHIPS – A limited number of graduate scholarships are available. Some incoming first year graduate students with an overall undergraduate GPA of 3.5 or higher are eligible to receive scholarship monies. Thereafter, graduate students with an overall graduate GPA of 3.66 or higher are eligible to apply for such monies. Students interested in scholarships should apply in Scholarship Central on HSU Central.

12. FORMS AND CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE BUSINESS OFFICE AND THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

A. SCHEDULE OF GRADUATE CLASSES – Upon the graduate student’s finalization of his/her semester registration, the student can access a copy of his/her schedule of classes for that semester on HSU Central Self-Service.

B. STUDENT FILE LOCATED IN THE CMHC ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT OFFICE – Each student will have a file in the Office of the CMHC Administrative Assistant that includes the following documents: initial program acceptance form including any leveling courses that need to be completed; registration forms for each semester the student is enrolled in courses; paperwork pertaining to practicum and internship supervision and evaluations; and paperwork pertaining to the student’s candidacy and comprehensive evaluation. These are electronic files kept on the Administrative Assistant computer.

13. GRADING
The grading scale and policies are detailed in the Graduate Catalog. It is significant to restate here that no more than two (2) final course grades of C may be earned in courses taken by any CMHC graduate student. Following the receipt of (2) C’s, the student’s graduate advisory committee will meet to examine the current progress and potential of the student. Any recommendation of the committee will be communicated to the Dean which could include dismissal from the program.

14. GRADUATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The graduate advisory committee will be comprised of full time graduate faculty who are considered the CACREP core faculty. The responsibility of the committee will be to examine each student’s progress, status, and development before recommending advancement to candidacy; to administer the comprehensive evaluation; and to act on the student’s behalf on other issues.

15. GRADUATION

A. DIPLOMA CARD – A diploma card must be filed the semester prior to the semester the student plans to graduate. For example, students graduating in August or December must submit their diploma card by March 1 and students planning to graduate in May must submit their diploma cards by September 25. Additionally, the student’s degree plan must be checked. The student is urged to consult the Graduate Catalog and maintain close contact with the office of Graduate Studies relative to exact procedures and a timetable for completion.

B. COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION – the comprehensive evaluation must be completed before graduation. No student will be allowed participation in graduation exercises if he/she has not met all requirements, including successful completion of both written and clinical portions of the comprehensive evaluation.

C. CLINICAL HOURS - students must have accumulated their 700 clinical hours (including at least 280 direct client hours) before graduation; documentation of
these hours must be submitted to the office manager by the last day of classes of the semester in which the student is graduating. In addition, all client files must be closed or transferred to a new therapist by the last day of classes of that semester. No student will be allowed to participate in graduation exercises if he/she has not met all these requirements.

16. **Endorsement policy for recommending students for credentialling and employment**

   A. Student in the CMHC program are expected to follow professional code and ethics and certification/licensure guidelines of the following organizations:
   
   - National Board for Certified Counselors
   - American Counseling Associations
   - Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs
   
   Counseling Licensure Information can be found at:
   
   Texas
   
   
   Outside of Texas
   
   [https://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/licensure-requirements](https://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/licensure-requirements)

17. **TIME LIMIT**

   The student has seven (7) years from time of acceptance to complete the M.A. in CMHC. Semester extensions are very rarely granted and only in the case of extreme extenuating circumstances. The student should closely consult with the Director of the Program relative to any request for an extension. All extensions must have a faculty recommendation in order to be considered. All requests for extensions are made to the Dean of Cynthia Ann Parks College of Liberal Arts who forwards them to the Graduate Council for consideration and final disposition.
18. GRIEVANCE AND APPEAL PROCEDURES

To appeal the decision of the student’s Graduate Advisory Committee or any other policy or procedural issue, the student should first consult with either a faculty member and/or the Director of the Program. If the student is not satisfied and wishes to appeal, the student must indicate his/her desire to appeal to either the Director of the Program or the Dean. This appeal should be made in writing. The student’s appeal will be considered and, if appropriate, forwarded to the Graduate Council for final action. Following action from the Graduate Council, the student may appeal to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

19. UNIVERSITY POLICY REGARDING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

An individual with a disability is defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as a “person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.” Any student with a documented disability may choose to seek accommodations. Eligible students seeking accommodations should contact the Director of Undergraduate Advising and Disabilities as soon as possible in the academic term (preferably during the first two weeks of a long semester) for which they are seeking accommodations. The Director shall prepare letters outlining specific, reasonable accommodations for the student. The student is responsible for delivering accommodation letters and conferring with faculty members. Please refer to the 2023-2024 Undergraduate Catalog for the complete policy. Carol Krueger, Director of Undergraduate Advising and Disabilities, Sandefer Memorial, 1st Floor in the Academic Advising Center, 325-670-5867, disabilityservices@hsutx.edu.

20. CMHC Diversity

Students, faculty, and staff represent a diversity of individual beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences. The program will provide a learning environment where diversity and individual differences are understood, respected, appreciated, and recognized as a source of strength. If there are aspects of the program that result in barriers to your inclusion or
accurate assessment of achievement, please notify the Program Director or any faculty member as soon as possible.
APPENDIX A
HSU Department of Psychology & Counseling
Advancement to Candidacy
Clinical Counseling and Marriage & Family Therapy

Name: ___________________________ ID #: __________________
Preferred Phone #: ___________________________ Email: ___________________________
First Semester & Year in Program: ___________________________ Semester & Year of Advancement: ___________________________

**Advancement to Candidacy Requirements:**
1. Resolve all incomplete grades, if applicable.
2. Maintain a minimum 3.00 cumulative and program grade point average.
3. Complete the following program requirements: CMHC 5310, 6302, 6304, 6306, 6350

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<td>CMHC 6305 Advanced Research Methods</td>
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**Total Units:** 60

Student Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: ________