

Master's in Educational Psychology

School Counseling Track



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Student Handbook

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Introduction

School counselors are professionals who work with children and adolescents, school faculty, and families in the schools. Drawing on several specific skills, school counselors are asked to address an increasingly complex array of social and psychological problems.

To competently serve youth in schools, school counselors must develop an awareness of the ecosystems affecting children as well as the unique developmental factors that contribute to children's development and to their social and academic successes. For school counselors to be effective, they must practice culturally relevant and culturally competent interventions. This requires a solid understanding of the dynamic ways in which national origin, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender-identity, and disability affect child development and children's interactions with others. School counselors must also be familiar with other systems of human ecology, especially the school system, the workforce, and the nature of family dynamics. Within interacting systems of the human ecology are individuals who experience the world through their social, cognitive, and affective development. School counselors are trained to be aware of normative patterns of emotional and intellectual development and of socialization during childhood and adolescence. With an understanding of developmental models, school counselors can better understand a student's struggles to effectively navigate social relationships, academic demands, and emotional issues that they encounter with their peers, in their families, in the classroom, and as they prepare for the workforce.

TAMU School Counseling Mission

The mission of the TAMU School Counseling Track is to prepare exemplary professional school counselors and leaders. The curriculum uses a scholar-practitioner approach that integrates the use of current technology, on-site practicum experiences, and intellectual and creative resources to work with an increasingly diverse and global society. The school counseling curriculum educates well-rounded counselors who demonstrate competence included in the high standards as set forth by the Texas Education Agency and the American School Counselor Association.

STUDENT CONTRACT

We are delighted that you have chosen to pursue graduate study in school counseling at TAMU! Consistent with the goals of TAMU and the College of Education and Human Development, school counseling students are expected to develop values and ethics to guide personal and professional decisions and behavior. These dispositions are founded on the concepts of caring, fairness, flexibility, honesty, responsibility, and social justice. Accordingly, students are expected to respect individual differences, work cooperatively, explore alternative theories and viewpoints, appreciate the unique abilities of self and others, respect various forms of self expression, and accept responsibility for one's choices.

As a student in school counseling, you are expected to maintain a high level of academic achievement. Towards this end, students may not graduate with a grade less than a "B" on their degree plan. Furthermore, students on academic probation are not allowed to enroll in the required practicum courses.

The program requires two semesters of practicum at a K-12 school (public or private). To be eligible for the practicum sequence, all courses on the degree plan must be completed. Practicum hours cannot be accrued until students are enrolled in the practicum courses. Students are responsible for arranging the practicum with a school near their location as well as supervision from a certified school counselor. Students who cannot make arrangements for practicum completion will not be permitted to graduate from the program.

Completion of the master's degree is dependent not only on academic performance but also on the demonstration of appropriate interpersonal skills, professional demeanor, and social and ethical judgment. If concerns arise, the faculty will meet to evaluate the severity and nature of the concern and to suggest an appropriate course of action. Some suggestions might include: desist temporarily from course work, repeat courses, seek personal counseling, or withdraw from the program permanently. The faculty reserves the right to make recommendations based on their professional judgment concerning student needs and concerns.

To be eligible for school counselor certification in the State of Texas, all practicum and field placement must be fulfilled in a TEA approved school. Out-of-state applicants are responsible for researching their state's requirements related to out-of-state educational programs and certification requirements.

We attempt to accommodate working students who have busy lives. However, a challenging and time consuming two (or more) years will be required of each of you. Please carefully weigh this commitment with other personal and professional demands. Attendance in each class is paramount and high quality work is expected. As this is an online program, students must have (but not limited to) access to fast and reliable internet, laptop and/or computer, video creation and editing software, and headsets with microphones.

I have carefully read the above statement and the contents in this handbook. I agree to the terms as outlined.

Student Signature

Date

School Counseling Track Faculty

Linda G. Castillo, Ph.D., Professor, School Counseling Program Director

Lizette Ojeda, Ph.D., Associate Professor

Jamilia Blake, Ph.D., Associate Professor

Connie Fournier, Ph.D., Clinical Professor

Requirements for School Counselor Certification in Texas

The TAMU school counseling track meets all requirements for the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) certification in school counseling. To be eligible to apply for certification as a Texas school counselor, the student must:

- successfully complete all course requirements and obtain the master's degree
- hold a valid teaching certificate
- complete two years of classroom teaching experience
- pass the TEXES #152 School Counselor Exam

Contact the EPSY Advisor for additional information on the certification application process.

Degree Plan and Course Transfers

During the first year, students should complete a Degree Program form (located at <http://ogs.tamu.edu>). If there are any graduate courses he or she has taken prior to admission to Texas A&M University and are requesting those courses be transferred, students must submit a formal request the EPSY advisor. The request should include previous graduate course syllabi. There is a maximum limit of 12 credit hours that can be transferred. There is no guarantee that all course transfer requests will be approved.

Once the Official University degree plan has been approved and filed, any subsequent changes in courses or committee may be made by filing a "petition" which outlines the changes and is submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies.

School Counseling Curriculum

Course Sequence – Year 1:

Semester Sequence	Prefix & Course Number	Course Title
Summer I	CPSY 630	Foundations of School Counseling
Summer I	CPSY 601	Multicultural Counseling in Schools
Summer II	EPSY 604	Career Counseling in Schools
Fall	EPSY 636	Techniques of Research
Fall	CPSY 602	School Counseling Theories & Techniques
Spring	CPSY 612	Planning and Organizing Comprehensive Guidance Programs
Spring	EPSY 646	Issues in Child and Adolescent Development

Course Sequence – Year 2:

Semester Sequence	Prefix & Course Number	Course Title
Summer I	CPSY 603	School Counseling Group Interventions
Summer II	SPED 601	Assessment in School Settings
Summer II	SPED 628	Consultation in Special Education
Fall	CPSY 639	Counseling Practicum in the Schools
Spring	CPSY 683	Field Practicum in School Counseling

The Practicum Sequence

The school counseling program requires two semesters of practicum at a K-12 school (public or private). Students are responsible for arranging the practicum with a school near their location as well as weekly one hour of supervision from a certified school counselor. Students who cannot make arrangements for practicum completion will not be permitted to graduate from the program.

NOTE: To be eligible for school counselor certification in the State of Texas, all practicum and field placement must be fulfilled in a TEA approved school. Out-of-state students are responsible for researching their state's requirements.

CPSY 639 Counseling Practicum in the Schools

The school counseling practicum experience is conducted in the schools. It is intended to provide students with the opportunity to develop basic counseling skills, as well as to integrate theoretical understanding into practical counseling application. Supervision and feedback will occur through the on-site supervisor (i.e., certified school counselor), the faculty supervisor, peer review, and by counseling psychology doctoral student supervision. Students are required to set up their practicum with a school near their location.

In order to be eligible to take the school counseling practicum, students must:

- have successfully completed all courses on the degree plan before taking the practicum sequence
- not be on academic probation
- obtain permission from the School Counseling Program Director
- have a signed field placement contract on file in the EPSY office (see EPSY Advisor for more details)

The practicum requires, but not limited to, 30 direct contact hours and 70 hours of indirect related activities. The student must submit a completed Supervisor Evaluation and Summary of Practicum Hours forms to the instructor on course completion.

Direct hours may include:

- Individual counseling
- Career guidance and counseling
- Admission, Review, & Dismissal (ARD) consultation
- Group counseling
- Classroom guidance in psychoeducational topics only
- Consultation (psychoeducational) with parents, teachers, administrators, counselors
- Staff development, leadership activities, and parent group presentations (must be psychoeducational)

Indirect Hours may include:

- Student classroom observation (behavioral conduct)
- School Counselor observation
- Guidance curriculum development
- Academic registration activities (e.g., scheduling classes)
- Group supervision, TAMU faculty supervision, and on-site supervision

Note: Providing individual or group counseling to “volunteers” is **not** allowed and does not count towards practicum hours. Volunteers include (but not limited to): students in your classroom,

your colleagues or friend's child, any child with whom you have a familial affiliation, etc.

A minimum of one hour per week of individual supervision by a certified school counselor is required. More details will be provided in the course.

CPSY 683 Field Practicum in Counseling Psychology

The field practicum is intended to provide the student with a more comprehensive site-based school experience characteristic of the tasks that school counselors perform. Students are required to submit a signed Statement of Agreement form to the Field Practicum Site if they go to a site that differs from their previous practicum placement.

In order to be eligible to take the school counseling field practicum, students must:

- have "B" or better in CPSY 639
- not be on academic probation
- obtain permission from the School Counseling Program Director
- have a signed field placement contract on file in the EPSY office (see EPSY Advisor for more details)

Students are required to complete a minimum of 150 hours in the field practicum with 50 direct contact hours. The student must submit a completed Supervisor Evaluation and Summary of Practicum Hours forms to the instructor on course completion.

Professional Liability Insurance

Students taking the practicum sequence are required to purchase professional liability insurance during their practicum experience. One option is The American Counseling Association Insurance Trust:

<http://www.acait.com/students/index.cfm>

Role of the Temporary Faculty Advisor

Upon admission to the school counseling program, each student is assigned a temporary advisor by the program faculty. The role of the advisor is to assist students in interpreting university, departmental, and program regulations and requirements. Students will select a permanent chair/advisor and submit the Official University degree plan by the fall of their second year in the program.

Role of Student's Chair and Committee

A school counseling faculty member must be the chair of your committee. The chair of the student's committee together with the student will select the remainder of the Advisory Committee. The student's Advisory Committee will consist of a total of three members of the graduate faculty. Of the other two members, one member must be from a department other than educational psychology.

TEXES #152 – School Counselor Exam

Students are eligible to take the TEXES #152 upon successful completion of CPSY 639 and approval by the School Counseling Program Director. Contact the EPSY Advisor for more details.

Academic Probation

Students are placed on academic probation by the program if they receive a C, D, F, or U in any course on the degree plan. Students are required to inform their advisor if they receive such a

grade. If a student receives less than a "B" in a class on the degree plan, it will have to be retaken. **Students may not leave for any practicum experiences while on academic probation.** If probation is not rectified by the specified time period, the student will be terminated from the program.

The Department Academic Advisor

The Academic Advisor and the student services office is located in Room 704 EDCT, just inside the main office of the Department of Educational Psychology. This office is staffed by the Academic Advisor and student assistants who handle the application process for the department.

The following services are provided by the office of the Academic Advisor:

1. Applications and advising for EPSY programs.
2. Registration.
 - a. Information
 - b. Drop/Add forms
 - c. Q-drop
 - d. In-absentia registration and information
3. Deadlines.
 - a. Written and Oral Preliminary Examinations
 - b. Dissertations and theses
 - c. Graduation
4. Procurement of rooms for preliminary exams and dissertation proposal/defense meetings.
5. Grade sheets for teaching assistants and faculty.
6. Maintenance of student records.
7. Grade changes (through instructors).
8. Variable credit course sign-up (i.e. 485,685, 683, etc.)
9. Student Information Management System (SIMS):
Current tracking of courses, enrollment, and student status.
10. Field Practicum services.
 - a. Forms
 - b. School contracts
11. Record of addresses and phone numbers of current graduate students.

Student Grievance Process

In addition to the grievance procedures established by the University, the Department of Educational Psychology has developed the following process. It is known as the Student Advocate Office and is described as follows:

There is a Student Advocate Office within the EPSY department. An EPSY faculty member selected by the Department Head assumes the Student Advocate position. The current Student Advocate is Dr. Laura Stough. Graduate and Undergraduate Grievance Advisory Committees have been established. Each committee is made up of one faculty member and two students. The purpose of these committees is threefold.

- 1) To advise the Student Advocate concerning policy and issues related to faculty/student relations in EPSY,
- 2) To forward possible student concerns to the Student Advocate, and
- 3) To aid in the resolution of student concerns when requested by the Student Advocate.

The following policies were derived by the Student Advocate in consultation with EPSY faculty, students and the department head.

Pre-condition to Student's Initiation of the Grievance Process:

Students are encouraged to meet with and attempt to resolve problems with the faculty member. If a student has met with the faculty member and the problem has not been resolved, he or she should contact the Student Advocate or a member of the Grievance Advisory Committee.

OR:

If students do not choose to meet with the faculty member due to the nature of the problem or the impaired relationship with the faculty member, they also may directly contact the Student Advocate or a member of the Grievance Advisory Committee and initiate the grievance process.

Overview of Grievance Process

A student who has a faculty-student concern and who has addressed the preconditions for initiation of the grievance process is encouraged to meet with the Student Advocate. However, a student may choose to meet first with other EPSY faculty member(s).

Depending upon the nature of the student's concern, the Student Advocate may consult with the identified faculty member, the program coordinator or the department head. At the discretion of the department head, the student's concern may be communicated to the College Of Education and Human Development (CEHD) Dean's office. When there is a discussion of a particular faculty-student concern, maintaining anonymity of the student may not be possible. However, confidentiality of information, as outlined in American Psychology Association ethical principles, will be maintained.

Resolution of Student Concerns

Resolution of a student's concern may occur as a result of:

- 1) Student's dialogue with the faculty member, a Grievance Advisory Committee member or the Student Advocate.
- 2) Student Advocate's consultation with the Grievance Advisory Committee and/or discussions with the faculty member.
- 3) Student Advocate's discussion of the student's concern with the program coordinator or the department head. As a result of these discussions, the Student Advocate and/or the department head may confer with the faculty member.
- 4) Pending the outcome of the above mentioned 3), or the nature of the student's concern, the department head and/or student may enter into discussion with the CEHD Dean's office and appropriate University committees and administrators.

University Student Rules and Regulations

<http://student-rules.tamu.edu>

Additional Resources

TEXES School Counseling (152) Preparation Manual

<http://www.texas.ets.org/texas/prepMaterials/>

TEXES Test Dates

<http://cms.texas-ets.org/testdates/>

Texas School Counselor Association

http://www.txca.org/tca/TSCA_Home.asp?SnID=862881304

American School Counselor Association

<http://www.schoolcounselor.org/>