

Master's of Education
Educational Psychology

School Counseling Track



Student Handbook

Summer 2021

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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 factors that contribute to their development and their social and academic success. 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 relationships. School counselors must also be familiar with other systems of human ecology, especially the school system, the workforce, and the nature of family dynamics.

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 competencies 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. Because courses are offered only once a year, we require students to follow the course sequence as listed in this handbook.

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, program faculty will meet to evaluate the severity and nature of the concern and to suggest an appropriate course of action. Some suggestions may include: desist temporarily from course work, repeat courses, professional development and/or remediation activities, 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 field placements must be fulfilled in a TEA-approved school. Additional requirements are outlined in this handbook. 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.

Please note that our program does not prepare students for LPC certification. Our sole focus is on training school counselors. As such, we do not offer the additional courses required for an LPC.

I have carefully read the above statement and the contents in this handbook. I agree to the terms as outlined. Please sign and email student contract to epsyadvisor@tamu.edu.

Student Signature

Date

Print Student Name

UIN

School Counseling Track Faculty

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

Jamila Blake, Ph.D., Associate Professor

Marcia Montague, Ph.D., Clinical Assistant Professor

Lizette Ojeda, Ph.D., Associate Professor

Anita McCormick, Ph.D., Adjunct Faculty

Department Academic Advisors

The Educational Psychology Department has two academic advisors available to assist students and can be contacted at epsyadvisor@tamu.edu or 979-845-1831.

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

1. Application process
2. Registration Information
 - a. Drop/Add forms
 - b. Q-drop
 - c. In-absentia registration and information
 - d. Leave of absence petition
3. Deadlines
 - a. Final Examinations
 - b. Graduation
4. Maintenance of student records.
5. Grade change assistance (through instructors).
6. Variable credit course sign-up (i.e. 685, 683, etc.)
7. Current tracking of courses, enrollment, and student status.
8. Field Placement services.
 - a. University Statement of Agree Form
 - b. School contracts
9. Financial Aid information

Course Transfers

Students may submit a request for graduate courses taken prior to admission to Texas A&M University to be transferred. Students must email the request to the school counseling program coordinator by the deadline noted in the program acceptance letter. The request should include a copy of the transcript(s) with the course grade(s) and syllabi. There is a **maximum limit of 6 credit hours** that can be transferred. There is no guarantee that course transfer requests will be approved. Counseling theories and techniques courses are not transferable.

Degree Plan and Master's Committee

During the fall of the second year, students should complete a Degree Plan (contact epsyadvisor@tamu.edu for assistance). In order for degree plans to be approved, they must follow the requirements below.

- MED, Non-thesis Distance Education with a major in EPSY.
- All courses listed in the School Counseling Handbook; 48 credit hours.
- Committee as follows:
 - Chair - Dr. Linda Castillo [No other committee members are required.]

Note: To address the Rule #H43 message, request an exemption to the rule on the "Exception - Edit" screen and enter the following justification: *The school counseling program requires 48 credit hours on the degree plan.*

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 & Professional Studies. Contact epsyadvisor@tamu.edu for assistance.

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 the program coordinator if they receive such a grade. If a student receives less than a "B" in a class on the degree plan, the course must be retaken. **Students may not enroll in practicum while on academic probation.** If probation is not rectified by the specified time period, the student will be terminated from the program.

Continuous Enrollment & Leave of Absence

Students are required to maintain continuous enrollment until all courses in the degree plan are complete. Students who are not continuously enrolled will be withdrawn from the university and the program. Once withdrawn, the student must re-apply. There is no guarantee that the student will be re-accepted into the program. If a student is unable to maintain continuous enrollment, the student must complete a petition for a leave of absence. Contact epsyadvisor@tamu.edu for assistance.

MED in Educational Psychology
School Counseling Emphasis
48 credit hours

Required Course Sequence – Year 1:

Semester Sequence	Prefix & Course Number	Course Title	Credit Hours
Summer I	CPSY 630	Foundations of School Counseling	3
Summer I	CPSY 601	Multicultural Counseling in Schools	3
Summer II	EPSY 604	Career Counseling in Schools	3
Summer II	CPSY 600	Counseling Theories for School Counselors	3
Fall	EPSY 636	Techniques of Research	3
Fall	CPSY 602	Counseling Techniques for School Counselors	3
Spring	CPSY 612	Planning and Organizing Comprehensive Guidance Programs	3
Spring	EPSY 646	Issues in Child and Adolescent Development	3

Required Course Sequence – Year 2:

Semester Sequence	Prefix & Course Number	Course Title	Credit Hours
Summer I	CPSY 603	School Counseling Group Interventions	3
Summer II	SPED 601	Assessment in School Settings	3
		*Elective [taken Summer, Fall, or Spring]	3
Fall	CPSY 683	Field Practicum: School Practicum I	6
Spring	CPSY 683	Field Practicum: School Practicum II	6
Spring	SPED 628	Consultation in Special Education	3

***School Counseling Elective Options (Course semester offerings may vary)**

EPSY 602 Educational Psychology
 EPSY 622 Measurement & Evaluation in Education
 EPSY 634 Educational Neuroscience
 EPSY 689 Foundations in the Profession of Coaching
 EPSY 631 Program Evaluation
 SPED 609 Educating Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders
 SPED 632 Transition Education and Services for Individuals with Disabilities
 SPED 642 Prevention, Support, and Intervention for Students with Emotional and Behavior Problems
 SEFB 618 Applied Behavior Management in the Classroom

Field Placement Requirements Checklist

- **Course Completion** - Completed all courses on the degree plan (excluding elective and SPED 628) with no courses lower than a “B.”
- **Academic Standing & Professionalism** – Student is in good standing in the program.
- **Field Site** – Field placement must take place at a school accredited by TEA or other schools approved by TEA. Approved TEA schools are those accredited by the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC) or the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools.
 - TEA Accredited Schools - <http://tea.texas.gov/accredstatus/>
 - Texas Private School Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC) Schools - <https://www.tepsac.org/#/search/schools>
 - Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) Schools - <http://www.dodea.edu/>
 - Out-of-state students are responsible for researching their state's practicum/internship requirements.
- **Field Placement Contract** – Students must have a completed and signed a TAMU [Statement of Agreement](#) contract by June 1st before practicum enrollment. Students will not be allowed to do practicum without the signed contract and will be withdrawn from practicum class. Applying for field placement and getting forms signed is a long process, sometimes taking months. It is strongly advised that students begin the process at least 6 months before the fall practicum. School districts may have their own additional form requirements.
- **On-site Supervision** – The site supervisor must have **no less than three years of experience as a certified school counselor**, be currently certified, and be assigned by the campus or district administrator. The site supervisor will guide, assist, and support the practicum student and report the student's progress to the university field supervisor. Students must meet with their site supervisor at minimum one hour per week.
- **Professional Liability Insurance** – documentation of insurance will be turned in during the first week of the practicum course. Student members of the American School Counseling Association get liability insurance as part of their membership.

<https://www.schoolcounselor.org/school-counselors-members/member-benefits-info/liability-insurance>
- **University Field Supervisor** – TAMU practicum instructor(s) will provide required formal observations and written feedback of those observations. Please note that because we are on online program we conduct **video** observations to fulfill the formal observation requirements.
- **Video Observation** – To fulfill formal observation requirements, we conduct video observations. Your practicum placement must allow for video recording of actual school counseling work being done. Role plays and/or volunteer clients does not constitute a formal observation and will not fulfill this requirement. We adhere to strict guidelines to maintain confidentiality and security of video-recorded observations.

Note: Students who cannot make arrangements for practicum completion will not be permitted to graduate from the school counseling program.

School Counseling Practicum Sequence

The practicum sequence is intended to provide the student with a comprehensive site-based experience characteristic of the tasks that school counselors perform. Students are required to complete a minimum of 200 supervised hours (100 direct; 100 indirect) for both School Practicum I and School Practicum II totaling 400 hours (200 direct; 200 indirect) for the year. Hours do not transfer (roll over) from one semester to another. Hours cannot be accumulated until the university official start date of fall semester and all requirements noted on page 8 are met. The following are expectations for the fall and spring practicums.

1. **Synchronous and asynchronous class attendance and participation.** Syllabi with class dates and detailed expectations are provide at least one week before the official semester start date.
2. **On-site Supervisor**
 - a. The site supervisor must have have **no less than three years of experience as a certified school counselor**, be currently certified, and be assigned by the campus or district administrator.
 - b. Meets **one hour** a week to provide supervision over student's work.
 - c. Verifies and signs weekly practicum hour log.
 - d. Verifies and signs end-of-semester practicum log.
 - e. Completes student performance evaluation at mid-semester and end of the fall and spring semesters and submits to university field supervisor.
 - f. Works with student and university to create a meaningful practicum experience.
 - g. Will receive copies of student's formal observation evaluations from the university field supervisor to assist in selection of needed student training experiences to optimize student growth as a school counselor.
3. **Student Counselor**
 - a. Submits signed TAMU [Statement of Agreement](#) to the EPSY office by June 1st.
 - b. Obtains professional liability insurance before official start of the practicum semester.
 - c. Keeps track of weekly and semester hours log.
 - d. Obtains parental and client consent for counseling. Turns in signed counseling consent forms to university field supervisor. (will be provided or use school district's form)
 - e. Obtains parental and client consent for video recording. Turns in signed video recording consent forms to university field supervisor.
4. **Hours Requirements**
 - a. Direct Hours may include:
 - i. Individual counseling
 - ii. Intake interviews
 - iii. Sessions with parent's on client's behalf
 - iv. Face-to-face student scheduling
 - v. Career guidance and counseling
 - vi. ARD/504 consultation
 - vii. Group counseling
 - viii. Leading/Co-leading a developmental/psychoeducational guidance program
 - ix. Consultation (psychoeducational) with parents, teachers, administrators, counselors
 - x. Psychological assessment administration and interpretation
 - b. Indirect Hours may include:

- i. School Counselor observation/shadowing (CPSY 639 only)
 - ii. Planning and designing a developmental guidance and counseling program
 - iii. Group supervision
 - iv. University field supervisor supervision
 - v. On-site school counselor supervision
 - vi. Non-Psychological Assessment selection and preparation
 - vii. Attendance of counseling professional development workshops
 - viii. Coordinate resources for students within the school and community
5. **Formal Observation/Video**
- a. School Practicum I [Fall]
 - i. **Two role-play sessions** (minimum) with an individual **adult volunteer** client must be video-recorded. This will be done to assess for basic counseling skills and training needs. Student will be given feedback on counseling technique during each session. Second session cannot be recorded until university field supervisor evaluation has been received. Additional recordings may be requested based on counseling skills and training needs. These recordings do not count towards practicum hours. (no group counseling allowed)
 - ii. **Three counseling sessions** with an **individual client** must be video-recorded. Each recording should be at least 30 minutes. Student will be evaluated on each session. Subsequent sessions cannot be recorded until university field supervisor evaluation has been received. Evaluation will focus on (but not limited to) counseling microskills and solution focus counseling skills. Additional observations may be required based on counseling skills and training needs.
 - b. School Practicum II [Spring]
 - i. **Two sessions leading a developmental guidance group** [preferred] must be video-recorded. Each recording should be at least 30 minutes. Second session cannot be recorded until university field supervisor evaluation has been received. Additional observations may be required based on counseling skills and training needs.
 - c. Other course requirements are outlined in the course syllabus.
6. **Approved Clients**
- a. Providing individual or group counseling to “volunteers” is **not** allowed and does not count towards practicum hours or formal observations. 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.
 - b. Clients must be from the population you are serving as a school counselor.

Professionalism and Ethics

The school counseling program follows the professionalism and ethical standards outlined by the associations listed below. Students are encouraged to join professional organizations that will contribute to their growth as a school counselor.

[American School Counselor Association Ethical Standards for School Counselors](#)

[Texas School Counselor Association](#)

[American School Counselor Association](#)

Graduation and Certification Exam

Students seeking a MED, Non-thesis Distance Education with a major in EPSY are eligible to petition for an exemption from the final exam. You must apply for exemption before the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies deadline or you will not be able to graduate. At the beginning of the last semester in the program, contact epsyadvisor@tamu.edu for assistance.

TExES School Counselor (152) Exam Checklist

- Complete with a “B” or better CPSY 683 School Practicum I.
- Successfully pass the certification practice test.
- The school counseling coordinator will send notification of your eligibility to take exam with instructions by beginning of spring semester.
- [Test dates for TX152](#)

Test Preparation Resources

[TExES Preparation Manual \(TEA\)](#)

[TExES School Counselor \(152\) Secrets Study Guide](#)

[TExES School Counselor \(152\) Flashcard Study System](#)

Texas School Counselor Certification Requirements Checklist

The TAMU school counseling program meets all requirements for the Texas Education Agency’s (TEA) certification in school counseling. In order for our program to sign off on Texas school counselor certification, students must have the following:

- Graduate with a TAMU master’s degree in hand.
- Copy of valid teaching certificate from TEA.
- School district forwards Official Service Record to the EPSY graduate office.
- Pass the TExES #152 School Counselor Exam.
- Completed SBEC Certification Application form. Contact epsyadvisor@tamu.edu for assistance.
- Completed practicum at a TEA approved school.
- Statement of approval from the school counseling coordinator.

To apply for school counselor certification, email a request with the above supporting documentation of the completed requirements to epsyadvisor@tamu.edu.

Student Grievance Process

In addition to the grievance procedures established by the University, the Department of Educational Psychology has a Student Advocate Office. An EPSY faculty member selected by the Department Head assumes the Student Advocate position. Graduate and Undergraduate Grievance Advisory Committees have also 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.

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>

From the Offices of the Dean of Student Life: Title IX Haven Training

This training is required by all students at A&M.

This training only needs to be done once and there will be a hold on class registration until it is completed. You may do this by clicking on the appropriate link below. When you log into the training, you will be leaving the Texas A&M University network. You will be logging into a webservice hosted by EverFi on behalf of the Offices of the Dean of Student Life at Texas A&M University.

[Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Training – Graduate and Professional](#)

Research Involving Human Subjects

Any research conducted with human subjects must be approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Texas A&M University. All students should take the online training and receive the certificate prior to conducting research with human participants, including applied, classroom research. The training and additional IRB information may be found at this URL:

<https://rcb.tamu.edu/humansubjects/signing-up-for-human-subject-protection-training-in-citi-1>

Email

Upon admission into the University, students will receive a Texas A&M official email address in the format of "NetID@email.tamu.edu." While some students prefer their personal email or school district generated email, University student rules and policies explicitly state that it is the student's responsibility to maintain and monitor their Texas A&M email address. Official correspondence from the University and the Department will be sent to official Texas A&M email addresses, and failure to properly monitor that account may result in missing important information and deadlines. Failure to monitor the official Texas A&M email is not an acceptable excuse for missed deadlines or requirements, and resulting holds or fees will not be lifted for this reason alone.

Financial Information & Graduate Student Resources

Tuition and Fees

Tuition and Fees are collected each semester. Information on the cost of attendance can be viewed or calculated by going to: <http://financialaid.tamu.edu/Graduate/Cost>

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is available through the Department of Student Financial Aid (financialaid.tamu.edu). Students are encouraged to take the initiative to seek out assistantships with individual faculty members and to advise the Academic Advising office if they are looking for an assistantship.

Financial aid programs for graduate students include the Robert T. Stafford Loan (formerly the Guaranteed Student Loan), the Perkins Loan (similar to the Stafford Loan), the Hinson-Hazelwood Loan, College Work Study, the Texas Public Education Grant and the State Student Incentive Grant. To be considered for all forms of aid available to graduate students, a student must file either the Financial Aid Form (FAF) or the Family Financial Statement (FFS).

Additional information on financial resources can be found at: <https://ogaps.tamu.edu/Funding-Opportunities>

Graduate Student Resources

The Office of Graduate and Professionals Studies' website provides financial and professional support resources to graduate students.

<https://ogaps.tamu.edu/>

Resources for distance education students can be found at:

<https://ogaps.tamu.edu/New-Current-Students/Distance-Portal>