

SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

MASTERS IN MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING  
PROGRAM MANUAL  
2021-2022



SUFFOLK  
UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF  
ARTS & SCIENCES

SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

2021-2022

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## **PROGRAM CORE FACULTY**

***There are four members of the core faculty. Faculty research interests are diverse and are listed below.***

*David Medoff, Ph.D.* (Farleigh Dickinson University, 1995). Associate Professor and Former Program Director. Forensic psychological assessment and consultation; forensic psychological testing; juvenile and adult sex offender risk assessment; admissibility of psychological evidence and expert testimony; criminal responsibility and competency to stand trial evaluations; attorney-mental health consultation; ethics and legal risk management.

*Mary Beth Medvide, Ph.D.* (Boston College, 2014). Assistant Professor. School-to-work transitions among racial and ethnic minority students; work-based learning programs for adolescents, and the development of meaning and hope for the future.

*David Shumaker, Ph.D.* (University of South Carolina, 2002). Professor and Program Director. Developmental psychopathology; existential-integrative therapy; child and adolescent anxiety disorders; high-conflict divorce; group-therapy training.

*John Smolinsky, Ph.D.* (Suffolk University, 2007) Assistant Professor of Clinical Practice and Clinical Training Coordinator. Veteran's Issues; Treatment of Addiction (SUDs & Gambling); Community Integration as a Recovery Tool; and working with Peer Providers to improve recovery outcomes.

## **PREAMBLE**

This program manual applies to students matriculating into the mental health counseling and dual-degree programs in the fall of 2021. Students who enrolled in the MHC and dual-degree programs prior to the fall of 2021 are expected to abide by the program expectations, curriculum, and course of study that were in effect at the time of their matriculation.

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Master of Science in Mental Health Counseling (MHC) program. We are happy that you have decided to start your journey toward becoming a counselor here in our program. This manual serves as a reference guide for the Masters in Mental Health Counseling and dual-degree students. It is designed to help you progress through the Suffolk University Master's Program in Mental Health Counseling. Students need to follow the Suffolk University Policy and Procedures, the Graduate Program Procedures, and the requirements and procedures of both the MHC Program and the Psychology Department. Dual-degree students are also required to follow the regulations and requirements of the departments and programs that house the Masters in Criminal Justice degree for the joint MHC/CJ degrees and Masters in Public Administration degree for the joint MHC/MPA degrees. It is your responsibility to be informed of all program requirements and policies and to follow the procedures outlined herein.

The manual supplements other important published material which you should be familiar with and must follow:

Suffolk University College of Arts and Sciences Student Handbook  
<http://www.suffolk.edu/campuslife/17425.php>

Suffolk University MHC Academic Catalog  
<https://suffolk.smartcatalogiq.com/CURRENT/Catalog/College-of-Arts-and-Sciences-Graduate-Programs/Mental-Health-Counseling/Master-of-Science-in-Mental-Health-Counseling>

Suffolk University Academic Catalog Graduate Policies  
<http://suffolk.smartcatalogiq.com/CURRENT/Catalog/Academic-Policies/Graduate-Academic-Policies>

American Counseling Association Ethics Code  
<http://www.counseling.org/resources/aca-code-of-ethics.pdf>

Massachusetts Licensing Board regulations for Licensed Mental Health Counselors  
<http://www.mass.gov/ocabr/licensee/dpl-boards/mh/regulations/rules-and-regs/262-cmr-200.html>

The manual is our current statement of the departmental and MHC program requirements. From time to time, however, requirements may be modified to reflect changes and growth of the MHC Program and the field of Mental Health Counseling. Changes to program requirements or procedures are communicated to students via email, blackboard, campus mail and/or public postings.

Although we try our best to keep the manual (and web material) up to date, we may occasionally make an error in the revision process. If an error is found, we will inform students and correct the error as soon as possible. However, in no case will the MHC program be bound to follow an erroneous statement or procedure, and students will be expected to bring their program of studies in line with correct requirements as quickly as possible. Should any questions arise, students may contact the Program Director, or the Department Chair, for clarification.



The only way that a student may deviate from the procedures listed in this manual is by submitting a formal petition and receiving program approval from the Program Director, the Masters Curriculum Committee, the Department Chair, and in certain circumstances the Dean's Office via the formal petition process outlined later in this manual. Should any exceptions, decisions, or clarifications about your particular requirements be made, make sure that you have a written, signed and dated memorandum on the matter, with copies placed in your department student file.

## **GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

The overarching mission of the Suffolk University Master of Science in Mental Health Counseling Program is to provide academic and applied training to students that will prepare them to pursue licensure as a licensed mental health counselor (LMHC) with the Board of Allied Mental Health and Human Services Professions in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Students anticipating pursuing licensure in states other than Massachusetts need to familiarize themselves with the licensing requirements of those states as not all coursework and field work expectations are the same. Through coursework, sensitive and student-focused advising and career support, and practicum/internship experiences, students learn a broad array of counseling skills and develop a deeper understanding of the theoretical bases of human behavior and counseling theories. Our dual-degree offerings provide students with the opportunity to receive additional training in criminal justice and public administration in the dual MHC/CJ and MHC/MPA programs. Dual-degree students will receive the same training and evaluation for the MHC portion of their dual-degree that MHC-only students receive and should abide by these same expectations outlined in this handbook. Students gain core professional competencies and become versed in scientifically-informed best practice approaches to assessment, case conceptualization, and treatment. Our program emphasizes developmental-contextual and multicultural frameworks for understanding and promoting mental health across diverse populations. Consistent with the mission of the College of Arts and Sciences the program emphasizes training in traditionally underserved and vulnerable populations.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

**GOAL 1:** To provide foundational training in the field of counseling that promotes student identification with the field of counseling.

**OBJECTIVE 1.1:** Students will gain broad theoretical and applied knowledge pertinent to the practice of counseling through classes in the core content domains of the field. The courses include counseling theory, counseling skills, psychological assessment and testing, psychological diagnoses, human development, cultural diversity and competency, professional orientation, and practicum and internship experiences.

Competency 1.1.1: Students demonstrate knowledge of human development from a multicultural perspective. They will successfully complete COUN 712 (Lifespan Development) and COUNS 733 (Counseling Diverse Populations).

Competency 1.1.2: Students demonstrate the capacity to accurately diagnose mental health disorders based upon the DSM-V framework. They will successfully complete COUNS 716 (Psychological Diagnosis).

Competency 1.1.3: Students demonstrate the capacity to apply empirically-supported case conceptualization and treatment approaches when engaged in counseling. Students will successfully complete COUNS 738 (Practicum I), 739 (Practicum II), 740 (Internship I), & 741 (Internship II) as indicated by passing grades and positive site supervisor evaluations of their clinical performance.

OBJECTIVE 1.2: Students will gain knowledge about the professional role and expectations of counselors through a self-reflective process. They will develop a sense of identity as counselors and members of the professional counseling community.

Competency 1.2.1: Students will demonstrate an ability to identify their biases, values, and historical experiences that impact their approach to counseling and understanding of the same.

Competency 1.2.2.: Students will demonstrate an ability and willingness to reflect on their emotional reactions to counseling experiences, their biases, and their values. Where indicated (i.e., when in the best interest of their clients and in accordance with a culturally sensitive approach to the discipline) students will make efforts to minimize biases that may negatively impact their treatment approach.

Competency 1.2.3: Students will be able to identify the major local, state-level and national counseling associations available to them and will demonstrate effort to either join these organizations, attend conferences sponsored by these organizations, and/or present research findings at conferences sponsored by these organizations.

OBJECTIVE 1.3: Students will learn values and ethical decision-making models that are consistent with engagement in ethical practice as counselors. They will develop an appreciation for the importance of pursuing life-long learning in their roles as counselors.

Competency 1.3.1: Students will demonstrate understanding of the American Counseling Association (ACA) ethical guidelines and local, national, and state regulations pertaining to the practice of mental health counseling. Students will successfully complete COUNS 728 (Professional Orientation).

Competency 1.3.2: Students will demonstrate knowledge of the continuing education expectations associated with licensure as a mental health counselor in the state of Massachusetts.

Competency 1.3.3: Students will be able to recognize common ethical issues experienced by counselors (e.g., dual role dilemmas, duty to warn) and apply a coherent decision-making approach to resolving ethical dilemmas they encounter in practice. They will seek supervision appropriately.

GOAL 2: To train students to become competent practitioners, to effectively integrate theory and skills from a variety of treatment modalities, and to integrate science and empirical research into clinical practice.

OBJECTIVE 2.1: Students will develop Core Counseling Skills from the MicroSkills and other empirically supported treatment training resources.

Competency 2.1.1: Students will demonstrate effective attending and listening skills, such as basic attending, open ended questioning, minimal encouragers, reflection of emotions, summary, and basic interpretation skills. Students will successfully complete COUNS 737 (Interpersonal Skills Lab).

Competency 2.1.2: Students will demonstrate the ability to conduct a basic risk assessment for client safety and risk of harm to others. They will be able to develop appropriate safety and preventative maintenance plans for their clients who are at-risk. They will seek supervision appropriately and refer clients to appropriate care providers as necessary.

Competency 2.1.3: Students will be able to assess a client by conducting a clinical interview and performing a mental status examination. They will develop accurate diagnostic impressions, a case conceptualization supported by data and based in theory, and an evidence based treatment plan.

**OBJECTIVE 2.2:** Students will be able to articulate and implement a sound theoretical orientation based upon knowledge of common factors research, evidence based and empirically supported treatment research, and researched based theoretical models of counseling (e.g., client centered, cognitive behavioral, psychodynamic, family systems, multicultural, and existential-humanistic orientations).

Competency 2.2.1: Students will successfully complete COUNS 713 (Counseling Theory) and articulate in writing and orally their theoretical orientation.

Competency 2.2.2: Students will demonstrate a deeper understanding of how their historical life experiences, culture, family of origin, and values impact their theoretical preference and approach to counseling.

Competency 2.2.3: Students will demonstrate an ability to approach case conceptualization from multiple perspectives and demonstrate flexibility and an appreciation for client factors when developing treatment plans.

**OBJECTIVE 2.3:** Students will adhere to a model of training whereby research informs their practice. They will become critical evaluators of research.

Competency 2.3.1: Students will successfully complete COUNS 715 (Research Methods) and demonstrate analytic research skills for evaluating the quality of the evidence for treatments advocated in social science literature.

Competency 2.3.2: Students will demonstrate sound clinical judgment when incorporating empirical knowledge into their practice, taking into account the client's cultural context, social environment, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, limitations, values, personal preferences and motivations.

Competency 2.3.3: Students will demonstrate knowledge of empirically supported and evidenced based approaches to the assessment of a client's bio-psycho-socio functioning and presence of mental health disorders. Students will successfully complete COUNS 717 (Psychological Testing).

**GOAL 3:** To train students to better understand the nature of social justice, especially as it applies to urban populations in clinical settings that serve diverse communities.

OBJECTIVE 3.1: Students will learn the theoretical foundations of social justice oriented mental health counseling.

Competency 3.1.1: Students will demonstrate knowledge about the specific theoretical models that have been developed to better understand the clinical concerns and needs of traditionally underserved clients and minorities. Students will successfully complete COUNS 733 (Counseling Diverse Populations).

Competency 3.1.2: Students will demonstrate knowledge of specific counseling issues regarding various underserved populations and how traditional models of counseling may not sufficiently address their needs.

Competency 3.1.3: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the broader social and political context that contributes to and can change injustices that impact clients.

OBJECTIVE 3.2: Students will promote social justice in their clinical practice.

Competency 3.2.1: Students will identify the needs of their clients and become informed about the community resources available to the client. They will demonstrate an appreciation for the obstacles that can make it difficult for their clients to pursue these resources.

Competency 3.2.2.: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the interrelationship between the counseling community and larger systems that promote the well-being of all people.

Competency 3.2.3: Students will demonstrate an appreciation for the importance of a counselor embodying the highest ethical standards in their professional and personal lives.

## **STUDENT COMMITMENT AND GENERAL EXPECTATIONS**

Suffolk University has specific community standards of professional conduct that apply to all students engaged in graduate study. For a description of these standards and students' rights and responsibilities, please see the Student Handbook <https://www.suffolk.edu/student-life/student-services/student-handbook>. In addition to the Student Handbook, students are expected to understand the graduate academic standing policies outlined in the academic catalog <http://suffolk.smartcatalogiq.com/CURRENT/Catalog/Academic-Policies/Graduate-Academic-Policies/Academic-Standing-and-Re-Entry-Policies/College-of-Arts-and-Sciences>.

For successful completion of the Mental Health Counseling Program, students must demonstrate proficiency in three domains: *academic excellence*, *ethical behavior and academic honesty*, and *professional behavior and competence*. Each domain of proficiency is described in detail below.

### **Academic Excellence**

The MHC program complies with the grading practices and regulations specified in the *Suffolk University Graduate Catalog*. Suffolk University College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) has developed overall graduate program policies for academic standing. See <http://suffolk.smartcatalogiq.com/CURRENT/Catalog/Academic-Policies/Graduate-Academic-Policies> for criteria that will trigger a review by the Graduate Academic Standing Committee (GASC). GASC has overall authority over student probation and dismissal.

Consistent with the policies of the College of Arts and Sciences, students must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (B) or better to continue the program in good standing, to enroll (or remain enrolled) in a practicum and internship, and to graduate from the program. Students must complete their counseling skills laboratory class (COUNS 737) with a "B" or higher and be in good standing on their practicum with an expectation of earning a grade of "B" or higher to apply for internship. If they do not obtain a 'B' in practicum, they cannot do internship and will be subject to review by the Graduate Academic Standing Committee (GASC). Students who receive a grade below a 'C' in any course will be required to repeat the course, even if their overall GPA is above a 3.0. A grade of B- or below and/or an overall GPA of less than 3.0 will result in the student being referred to the Graduate Academic Standing Committee (GASC) and may result in an academic warning, academic probation, or dismissal from the MHC program.

It should be noted that when grievances or academic concerns arise, if possible, the first step should be discussion between the student and faculty member. When this is not possible or the matter cannot be resolved, the next step is for the concerned party to discuss the matter with the Graduate Program Director, or the Department Chair. It should be noted that for the MHC program, the severity or frequency of some concerns may not be evident until the end of the student's first year in the program. In these situations, the matter may be referred directly to AMC, GASC, or Student Affairs.

### **Ethics and Academic Honesty**

Students are expected to comply with the code of ethics of the American Counseling Association (<https://www.counseling.org/resources/aca-code-of-ethics.pdf>) and state licensing regulations while in the field completing their practicum/internship placements (**LICENSING REGULATIONS** retrieved from <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/licensing-regulations->

[forms-policies-and-technical-assistance](#)). If there is evidence of possible unethical and unprofessional behavior as defined by the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (American Psychological Association 2010) and American Mental Health Counselors Code of Ethics (AMHCA 2010), students will be referred to the Graduate Program Director and ultimately the Graduate Academic Standing Committee or the University Student Conduct System dependent upon the behavior.

In addition, students are expected to comply with the community standards described in the Suffolk University Community Standards and Student Conduct System <http://www.suffolk.edu/studenthandbook/60802.php>. Failure to do so may result in a referral to the department or the corresponding committee.

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental to the University and the department, and are consistent with the ACA ethics code. All students are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Suffolk University policy for academic honesty. Continued participation in the program constitutes an acceptance of the conditions described in the publication and, thus, a commitment to honest academic conduct.

Faculty and students who suspect an occurrence of academic dishonesty may initially try to pursue a resolution directly with the offending party if the potential grade impact is limited. If this does not resolve the concern, or the scope of the infraction is of a larger scale, or direct discussion is deemed not an option, then the faculty will refer the matter to the University's Academic Misconduct Committee. The more detailed process of responding to potential academic violations is outlined in detail at the following website <http://www.suffolk.edu/studenthandbook/19863.php>.

### **Professional Behavior & Competence**

Students are expected to demonstrate professional behaviors essential to a successful practice as mental health counselors. If a student is observed to have significant difficulty in these areas, individual faculty will meet with the student and attempt to help the student address the issue informally. If the student continues to have difficulty across a number of settings and/or the concerns regarding professional behavior are deemed of high concern, the director of the MHC program will be notified and a plan of remediation will be developed with the student. In addition, at the end of each semester the program director, with input from appropriate faculty, will review each student's academic progress, interpersonal comportment and professionalism, and development of core clinical skills. A student will be notified in writing if significant concerns are evidenced in any of these areas and a remediation plan will be developed.

Students are expected to exhibit behaviors that demonstrate:

- Ethical conduct in accordance with professional ethical standards and codes
- Acceptance and affirmation of diversity and equity as core ethical values demonstrated in behavior (i.e., gender and sexual orientation, ability, and racial and ethnic identity)
- Overall emotional maturity: Responsibility, appropriate interpersonal boundaries, and emotional stability

- Active listening and empathic understanding
- Acceptance of constructive criticism
- Appropriate professional conduct (i.e., appropriate professional appearance, collegiality, and punctuality)
- Professional interpersonal communication, including checking and responding to all program-related emails in a timely manner
- Academic writing fluency
- The initiative and interpersonal capacity to effectively interview for and obtain a second year internship
- Collaborative facilitation skills: Adaptability, flexibility, rapport, and respect
- Complying with required lines of communication with supervisors and administrators with regard to clinical practice

Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the areas of clinical and professional competency outlined in the “Goals and Objectives” section of this manual. In addition, since ethical conduct and professional behavior is a critical component of a mental health practitioner's competence, students are expected to demonstrate ethical and professional behavior as described and referenced in this manual.

#### **Events that may warrant review from the Academic Misconduct Committee (AMC)**

Students are expected to practice ethical behavior in all learning environments and scenarios, including classrooms and laboratories, internships and practica, and study groups and academic teams. Cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, use of unauthorized electronic devices, self-plagiarism, fabrication or falsification of data, and other types of academic misconduct are treated as serious offenses that initiate a formal process of inquiry, one that may lead to disciplinary sanctions. Some cases of academic misconduct may be reviewed and resolved at the academic departmental level; other more egregious forms of academic misconduct necessitate a full review by the Academic Misconduct Committee (AMC).

For additional information, please refer to the academic misconduct policy [outlined on the website](#).

#### **Events that may warrant review from the Graduate Academic Standing Committee (GASC)**

A student is typically referred to and reviewed by GASC committee if they:

- Receive two or more grades of I or W in a given semester
- Receive any grade below B, with a cumulative GPA above 3.0
- Have a semester GPA below 3.0
- Have a cumulative GPA below 3.0
- Receive a less than satisfactory in practicum or internship evaluation
- Do not satisfactorily complete the requirements of a remediation plan
- Demonstrate serious difficulties in professional development and academic conduct
- Fail to conform to ethical and legal standards of the professional practice of counseling (ACA Ethics Code)
- Fail to make satisfactory progress toward completion of the degree
- Fail to meet the conditions of a probation set by the GASC

For additional information, please refer to the academic standing policies [outlined on the website](#).



**Events that may warrant review from the University Student Conduct System**

Suffolk University has established the Community Standards to promote and maintain an academic environment that is consistent with the mission of the University. The Student Conduct System addresses alleged violations of the Community Standards. Students are expected to carefully review the Community Standards and are required to comply. Students will be held accountable for violations. Sanctions will range from a warning to removal from University housing to dismissal from the University to the withholding or the revocation of a degree. Minimum sanctions have been established for certain violations.

For additional information, please refer to the Community Standards & Student Conduct System [outlined on the website](#)

## **COURSE SCHEDULE AND DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Course Work**

The list of required courses and the block schedule are included below and will be provided each year by your academic advisor. The purpose of the block schedule is to let students know which year and semester they should take each required course and to provide a sense of the days and times at which courses are typically offered. All students in the mental health counseling program are expected to enroll as full-time students and remain full-time students through the completion of their degree. Students in the dual-degree programs are expected to follow the same sequence of classes and enroll full-time in the MHC curriculum for the first two of the three full-time years they are completing their dual-degrees. Dual-degree students earn their degrees after successful completion of both program requirements. Students should be aware that the actual courses offered each semester (and the day and time they are offered) may vary from semester to semester as necessary to accommodate faculty availability, student needs, and programmatic changes. Outside work obligations should not take precedent over school requirements and students should be prepared to be on campus as many as four days per week with practicum and internship duties potentially requiring a five day per week school-related commitment. The courses are further described in the Suffolk University Academic Catalog. The curriculum is designed to provide students with a foundation in the broad bases of counseling; to expose students to theories of assessment, models of psychopathology and its treatment, research methods and design; to provide practical training in clinical skills and to expose students to some specialty areas within the field of mental health counseling. The courses required for program completion evolve over time in response to changes in the profession and licensure regulation changes. If a change is made to the curriculum, students in each cohort will be informed as to whether they need to abide by the change.

Full-time students are expected to enroll in 15 credits per semester (fall & spring only) during their two years of the program (5 courses per semester in the first year and 4 courses per semester in the second year as COUNS 740 & 741 are 6 credit courses). The University expects students to complete their Masters degrees within a 2 year period, 3 years for dual degree students, and students are expected to apply for graduation through their MySuffolk accounts to initiate the audit process (dual-degree students will apply for graduation in their third year of the program when they are completing their CJ or MPA requirements). Details regarding these policies can be found at the following website:

<http://suffolk.smartcatalogiq.com/CURRENT/Catalog/Academic-Policies/Graduate-Academic-Policies>. From time to time, the program offers summer courses that students may enroll in to meet elective requirements of our program. However, summer course offerings are not guaranteed and the program is designed for students to complete it on a full-time basis in two years (3 years for dual-degree students) without having to enroll in a summer course.

**MASTERS OF SCIENCE IN MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING**  
**REQUIRED COURSES AND AVAILABLE ELECTIVES**

**Required Courses**

(5 Courses, 15 Credits)

COUNS 712 Life Span Development  
COUNS 715 Methods of Research  
COUNS 728 Professional Orientation: Ethical/ Legal Issues  
COUNS 733 Counseling Diverse Populations  
COUNS 735 Group Counseling

**Counseling Requirements**

(8 Courses, 30 Credits)

COUNS 713 Counseling: Theory and Practice  
COUNS 716 Psychological Diagnosis  
COUNS 717 Introduction to Psychological Testing  
COUNS 737 Counseling Skills Lab  
COUNS 738 Mental Health Counseling Practicum I  
COUNS 739 Mental Health Counseling Practicum II  
COUNS 740 Counseling Internship I (6 credits)  
COUNS 741 Counseling Internship II (6 credits)

**Special Treatment Issue Requirement**

(1 Course, 3 Credits)\*

COUNS 727 Substance Abuse & Treatment  
or  
COUNS 729 Human Sexuality Seminar

**Electives**

(4 Courses, 12 Credits)

COUNS 725 Forensic Psychological Assessment  
COUNS 726 Family Therapy  
COUNS 732 Psychological Disorders of Childhood and Adolescence  
COUNS 910 Independent Study

\* *Note:* The course not chosen for the Special Treatment Issue Requirement can be used as an elective

## **COURSE SEQUENCING FOR FULL-TIME STUDENTS**

Taking the courses in the order listed below will ensure that you meet all prerequisite requirements for courses and are fully prepared to participate in the Mental Health Counseling Program as a full time student (15 credits per semester). Students are required to meet with their advisor in person during their first year of study. On occasion summer course offerings may be available but this is not guaranteed as their availability depends upon resources and student interest. Students should therefore plan to be enrolled full time (i.e., 15 credits per semester) during the fall/spring semesters if they wish to graduate in two years. Students seeking to deviate from the recommended course sequencing require the permission of the Masters Graduate Curriculum Committee.

### **Year One Fall Semester**

COUNS 712: Life Span Development (3 credits)
COUNS 713: Counseling: Theory & Practice (3 credits)
COUNS 717: Introduction to Psychological Testing (3 credits): Prerequisite to Counseling 716
COUNS 737: Counseling Skills Lab (3 credits)
COUNS 738: Mental Health Counseling Practicum I (3 credits)

### **Year One Spring Semester**

COUNS 728: Professional Orientation: Ethical/ Legal Issues (3 credits)
COUNS 715: Methods of Research (3 credits)
COUNS 726: Family Therapy, or other elective if available and space pending (3 credits)*
COUNS 732: Psychological Disorders of Childhood and Adolescence, or other elective if available and space pending (3 credits)*
COUNS 739: Mental Health Counseling Practicum II (3 credits)

### **Year Two Fall Semester**

COUNS 740: Clinical Internship I: Prerequisite COUNS 738/739 (6 credits)
COUNS 716: Psychological Diagnosis (3 credits)
COUNS 729: Human Sexuality Seminar (3 credits)** and/or COUNS 727: Substance Abuse & Treatment (3 credits)** (students must take at least one of these two classes to meet core requirements)
COUNS 729: Human Sexuality and/or COUNS 727: Substance Abuse (the second of the above two courses) or other elective if available and space pending (3 credits)*

### **Year Two Spring Semester**

COUNS 741: Clinical Internship II (6 credits): Prerequisite COUNS 740
COUNS 735: Group Psychotherapy (3 credits)
COUNS 733: Counseling Diverse Populations (3 credits)
COUNS 725 Forensic Psychological Assessment or other elective if available and space pending (3 credits)*

\* = Elective

\*\* = 1 of these 2 required for licensure

## **PROGRAM AND COURSE ADVISING**

Upon matriculation in the fall semester of a student's first year, students will be assigned an advisor. The advisor is available to the student to discuss all course related concerns, including course scheduling and best electives to pursue given a student's career interests. The advisor is also available to discuss long-term career interests and any other concerns related to the student's development as a mental health counselor. It is the student's responsibility to seek advising. Within the first full year of enrollment, all students need to meet with their advisors in person on one occasion and both the student and advisor need to sign the first year advising form documenting that they have met. The form will be placed in the student's file. Students also will need to sign a form documenting that they have reviewed and agree to abide by the terms of the student manual. Aside from the mandatory first-year meeting, students are not required to meet with their advisors in person prior to registering for classes each semester. We believe a critical component of a student's professional development is the ability to recognize the need for consultation and advising, and seek these resources appropriately. We strongly encourage students to meet with their advisors in person should they have any questions. The student advisor and MHC program will not be held accountable for mistakes in course scheduling that result from a student's failure to seek appropriate advising. Students are also encouraged to seek advising from the Clinical Training Coordinator (CTC) regarding practicum and internship related concerns. Students in the dual-degree programs will also have advisors in their other degree program. It is the student's responsibility in these cases to become informed about the advising expectations in their other degree program and to adhere to those policies.

Students in the dual-degree programs will be assigned a MHC advisor and an advisor from their other degree program. However, the MHC advisor will oversee the dual-degree student's overall progress in their dual-degree program course of study and, in close consultation with the student's other advisor, will serve as the student's ultimate authority on how to pursue a course of study that results in a timely completion of the dual-degree. At no point in time will a student be allowed to use an MHC course to apply towards their other degree and courses in the other degree programs cannot be used towards the MHC degree.

## **PRACTICUM AND INTERNSHIP**

Students are required to complete an approximately 9 month practicum and an approximately 9 month internship as part of the 60-credit master's program in mental health counseling. Students' activities pertaining to practicum and internship are expected to take place within the boundaries of the course start and end dates during the academic year. Students may not start or end these placements prior to or following the semester dates associated with their enrollment in these courses. Students may only count their hours toward licensure, and will only be covered by Suffolk University's liability insurance, when enrolled in the practicum and internship courses, i.e., from early September through early May. Practicum or Internship training periods should not be terminated early even in the event that the necessary hours have been accrued.

This section of the manual describes how to find a practicum/internship and all the requirements involved. If you have questions after reading the information below, you are welcome to seek out the Program Director (Dr. Shumaker) and the Clinical Training Coordinator (Dr. Smolinsky).

### **Practicum Options**

Practicum can be completed in one of two ways: Students may either secure a clinical placement to work with clients at a clinic, school, residential program, etc., or they may complete a role-play practicum option. Students with clinical placements will be using the client hours for the experience, while students in the role-play option will be required to engage in a series of role-plays with each other. Either way, every student must enroll in the practicum course in the fall and spring (COUNS 738 and 739). Either option will meet criteria for practicum for licensure as a licensed mental health counselor (LMHC).

Clinical practicum placements take place during the day Monday through Friday during normal business hours and it is the responsibility of the trainee to arrange a schedule with the site that does not interfere with necessary classroom attendance.

The practicum class (COUNS 738/739) meets in the evening, and the role plays and individual supervision occur outside of class. All courses in the program are scheduled for the late afternoon and early evening (starting around 5pm and 8pm).

### **How to Find a Clinical Practicum**

Many resources are available to help students find a practicum placement. When admitted to the master's program, students receive a welcome email from the director with instructions regarding which courses to register for, along with instructions to contact the Clinical Training Coordinator (CTC) regarding practicum options. The CTC reaches out to all newly admitted students with instructions for how to secure a clinical practicum for students interested in this option. The CTC shares several resources to help students find a clinical practicum, including a) the program data base of practicum sites currently and recently used by students, b) instructions for how the student may establish a practicum at a new site, d) the Practicum & Internship Timeline & Progress form e) the training agreement listing all requirements for the experience, and f) updates about which sites are still accepting applications. The CTC is available to students via email, phone, and in-person meetings to help them identify relevant sites based on their interests, adapt their resumes for the relevant sites, compose cover letters, interview at sites, etc.

While many resources are available, it is ultimately up to the individual student to put in the effort to secure a clinical practicum and to reach out for assistance as needed. Students who choose to not pursue a clinical placement, or who are unsuccessful at securing one, participate in the role-play practicum on campus instead. While students are not required to complete an application for the clinical practicum experience, if they are choosing to do an off-site placement, they are required to submit the Practicum Training Site Search Progress form at various points throughout the search process as well as a completed training agreement with the CTC by August 15 prior to the start of the placement.

### **Application Process**

Students who are completing practicum are eligible to apply to go on internship the following year. It is the student's responsibility to seek and obtain an internship and we do not guarantee a student will be placed in an internship during the first interview cycle as success of obtaining a placement depends significantly upon student initiative, flexibility and interviewing ability. Students must be in good academic standing to be approved for internship.

To be approved, the student must submit an application showing

1. Grade received in the fall Counseling Theories & Practice course (COUNS 713)
2. Grade received in the fall Counseling Skills Lab course (COUNS 737)
3. The student is in good standing in the Practicum course (COUNS 738)
4. Overall grade point average
5. Number of anticipated credit hours to be completed before beginning Internship
6. Sites of interest that the student has contacted or interviewed with so far

Students must have a grade of B or above in Interpersonal Skills, and the Practicum course. They must have a GPA of 3.0 or above overall. They must also demonstrate professional behavior across all academic contexts in order to be approved for internship. Students who are subject to a remediation plan based upon the mid- and end-of-year program review of their performance must have fulfilled the obligations of the remediation plan in order to apply for internship.

The application is due on February 1 each year. Many internship sites start accepting applications and interviewing applicants in early January, so students must begin contacting sites before this. Students will be expected to submit the Internship Training Site Search Progress form at various points throughout their search process:

- June 15
- July 15
- August 15 – along with final agreement

Students who do not submit forms or whose progress reported is cause for concern, will be asked to schedule a meeting with the CTC to review progress and develop a plan of action.

### **How to Find a Clinical Internship**

As with practicum, many resources are available to help students find an internship placement. The clinical training coordinator (CTC) reaches out to all students currently on practicum with instructions for how to secure an internship, including a) the program data base of sites currently and recently used by students, b) instructions for how the student may establish an internship at a new site, c) the training agreement listing all requirements for the experience, and d) updates about which sites are still accepting applications. The CTC is available to students via email,

phone, and in-person meetings to help them identify relevant sites based on their interests, adapt their resumes for the relevant sites, compose cover letters, interview at sites, etc.

In addition, students are invited to the annual Meet and Greet in early or mid-December where students currently on practicum and internship share their experiences and students network and exchange information about sites informally. Finally, students will be given access to the Blackboard page titled “Mental Health Counseling Program Resources” where the CTC posts information about training opportunities received from sites. The folder is called Practicum and Internship Resources.

While many resources are available, it is ultimately up to the individual student to put in the effort to secure an internship and to reach out for assistance as needed. If a student is unable to find a suitable internship and produce an approved training agreement by the department deadline of August 15<sup>th</sup>, they will be unable to enroll in any classes for that year and will need to take a leave of absence from the University with the expectation that they will resume their studies the following academic calendar year assuming they have secured a suitable internship placement by then.

### **The Importance of Starting Applications Early**

Students are advised to start looking for a practicum as soon as they are admitted to the program and to start looking for an internship by the middle of the fall semester of their first school year. Many sites begin accepting applications and interviewing in January. In addition, some sites require a CORI background check, which may take weeks, and/or a Clinical Affiliation Agreement, which may take months, before the placement can be finalized.

### **Practicum and Internship Requirements**

As described above, practicum can be completed in one of two ways (a clinical placement or a role-play practicum). The checklist below outlines the requirements for clinical practicum and clinical internship, and does not apply to the role-play practicum option:

#### *General Requirements*

- \_\_\_ The student’s activities must involve mental health counseling:  
Assessment, diagnosis, treatment, counseling, psychotherapy, psychoeducation, consultation (not vocational guidance, academic school guidance, I/O consulting, teaching, research)
- \_\_\_ A supervisor must be on site when the student is seeing clients
- \_\_\_ Supervisor credentials:
  - \_\_\_ LMHC, LICSW, LMFT, licensed psychologist with HSP certification, psychiatrist, or licensed nurse with psychiatry specialty, and
  - \_\_\_ 3 years full-time or part-time equivalent experience after this license (full-time experience involves 10 direct client hours per week)
- \_\_\_ Supervision meetings must be at least 45 consecutive minutes
- \_\_\_ Supervisor must conduct regular evaluations of the supervisee's performance (shall include but not be limited to direct observation and review of process notes)
- \_\_\_ The site must be regulated by the state or other appropriate entity, or otherwise exempt, and may not be a private practice or group private practice



*Practicum at Field Placement Site*

Licensure Requirements

- At least 100 clock hours, including
  - A) 40 hours direct client contact (a contact hour = 45 minutes in at least 15-min segments)
  - B) 25 hours supervision:
    - 10 hours individual supervision (training site responsibility)
    - 5 hours group supervision
    - 10 hours either individual or group supervision
- Note:* 24 hours of group supervision will be provided in class on campus at Suffolk

Suffolk Requirements

The program at Suffolk requires more than the minimum required for licensure

- At least 210 clock hours, at least 8 hours/week, can be 1 or 2 days/week, spread across the year, or larger time commitment as required by the training site
- Case load of 3-5 clients, with at least two continuing individual cases (at least 4 sessions each)
- Weekly 1-hour supervision meetings with site supervisor who has the above credentials

*Internship at Field Placement Site*

Licensure Requirements

- At least 600 clock hours, including:
  - A) 240 hours direct client contact (a contact hour = 45 minutes in at least 15-min segments)
  - B) 45 hours supervision:
    - 15 hours individual supervision (training site responsibility)
    - 15 hours group supervision
    - 15 hours either individual or group supervision
- Note:* 24 hours of group supervision will be provided in class on campus at Suffolk
- Where the Internship is conducted in the intern's place of employment, the Internship site must provide additional activities and supervision clearly delineated from the intern's usual work activities

Suffolk Requirements

The program at Suffolk requires more than the minimum required for licensure

- At least 600 clock hours (240 direct contact hours, at least 24 hours/week, can be 2 or 3 days/week, spread across the year, or larger time commitment as required by the training site
- Case load of at least 5 clients, with at least two continuing individual cases (at least 4 sessions each)
- Weekly 1-hour supervision meetings with site supervisor who has the above credentials

You may begin your placement over the summer, especially if you need to participate in trainings, etc., but you may not begin counting the hours until the Practicum/Internship course begins in September because you are not enrolled in the course.

Students are responsible for ensuring that their practicum and internship placements meet all the criteria to fulfill the requirements for licensure as a licensed mental health counselor (LMHC). These requirements should be discussed at the interview stage before the student makes a final commitment to a site. Students are encouraged to bring to the interview a list of the requirements so that the specifics of the training experience can be discussed.

In order to meet the requirements as an Approved Supervisor, the supervisor must be a licensed mental health counselor (LMHC), a licensed independent clinical social worker (LICSW), a licensed marriage and family therapist (LMFT), a licensed psychologist with health service provider certification, or a licensed physician or nurse with sub-specialization in psychiatry, and have at least 3 years full-time or part-time equivalent post-licensure experience. If the supervisor does not meet all these requirements, the practicum or internship will not count toward licensure as an LMHC.

Students should familiarize themselves with all the practicum and internship requirements as summarized in the table above and described in detail on the website of the Board of Registration of Allied Mental Health and Human Services Professions. The website is <http://www.mass.gov/ocabr/licensee/dpl-boards/mh>

Students are allowed to use a paid job experience as practicum or internship, as long as the experience meets all the requirements. Refer to the requirements listed above and described at the website above.

If you have any questions about whether a given practicum or internship will meet all the requirements, please contact the clinical training coordinator who can help you negotiate the details with a potential site. Your practicum or internship placement is not finalized until the clinical training coordinator has approved your training agreement.

### **Training Agreements**

Once students secure a practicum or internship, they are required to complete a Training Agreement in collaboration with the site supervisor to make sure the training will meet all of the requirements described above. The site supervisor and the student will complete and sign the Training Agreement in order to describe the training experience and ensure a mutual commitment. The supervisor will certify that the training meets all the requirements for either practicum or internship and that the supervisor meets all the criteria for an Approved Supervisor. The student will turn in the Training Agreement to the Clinical Training Coordinator as soon as the details have been finalized. The deadline for turning in the agreement is August 15 prior to the commencement of the class. If a student has not identified a viable placement and turned in a completed training agreement, they will not be eligible to take the class and will need to take a leave of absence and reapply for the next application cycle.

Again, your practicum or internship placement is not finalized until the clinical training coordinator has approved your training agreement. A new Training Agreement will be required if you are staying at your practicum site for a second year, i.e., continuing for internship.

### **Course Requirements**

Students must enroll in COUNS 738 (fall) and 739 (spring) for practicum and COUNS 740 (fall) and 741 (spring) for internship in order to receive academic credit for the experience, participate in didactics, and receive group supervision as required for licensure as an LMHC. All courses are

scheduled in the late afternoon and evening to allow students to be at their sites during regular business hours. Students may not miss class due to their practicum/internship responsibilities. Students may not switch sections mid-year as the practicum and internship courses are year-long classes and there is a need for group cohesion and continuity of supervision to be maintained.

### **Liability Insurance**

Students who are at clinical sites working with clients need liability insurance for their protection. All students in the master's program will automatically be covered under Suffolk University's general liability insurance policy when enrolled in the practicum and internship courses, i.e., from early September through early May. If students want to start at their training sites before classes start in September, or want to stay at their training sites after classes end in early May, they must purchase their own liability insurance.

Even if on practicum or internship only during the school year, i.e. early September through early May, we strongly recommend that students purchase their own liability insurance coverage for added protection. Students choosing this should purchase the insurance in August before starting their fall placements. Liability insurance can easily be purchased through the American Counseling Association at the following website for minimal cost:

<https://www.counseling.org/membership/aca-and-you/students>.

### **Evaluation Form**

All students on practicum and internship will be reviewed by their supervisors. Students who are in the role-play practicum will be reviewed by their Practicum course instructors. Students who are at clinical sites will be reviewed by their site supervisors.

The evaluation form assesses clinical skills in a variety of domains and uses a criterion-referenced rating scale:

1. Far below expectations
2. Below expectations
3. Meets expectations
4. Above expectations
5. Far above expectations

### **Fall Evaluations**

The Clinical Training Coordinator (CTC) sends out evaluation forms in early December to the site supervisors of all students who are currently at a clinical practicum or internship site. The CTC reviews the evaluations for any concerns, low ratings, and/or negative comments, and follows up with site supervisors as needed. If a student receives three or more ratings on their site supervisor evaluation of '1' (e.g., Far below expectations) then this would be considered multiple indications of serious concern regarding their performance. The student would be referred to the Graduate Program Director and the Clinical Training Coordinator for a review of their performance and development of a remediation plan. Any concerns are discussed with the student and relayed to the Practicum/Internship course instructors who assign the grades for the courses. Students in the role-play practicum will be evaluated by their Practicum course instructors. If a student is asked to leave an internship placement during their first semester by the site for any reason or if the CTC, Program Director, and MHC Committee determines a student is not performing at a minimally competent level to continue the internship experience, the student will discontinue the internship immediately and will need to plan to apply for a new

internship to commence in the following fall semester. Students that fail to make satisfactory academic progress will be reviewed by the Graduate Academic Standing Committee at the end of the fall semester.

### **January Visits**

The CTC visits each student currently on clinical practicum or internship in order to make sure the student is receiving high quality training and supervision at the site. The student is asked to arrange a 3-way meeting in early January between the site supervisor, the student, and the CTC to check in on how things are going and discuss any questions and issues that may have come up. Before the meeting, the student is invited to apprise the CTC of any problems that need to be addressed. During the meeting, the CTC will facilitate a conversation about the student's role at the site, responsibilities, strengths, growth edges, and learning goals for the remainder of the year. The CTC will also check in on the licensure requirements described above to help the student make sure that the training will meet the criteria. An additional purpose of the meeting is for the CTC to build strong partnerships with sites in order to facilitate placements for future students.

If a student is struggling, the CTC will help the supervisor and the student design a plan of action to address any gaps in learning and identify goals for remediation. The CTC then stays in touch with the student and supervisor over the following months to check in on the student's progress.

### **Spring Evaluations**

The CTC sends out end-of-year evaluation forms to site supervisors in early April, reviews the evaluations for any low ratings, negative comments, and problems described by the site supervisor, and forwards the evaluations to the Practicum/Internship course instructors. Course instructors are responsible for reviewing the evaluations and assigning each student a grade for the course. Students in the role-play practicum will be evaluated by their Practicum course instructors.

If a student receives three or more ratings on their site supervisor evaluation of '1' (e.g., Far below expectations) then this would be considered multiple indications of serious concern regarding their performance. The student would be referred to the Program Director for a review of their performance and development of a remediation plan. If a substandard site supervisor evaluation impacts a student's end of course letter grade resulting in the student receiving below a 'B' in the class, then the matter would be reviewed by the College of Arts and Sciences Graduate Academic Standing Committee.

Students are responsible for reminding their supervisors to submit the evaluation in time before grades are due in May. This is especially important for students on internship who must have a grade on file for all courses in order to be cleared for graduation.

### **Student Evaluations of Sites/Supervisors**

The CTC sends out evaluation forms in early May to all students who are currently at a clinical practicum or internship site, inviting them to rate the supervisor and the site in terms of the quality of supervision and training received. The CTC reviews the evaluations and follows up with students as needed. To protect student confidentiality, concerns are never relayed to sites or supervisors in an individual manner, but rather aggregated across students and across years.

**Licensure Forms**

At the end of the practicum/internship training experience, students are responsible for asking their site supervisors to fill out the relevant forms as needed for their licensure applications. Students must keep these forms until they are ready to apply for licensure. The forms can be accessed at <http://www.mass.gov/ocabr/licensee/dpl-boards/mh>.

**Post-Master's Degree Requirements**

After completing the master's degree, students are required to complete additional client hours and supervision hours as described on the website of the Board of Registration of Allied Mental Health and Human Services Professions. Students are encouraged to review the requirements described. The website is <http://www.mass.gov/ocabr/licensee/dpl-boards/mh>.

## **ENROLLMENT, RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS, LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND WITHDRAWAL**

The MHC program has been designed as a full-time study program and, therefore, students must register for a full-time course load for all two years of course work. Students must complete two years of full-time study, or its equivalent, at Suffolk University during which students must be in full-time residence. Students are expected to be continuously enrolled (i.e., registered for Fall and Spring semesters) from the date of matriculation in the program until the successful completion of the program unless the student has applied for a leave of absence (see below). Students are expected to complete a MHC degree within five years of initial enrollment in order to ensure the successful mastery of appropriate competencies that reflect the advancements in the field and to remain in compliance with University policy. Failure to complete the degree within the 5 year window will result in the individual being required to re-apply to the program with no guarantee of acceptance and may also result in a loss of credit of some or all previous coursework if the individual is re-admitted into the program.

Students cannot be enrolled in two programs at the same time unless they have been accepted into one of the dual programs (MHC/CJ or MHC/MPA). Students need to notify the program if they plan to pursue a certificate or degree outside of Suffolk University while concurrently enrolled in the MHC program. The request will be considered by the Program Director, Department Chair, and/or Masters Curriculum Committee and, if necessary, the Dean's Office to determine it is not a conflict or will negatively impact a student's ability to attend to the demands of the MHC program. Students in the dual-degree programs will not receive their MHC degree until they have completed the requirements of both graduate programs. If a student decides to discontinue one of the dual-degree programs but remain enrolled in the other, they need to seek approval from both program directors immediately in writing, the CAS Dean's Office, and the Registrar's Office.

Students receiving specific training or scientific grants may need to adjust the timeline of their MHC trajectory to accommodate the additional appropriate program-related activity. Under these conditions, students may petition the Program Director and Department Chair to accommodate their grant's timeline. If a student requires part-time study as part of the grant (e.g., the other part-time grant work is devoted to related research), the department reserves the right to place constraints on the length (in years) of part-time program status. We may also reject the petition if the department cannot reasonably accommodate the student's request.

The University has specific policies outlined for withdrawals and leaves of absences, as well as forms that students are required to complete for both. Students considering these options need to refer to the University policy, follow the appropriate steps, and complete the appropriate forms if necessary. The link to the policy and forms is provided here: <http://www.suffolk.edu/withdrawal>

### **Course Incompletes/Withdrawals**

A student may request an incomplete for a course in which he or she has satisfactorily completed (i.e., with a grade of "B" or better) a minimum of half of the required work for the course. The timeline for completion of a course is to be jointly determined by the student and the instructor, but shall not exceed one year from the time the incomplete is approved. An incomplete must be formally evaluated by the instructor within a year or it may be converted to a failing grade. A student may withdraw from a class after the normal drop/add deadline only with written approval

from the Student Affairs Office due to serious extenuating circumstances. Details regarding grading, including incompletes, withdrawals, grade-equivalents, etc., can be found at this website: <http://suffolk.smartcatalogiq.com/CURRENT/Catalog/Academic-Policies/Graduate-Academic-Policies>.

Withdrawing & Leave of Absence website: <https://www.suffolk.edu/student-life/student-services/student-handbook/university-policies-for-students-cas-sbs/withdrawing>

### **Student Accommodations**

*Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973* offer guidelines for curriculum modifications and adaptations for students with documented disabilities. If applicable, students may obtain accommodation recommendations from the Office of Disability Services following the appropriate procedures (<https://www.suffolk.edu/academics/advising-student-services/disability-services>). This should be done well in advance of the semester in which the student hopes to utilize an accommodation.

## **STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

Professional growth and development requires ongoing attention to personal health and well-being. We encourage students to engage in good self-care to ensure effective professional functioning. Students are expected to continuously self-monitor issues related to self-care and to be open to feedback from others, so that support and intervention can be utilized when disruptions in self-care that impact functioning occur. Students are welcome to discuss issues of academic and professional concern with the program faculty, and to seek support from their Program Advisor, the Program Director, the Clinical Training Coordinator, or any other faculty member. Students who disclose personal information should understand that the faculty serve in an academic and not clinical role, and that the faculty will direct the student to the appropriate resources, but cannot guarantee confidentiality if the student concerns potentially impact their ability to meet program demands. If a student experiences concerns of a personal nature, they should seek professional services as needed. Students are also advised to be aware of TITLE IX regulations regarding the limits of confidentiality pertaining to disclosure of sexual assault (<https://www.suffolk.edu/about/mission-history/policies-procedures/title-ix-at-suffolk>).

Many trainees in the mental health field find it beneficial to seek counseling or psychotherapy during their graduate training and we encourage interested students to do so. Interested students should contact the Suffolk Counseling Center (<https://www.suffolk.edu/student-life/health-wellness/counseling-services> ). There are a number of other support programs available throughout the University. Information about other student services such as the Wellness Services (<https://www.suffolk.edu/student-life/health-wellness>) and Diversity Services (<https://www.suffolk.edu/about/diversity-equity-and-inclusion>) can be found in the Suffolk University College of Arts and Sciences Student Handbook (<https://www.suffolk.edu/student-life/student-services/student-handbook>). The Center for Learning and Academic Success can be an important academic resource for graduate students, particularly if ESOL issues have been noted by the student or faculty (<https://www.suffolk.edu/academics/advising-student-services/academic-success-services>). Finally, international students should be aware of the services provided by the International Services Office at <https://www.suffolk.edu/admission/international-students>.



## TRANSFER OF ACADEMIC CREDITS

Applicants who have completed graduate course work at other accredited institutions may transfer up to 6 of their completed credits and apply those 6 credits toward the completion of a graduate degree at Suffolk University **only if** the following conditions are met:

- The applicant received a grade of B or higher in the courses
- The credits were earned no more than seven years before the student's matriculation at Suffolk University
- The credits were not applied towards another degree

*Note:* Transfer credit is subject to the final approval of the director of the MHC program, the Department Chair, the Master's Curriculum Committee, the Registrar's Office, and the Dean's Office.

Incoming students must submit transfer requests by June 1<sup>st</sup> before their first semester of study at Suffolk so that their academic plan can be adjusted accordingly. Transfer credit requests should be submitted to the Program Director in writing along with a copy of the syllabus and official transcript reflecting successful completion of the course. The Program Director, in conjunction with the Masters Curriculum Committee, Department Chair, and appropriate faculty, will then review the course syllabus and make an initial determination regarding the transfer of credit. The Department Chair makes the final department level determination and the recommendation is then passed onto the Dean's Office for their review and approval/disapproval. Courses that were completed as a 'Pass' are not considered for transfer. Practicum and Internship experiences are not eligible for transfer.

Students currently enrolled in the MHC program who are interested in taking and receiving program credit for a course in another program within Psychology or another department at Suffolk must seek permission from the Program Director before registering and follow the same review process outlined above (please see procedures for petitioning to take a doctoral-level Psychology class below). In rare circumstances, a student may receive permission to take a course outside of Suffolk University while enrolled in the MHC program and apply that course credit toward completion of their MHC degree at Suffolk. This is considered when a student wants to take an elective that Suffolk University simply does not offer or under other select extenuating circumstances. There is no guarantee in these cases that the request will be granted if suitable alternative electives at Suffolk are available to the student. As previously stated, these requests should be made to the Program Director and are subject to the same approval process outlined above in reference to transfer credits at the time an incoming student matriculates into the program.

## PETITIONS TO TAKE A DOCTORAL CLASS

- 1) Master's in Mental Health Counseling students may petition the Master's Curriculum Committee (MCC) to take up to one doctoral psychology course to apply towards their Master's degree if they meet the following criteria:
  - a) They are in good standing in our program and are not subject to any ongoing disciplinary procedures
  - b) They have completed the equivalent of one year of full-time graduate studies in our program (30 credits)
  - c) They have a cumulative G.P.A. of 3.90 or higher in our program
  - d) The doctoral course they are applying to take would be considered an elective in the MHC program of study (i.e., it is not being proposed to replace a required course).
  - e) The student assumes the responsibility and risk for ensuring the class they petition to take meets the requirements of the Massachusetts Licensing Board regulations as an acceptable elective. The regulations specify the following:

*Electives Areas.* Graduate Level Courses other than required Graduate Level Courses must be elective Graduate Level Courses which include knowledge and skills in the practice of Mental Health Counseling. Appropriate Graduate Level Courses may include, but are not limited to, any of the content areas listed under 262 CMR 2.05(2)(a)1. through 10., as well as:

1. best practices for maintaining and terminating counseling and psychotherapy;
  2. consultation skills;
  3. outreach and prevention strategies;
  4. diagnosis and treatment issues;
  5. working with special populations;
  6. professional identity and practice issues, including historical perspectives;
  7. mental health regulations and policy;
  8. management of community mental health programs.
- 2) If the student meets all of the above criteria to petition to take a doctoral level class they must submit a petition in writing to the MCC within 2 weeks of the start of the registration period for which the course is being offered. The petition must outline the course they would like to take, a justification for why that course would meet their specific curriculum needs, how it fits within the above Elective Area criteria, and an acknowledgement that the student assumes the responsibility and risk of ensuring that the course will meet licensure requirements. The MCC will then confer and provide a recommendation to the Department Chair and Doctoral Training Coordinator (DTC). If the MCC, Chair, and DTC unanimously approve the petition, and there is an available seat in the course after Clinical Program students have registered, the student can seek the permission of the specific course instructor to take the course. The Course Instructor will have final say in whether they will allow the student to take the class. If any one of those parties (i.e., the MCC, Chair, DTC, Course Instructor) do not approve of the petition, the student will not be able to take the course. Permission to take a doctoral course should not be interpreted as an initial step towards entry into the doctoral program.

## **ACCREDITATION & LICENSING**

Suffolk University offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in more than 70 areas of study through its College of Arts and Sciences, Sawyer Business School, and Law School. The University, within which the Mental Health Counseling Program is housed, is accredited by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE). NECHE is one of eight accrediting commissions in the United States that provide institutional accreditation on a regional basis. Accreditation is voluntary and applies to the institution as a whole. NECHE, which is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, accredits about 200 institutions in the six-state New England region.

This program is designed to meet the Massachusetts Division of Professional Licensure requirements for licensure as a Mental Health Counselor. Further, we have made every attempt to design the training program to comply with these regulations so that students may sit for the state licensing examination as a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC) upon completion of sufficient clinical hours accrued during the practicum, internship, and/or post-degree training. Therefore, graduates of this designated program who decide to apply for licensing as a (LMHC) typically will meet the educational requirements for licensing. However, as licensing boards are ever changing, are their own independent entity, and are not beholden to a university's best interpretation of their regulations, we cannot guarantee a former student's application for licensure will be approved.

Our courses are developed to be consistent with Massachusetts licensing requirements (please see Appendix C for the list). However, in each state and/or international jurisdiction there may be additional requirements that must be satisfied or even specific program accreditations, practicum or internship hours requirements, or course requirements that our program simply is not designed to meet and cannot fulfill. Therefore, while our faculty are available to consult and answer student's questions, students also need to consult with the licensing boards in the states that they wish to practice to determine if our program meets that state's licensing requirements. Furthermore, requirements for licensing do change over time. For exact information about current requirements, please contact the state or provincial licensing board in the jurisdiction in which you plan to apply early in your first year of study, and work with the advisor to tailor your coursework accordingly.

## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The information below is aimed at helping students in the Masters in Mental Health Counseling (MHC) program understand tuition costs and financial aid available. For specific questions regarding tuition and payments, students are encouraged to contact the Bursar's Office at 617-573-8407. For specific questions regarding financial aid, students should contact the Office of Student Financial Services at 617-573-8470.

### **Tuition Costs**

- Information about tuition and fees can be found at the Bursar's Office website, <https://www.suffolk.edu/about/directory/bursars-office>.
- Please check the Bursar's Office website, <https://www.suffolk.edu/about/directory/bursars-office/tuition-fees/graduate>, for any additional fees/costs.

Tuition rates typically increase annually. The 'total cost' for you to complete the MHC program will depend on your enrollment status, your pace/time to completion and aid awarded.

### **Merit Funding/Financial Aid**

All CAS graduate students are considered for merit funding at time of admission to the university. Please check out the Financial Aid Office website, <https://www.suffolk.edu/student-financial-services>

Students interested in applying for federal funding, such as the Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loan and Graduate PLUS Loan must complete the FAFSA at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). Students must be a US Citizen or an eligible non-citizen to complete the FAFSA. Students will need to complete a new FAFSA each academic year and students are encouraged to complete the FAFSA as soon as it is available.

Graduate students, especially those who are not eligible for the federal loan programs, may wish to consider applying for a private/alternative loan to help with tuition costs/educational expenses. Information on private/alternative loans can be found here, <https://www.suffolk.edu/student-financial-services/types-of-financial-aid/graduate-students/grad-loan-financing-options>

Students must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) in order to be considered for funding in subsequent years. The university SAP policy can be found here, <https://www.suffolk.edu/student-financial-services/eligibility/satisfactory-academic-progress>.

### **Employment**

Suffolk offers several different types of employment programs including CAS Faculty Research Assistantships, Teaching Assistantships and Administrative Fellowships. Information on these programs can be found here, <https://www.suffolk.edu/student-financial-services/types-of-financial-aid/graduate-students/work-awards>.

### **CAS Faculty Research Assistantships**

The CAS Faculty Research Assistance Program (FRAP) provides funding for selected CAS faculty to hire a research assistant to work on a new or ongoing research project. Research assistant positions are open to any full-time CAS student in good standing. FRAP applicants interview with and are selected by the supervising faculty member. Students interested in applying for an FRAP position with a CAS faculty member should consult the [Work Awards for Graduate Student Employees](#), which contains job descriptions and faculty contact information for all available FRAP opportunities for the upcoming academic year.

*\*Students will be awarded employment funding if selected for a CAS Research Assistant position, so no prior employment award is needed.*

### **CAS Teaching Assistantships**

The CAS Teaching Assistant Program (TAP) provides funding for selected CAS faculty to hire a teaching assistant for a high enrollment course. TA funding is restricted to full-time CAS undergraduates with senior status or full-time graduate students in CAS graduate programs. TA candidates must be in good academic standing; a minimum GPA of 3.0 is required. The TA award is based on a maximum 10-hour per week commitment for the 15-week fall semester.

TA applicants interview with and are selected by the supervising faculty member. Students interested in applying for a TA position with a CAS faculty member should consult the CAS Teaching Assistant List, <https://www.suffolk.edu/student-financial-services/types-of-financial-aid/graduate-students/work-awards>, which contains course descriptions and faculty contact information for all available TAP opportunities for the upcoming semester.

*\*Students will be awarded employment funding if selected for a CAS Teaching Assistant position, so no prior employment award is needed.*

### **Administrative Fellowships**

A select number of administrative offices offer Administrative Fellowship opportunities to graduate students. Most offices hire for the entire academic year. The Administrative Fellowship award is \$13,400/year (\$7200/year grant funding and \$6200/year employment funding). If offered a fellowship, a student must earn all of the employment in order to receive the full grant award. Many fellowships are filled each spring through the graduate fellow interview day here: <https://www.suffolk.edu/student-life/student-services/student-affairs/graduate-fellow-interview-day>

The Administrative Fellowship listing, <https://www.suffolk.edu/student-life/student-services/student-affairs/graduate-fellow-interview-day>, is updated as positions become available or are filled once the graduate fellow interview day has passed. Students interested in pursuing these positions are encouraged to apply early.

**Please note – merit funding, including CAS Graduate Grant and CAS Alumni Scholarship, may be reduced if the recipient is also awarded an Administrative Fellowship. Please refer to the information posted on the website for a detailed breakdown:**  
<https://www.suffolk.edu/student-financial-services/types-of-financial-aid/graduate->

**students/work-awards**. Students are also encouraged to work with their financial aid counselor for additional information: <https://www.suffolk.edu/graduate-admission/graduate-tuition-aid/information-for-accepted-grad-students>

### **Travel Reimbursement Guidelines**

Faculty members, doctoral students, and MHC students invited to deliver a paper, present a poster, or chair a symposium at a conference for research conducted with Suffolk faculty or through Suffolk University may be eligible to receive reimbursement of travel expenses from the University. MHC students enrolled full-time in the program may be eligible to be reimbursed one time per fiscal year. MHC students wanting to request travel funding should first consult with the Program Director. Pre-approval from the Chair is required. Only the first author on a presentation will be funded. Others can be considered on a case-by-case basis by petition to the Chair. Travel forms can be obtained in the Psychology Department. ***At least 4 weeks before travel departure and prior to making any overnight travel arrangements, all pre-trip paperwork must be submitted to the Administrative Services Manager to be considered for departmental funding, regardless of whether an advance is requested. Only travelers who adhere to this guideline may be approved for travel funds.***

Faculty and students are expected to use good judgment and to request reimbursement only for necessary business-related expenses. Each traveler should be conscious of an obligation to spend Suffolk funds prudently. All approval of travel expenses must be made by the Department Chair. Expenses will be paid by the University if they are deemed to be reasonable, appropriately documented, properly authorized and within the guidelines of University Policy. The full University Travel & General Expense Reimbursement Policy as well as a helpful FAQ can be found on the website here: <https://www.suffolk.edu/about/directory/risk-management/international-travel>. For additional questions, please ask the Administrative Services Manager.

## **PETITIONS**

A student may petition for an exception to any of the previously stated departmental requirements or deadlines. The petition must clearly state the details of the exception and a clear rationale for the request. Petitions must be submitted in writing to the Program Director who will then consult with the Masters Curriculum Committee if necessary, as well as the Department Chair. Depending upon the nature of the petition, some petitions will require the approval of the Dean's Office as well. Students are encouraged to discuss potential petitions with their Program Advisor or appropriate administrator before submitting.

A response to the petition will be provided to the student in a timely manner. The Program Director's response may be petition granted, petition denied or request for more information. Before sharing this response to the student, the Program Director will submit the response to the Department Chair who is responsible for making the final determination on all student petitions at the department level. As previously stated, however, depending upon the nature of the petition, final approval may rest with the Dean's Office.

A student who disagrees with the outcome of the petition and believes that the petition was unfairly judged by the faculty may file a grievance with the University Office of Student Affairs:

- Academic Grievances: <https://www.suffolk.edu/student-life/student-services/student-handbook/university-policies-for-students-cas-sbs/grievances-academics>
- Non-Academic Grievances: <https://www.suffolk.edu/student-life/student-services/student-handbook/university-policies-for-students-cas-sbs/grievances-non-academics>

## STUDENTS PROBLEMS, SAFETY, COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

### **Discrimination or Harassment**

Suffolk University has informal and formal grievance procedures for students who believe they have been the victim of discrimination or harassment. For a description of these procedures, please see the Student Handbook at <https://www.suffolk.edu/student-life/student-services/student-handbook>.

### **Sexual Misconduct**

Suffolk University has formal policies regarding how to resolve and support students who believe they have been subjected to sexual misconduct. Information regarding the policies and resources available to students in these cases can be found at <https://www.suffolk.edu/student-life/student-services/student-handbook>. Students are also advised to be aware of TITLE IX regulations and support services offered by the University pertaining to disclosure of sexual assault (<https://www.suffolk.edu/about/mission-history/policies-procedures/title-ix-at-suffolk>).

### **Other Issues**

For other instances in which a student believes that he or she has been treated inappropriately or unfairly by another student, on an academic or interpersonal matter, student are encouraged to follow these procedures.

- (1) The first action, in most cases, would be to address the problem with the other person(s) involved and attempt to reach an informal resolution of the area of concern.
- (2) If the student is not satisfied with the resolution of the problem, or feels that it would be inappropriate to address the matter directly, then he or she should next contact their Program Advisor for assistance.
- (3) If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved at this stage, the next step would be discussion with any of the following persons (depending on the nature of the problem): the Program Director, Clinical Training Coordinator, and/or the Chair of the Psychology Department.

A student who needs to pursue a grievance beyond this level, or a student who has a grievance that he or she feels cannot or should not be handled through Department channels, should contact:

- For interpersonal and peer matters: the Student Affairs Office to be reviewed through the Community Standards & Student Conduct System at <https://www.suffolk.edu/student-life/student-services/student-affairs>
- For complaints academic in nature: a student should contact the CAS Dean's office at <https://www.suffolk.edu/cas/about/administration>.



## **STUDENT RECORDS**

The department maintains a confidential file for every matriculated student. Files for graduated students remain permanently archived within the department per the FERPA, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>.

Each student's online file contains:

- The student's application for admission to the program
- Course information including advising forms, change of grade forms, graduation checklists and independent study approvals
- Records of clinical practicum and internship placements and evaluations
- Copies of all correspondence concerning academic progress, compliance with program requirements, and communications about remediation efforts.

Students may request to review their files at any time. A member of the department staff will supervise the student's review so as to maintain the integrity of the file. Students may request copies of materials in their files at any time, provided reasonable lead time is given for copying.

All student records are protected by FERPA, and no information from a students' file will be communicated to persons outside the faculty and administration of Suffolk University without the student's express written consent beyond the following exceptions. Information about a student required for the practicum/internship applications and/or to facilitate successful progress on practicum/internship will be shared with the site Training Director and supervisors as appropriate and required. Accrediting agencies may have access to student files as part of their confidential site visit and review.