



# **NOBTS MASTER'S COUNSELING PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

**New Orleans Baptist Theological  
Seminary**

**3939 Gentilly Boulevard  
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by the New Orleans Baptist  
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# NOBTS MASTER’S COUNSELING PROGRAM

## HANDBOOK

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### **Welcome!**

As your Counseling Program Faculty, we want to welcome you to the Counseling Program at NOBTS. We are so excited about your coming to study here, and excited to see how God will work in your life during these months and years you are here!

### **The counseling program at NOBTS has two very strong emphases:**

1. The development of your counseling knowledge and skills, with a great emphasis on skills building. By the time you complete our program, you will have built a number of skills for counseling, having practiced them in multiple settings.
2. Personal growth for each counselor. It is our premise that counselors called by God to this profession are called to be incarnational counselors. That means God is at work through you as you meet with clients and journey with them through the counseling process. In order for God to be at work through you, it is imperative that you continue the transformational process He has begun in you before you came here, and that the areas of life experience that might negatively impact your work as a counselor are a focus for growth and healing while you are in our program.

You will soon learn that our Counseling Program also offers a very strong, supportive community for you as you study, and we encourage you to fully engage in our community.

Our Professors have an open-door policy, so you can talk with us at any time. It will probably be a little easier if you make an appointment with us to be sure any one of us would be available at a time you are available, but you can also walk in any time our door is open. We look forward to getting to know you!

Your Faculty and Staff

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The NOBTS Master's Counseling Program offers three accredited, residential, master's degrees. The Master's Counseling Program degrees are related directly to the official purpose statement of the seminary:

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary exists to prepare God-called men and women for vocational service in Baptist churches and in other Christian ministries throughout the world through programs of spiritual development, theological studies, and practical preparation in ministry.

*The NOBTS Master's Counseling Program Handbook* is the official handbook for students enrolled in any of the master's degrees in counseling. The Handbook supplements, and is subject to, the provisions found in the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary *Graduate Catalog*. Many policies and procedures set forth in the *Graduate Catalog* are not repeated in this handbook, but are binding on all NOBTS students. The seminary retains the right to change programs, policies, courses, schedules, teachers, requirements, and all other aspects of the curriculum at any time.

The *Handbook* provides students as well as faculty members with information on the format, policies, procedures, and related matters for the Master's Counseling degrees at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Both students and faculty members are expected to master the contents of this manual and abide by its stipulations.

### **NOBTS Counseling Program Mission Statement and Program Objectives**

#### **Mission Statements**

##### **The Mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary**

The counseling program supports the mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in equipping leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

##### **The Mission of the NOBTS Master's Counseling Program**

The mission of the Counseling Program is to provide training and supervised experience in evidence-based counseling methods to help people deal with life issues in a biblically sound way and prepare students for licensure in counseling and counseling-related professions. We seek to produce graduates who have the values, knowledge, skills, and personal disposition to promote the mental health and holistic wellness of clients across diverse populations.

**NOBTS Counseling Program Objectives (ATS and SACSCOC Objectives)** • Students will demonstrate their understanding and ability to interpret and communicate accurately biblical, theological, and historical truth.

- The graduate will both master the theoretical dimension of counseling and achieve a high skill level in counseling.
- The graduate will integrate Bible, Christian theology, and evidence-based techniques in their individual, marriage and family counseling.
- Students will demonstrate growth in personal and spiritual maturity.
- Graduates will complete adequate coursework to seek credentials as a Licensed Professional Counselor or as a Marriage & Family Therapist.

**Student Outcomes of the Master's Programs in Counseling (CACREP Objectives) Upon successful completion of the Master's Program in Counseling, graduates should be able to:**

**Program Objective 1. Students will learn to synthesize theoretical and empirical knowledge in the field of counseling. (CACREP 2.F.5.h)**

KPI 1.1. Students will demonstrate evidence of the ability to develop relevant counseling case conceptualizations and treatment plans. (Knowledge and Skills)

KPI 1.2: Students will develop competence in self-efficacy and in their mastery of the core knowledge of human development (Knowledge)

KPI 1.3: Students will develop competence in their self-efficacy in career counseling and in their mastery of the core knowledge of career development, counseling and decision-making (Knowledge and Skills)

KPI 1.4: Students will develop the characteristics and functions of effective group leaders, and increase their core knowledge about group counseling. (Knowledge)

KPI 1.5: Students will increase in their skill in assessing risk of aggression or danger to others, self-inflicted harm, or suicide and will demonstrate clear and effective use of two forms of assessment for self-harm and suicide. (Knowledge and Skills)

KPI 1.6: Students will increase knowledge and skills regarding program evaluation and evaluation of counseling skills. (Knowledge and Skills)

KPI 1.7: Students will improve in knowledge and skill regarding diagnosis and treatment planning regarding mental health treatment. (Knowledge and Skills)

KPI 1.8: Students will increase their knowledge of techniques and interventions of marriage, couple and family counseling. (Knowledge)

**Program Objective 2. Students will develop the necessary academic and clinical skills to obtain professional licensure. (CACREP 2.F.5.h.)**

KPI 2.1: Students will develop strategies for personal and professional self-evaluation and implications for practice. (Knowledge and Skills)

KPI: 2.2 Students will develop counselor characteristics and behaviors that influence the counseling process, and will demonstrate improvement in their professional skills such as listening and probes. (Knowledge and Skills)

KPI 2.3: Students will develop the capacity and professional disposition to adhere to the ethical guidelines of the ACA, ASCA IAMFC, APA, & NBCC, including practices within competencies. (Knowledge)

KPI 2.4: Students will increase their knowledge of the importance of membership in professional organizations, preparation standards, and credentials relevant to the practice of clinical mental health counseling, and through recognizing the value of membership and participation in professional organizations, students will join at least one professional organization in our field. (Knowledge)

**Program Objective 3. Students will develop a deeper understanding of cultural diversity to enhance counseling skills. (CACREP 2.B.1)**

KPI 1: Students will increase in their multicultural counseling competencies while enrolled in COUN5331 and demonstrate respect for culture (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, spirituality, religion, sexual orientation, disability social class, etc.), awareness of and responsiveness to ways in which culture interacts with the counseling relationships. (Core 2 Social and Cultural Diversity)

**Program Objective 4: Students will learn to integrate historical Christian beliefs, faith, and spirituality with the best practices of mental health science, in an ethical manner. (CACREP 2.F.2.g)**

KPI. 4.1 Students will be able to communicate how they integrate historical Christian beliefs, faith, and spirituality with the best practices of mental health science, in an ethical manner.

**Degrees Offered:**

Master of Arts in Counseling, Specialization in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (MAMHC)

Master of Arts in Counseling, Specialization in Marriage and Family Counseling (MAMFC)

Master of Divinity, Specialization in Marriage and Family Counseling (MDiv)

## **Professional Identity and Professional Counseling Organizations**

As part of their professional identity, Master's Counseling students are expected to be involved in state and national counseling organizations, such as the

- Louisiana Counseling Association (LCA) <https://www.lacounseling.org/lca/default.asp>
- The American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC) <https://aacc.net>
- The American Counseling Association (ACA)  
<https://www.counseling.org/membership/join-reinstate-today!>
- Certification as National Certified Counselors (NCC).

**● Membership in organizations such as these provide opportunities for:**

1. Reduced membership rates and conference registration fees
2. Professional meetings, conferences, workshops, seminars
3. Membership services such as liability insurance, legal information and services, and library resources
4. Affiliation with specialized fields in counseling
5. Professional publications such as journals and newsletters
6. Networking with fellow professionals

## 7. Advocacy and leadership opportunities for clients and the profession

In addition, students are encouraged to look for opportunities to attend local, state, and national counseling conferences, and to serve at the conferences when possible.

## **Matriculation Requirements**

### **Process from Matriculation to Graduation**

#### **Phases of Admission**

In addition to the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary admission requirements and acceptance into NOBTS, a student pursuing a degree in counseling (any of the licensure tracks) must complete the following phases of admission:

#### **Entry Phase**

Entry Level for Counseling Licensure Programs Entry into any Graduate Counseling degree program at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is based on an evaluation of the applicant's personal, professional, and academic records by the Counseling Faculty.

NOBTS encourages applications from qualified applicants from diverse sociocultural backgrounds who display Christian character, professional promise, intellectual achievement, and educational commitment.

Caution: Please be aware that a felony charge or conviction on your record may impact your job prospects, and in some state, licensure.

#### **Diversity**

The Counseling Program at NOBTS affirms the Christian doctrinal position that God created humans in His own image, and that Christ died for mankind; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love. We believe the counseling profession affords our students and graduates the opportunity to be "salt and light" (Matthew 5:13-16) whatever their places of service, and that a robust appreciation for and sensitivity to human diversity is key to that end. Further, a learning environment diverse in its people, curricula, scholarship, research, and creative activities expands opportunities for intellectual inquiry and engagement, helps students develop critical thinking skills, and prepares students for social and civic responsibilities. Students and faculty benefit from diversity. The quality of learning, research, scholarship, and creative activities are enhanced by a climate of inclusion, understanding, and appreciation of the full range of human experience. We are committed to nurturing and training a diverse student body in an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation of differences. As a result, the counseling program is committed to diversity and equal opportunity and recognizes that it must represent the diversity inherent in American society, reflected in our local community, and aligned with the core values of the NOBTS community.

The counseling program provides an academic community for students, faculty, and staff to teach and learn from the experiences of others and to submit personal values and assumptions for reflection and critical examination. Student learning, professional and personal growth occur in a climate that encourages a deepened appreciation of differences. Therefore, we do not

discriminate in our educational and counselor training programs on the bases of race, color, gender, age, national/ethnic origin, sexual orientation, and physical or mental disability. While recognizing the importance of all dimensions of diversity as mentioned above, the counseling program adheres to the following initiatives:

- To increase, through recruitment and retention measures, the diverse representation of students, faculty, and staff;
- Promote full implementation of professional standards of practice and multicultural counseling competencies across the curriculum and in specialized courses;
- To include issues of diversity throughout the instructional programs and professional development activities;
- To develop graduate assistantships opportunities to serve diverse student groups;
- To provide departmental opportunities for students and faculty to engage in the exchange of ideas and information related to diversity; and
- To maintain ongoing educational opportunities and equality of access to our academic community.
- To equip students to ethically utilize spirituality as a force for healing when and where appropriate.

**This Phase is completed** through the regular application process for NOBTS and the Registrar's Office. At a minimum, applicants are expected to have the following qualifications, and meet the following requirements:

1. The applicant must have the Bachelor of Arts degree or its equivalent from a college or university accredited by an agency related to CHEA, or proof of equivalent training at a foreign university.

2. A minimum of 2.75 GPA on a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent.

3. Beginning candidates must

- attend the Graduate Orientation, and Counseling Program Orientation at the beginning of their first semester,
- complete the NOBTS Counseling Entrance Exam, ACE Survey, and Trauma Symptoms Index. These are not barriers to entrance, but rather measures to facilitate more effective training opportunities for each student.
- attend a New Student Process Group (COUN5000) during the first year of studies, preferably the first semester. Students should enroll in this group (0 credit, no cost) when they enroll in their classes for the semester.
- Personal counseling is encouraged and available. All students are free to determine where they have any personal counseling. Possible referrals include"
  - o Leeke Magee Christian Counseling Center (504) 816-8004
  - o Restoration Counseling (504) 913-5039



o Refuge 182 Counseling (504) 457-2223

4. During the Entry Phase, the student is required to complete **a minimum of four of the six core courses listed below**. These courses must be completed with no grade lower than a “B”. No more than 3 attempts are allowed to achieve a “B” or above in the core courses.

COUN6303, Legal, and Ethical Issues in Counseling (Fall & Spring)

COUN6351 Counseling Theories and Therapies (Fall)

COUN 6350 Clinical Marriage & Family Assessment (Spring)

COUN6302 Techniques and Skills in Therapy (Fall & Spring)

COUN6301 Psychopathology

COUN6354 Cognitive Behavioral Counseling OR COUN6355 Brief Solution Focused Counseling.

5. Entry Level admission does not guarantee full entrance into any of the Counseling programs. Students taking less than twelve hours of graduate credit in the counseling program their first semester may complete any of the remaining core courses the second semester, and take additional hours in the Basic Ministerial Competency Component of the program to fill their semester schedule as needed. Students are not allowed to register for other COUN courses until the minimum 4 of the 6 core courses have been completed, and the student has attained full acceptance into one of the Counseling Program degree plans. The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Core Courses needs to be completed in the second semester, or at the latest, the third semester.

6. Students may take any number of the Basic Ministerial Competency Component courses required in the program prior to seeking admission to one of the Counseling Degree Programs.

### **Phase Two: Completion of Academic and Clinical Requirements for Full Entrance in Graduate Counseling Programs**

In order to be fully accepted into a Graduate Counseling Program, candidates must meet the following conditions:

**1. Complete four prerequisite core courses, with no grade lower than a “B.”** Candidates cannot take additional COUN courses until they have been accepted into a graduate counseling program.

**2. Maintain a 3.0 GPA in all COUN classes**

**3. Complete application to Phase Two of the Graduate Counseling Program:** Students preparing to complete the first four core courses should apply to the Phase Two program by **October 15** or **March 15**. The application is online, in the Blackboard course COUN6380KS/Program and Practicum Application (on left menu).

**4. Evaluation of Work in Core Courses:**

- After the candidate has completed and submitted all the above materials, the professors who taught the applicant’s core courses will complete an evaluation of the evidence of

academic, emotional and spiritual preparation of the candidate for acceptance into the program and of the candidate's preparedness to begin the practicum.

- Evaluation Checklist: When the Application is submitted, the professors of the four core courses will fill out an evaluation checklist that will cover the following areas.
  - Academic Communication Skills Professional Orientation
  - Interpersonal Competence Personal Responsibility
  - Personal Integrity Respect others and Diversity
  - Self-Reflection and Self-Care Growth in Core Values of NOBTS
  - Growth in Seven Basic Competencies of NOBTS
  - Regular Involvement in your church and ministry
  - Evidence that the student is dealing with and/or working on any personal issues that could impact his or her work as a counselor.

**5. Interview with Faculty Member:** At this point, the candidate will be invited to have an appointment for an oral interview with one of the professors in the Counseling Department. The interview will include all evaluation scores and discussion of any issues of concern. Candidates will be notified in writing by the Clinical Director of the Department of Counseling regarding the results of their admission status. Those who are accepted will be allowed to register in COUN courses in the next semester. Those who are not admitted may continue taking the ministry-related courses, or work with an advisor to consider other possible majors.

## **6. Advising and Faculty Guidance**

Upon acceptance into the program, students are assigned an Advisor. A faculty member from the counseling program will be assigned to serve as a faculty advisor to the student concerning program matters. (Faculty Advisors and Students are encouraged to access the most current "Course Cycle" sheet located on Blackboard: COUN6380KS: Clinical Practice/Course Cycles) The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Core Courses must be completed or in process of completion before entry into Clinical Practice.

**Clinical Practice:** Once fully accepted into one of Graduate Counseling Program

**1. Fully accepted students are now eligible to apply for COUN6380 Clinical Practicum.**

**Cut off application dates—October 15 (spring start) or March 15 (summer or fall start)** Before submitting the application the student should

- Complete open book test over NOBTS Practicum/Internship Manual (on-line, Blackboard) COUN6380KS: Clinical Practice/Internship ManualTest; pass at 85%. Send email to the Clinical Director ([ksteele@nobts.edu](mailto:ksteele@nobts.edu)) stating that you have completed the exam with a score of 85% or more, and attach a photo of your score.
- Acceptance letters will be sent within 3 weeks after the deadline for applying. 10

**2. Begin Clinical Practice—an Overview (see NOBTS Practicum & Internship Manual for more details)**

- All students accepted into the Practicum will complete their Practicum at the Leeke Magee Christian Counseling Center.
- Orientation, Part 1, is currently online in a video format. It should be watched in its entirety.
- Students should purchase the text for the Practicum course COUN6380: Russell-Chapin, Sherman, & Ivey. (2016). *Your supervised practicum and internship: Field resources for turning theory into action* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). Cengage. ISBN 978-1- 138-93581.
- Read: NOBTS Faculty: : The Leeke Magee Christian Counseling Center Policies and Procedures Manual. Complete reading before Part 1 of Orientation. (Available on Blackboard Clinical Practice Site COUN6380KS).
- Orientation Part 2 will be held
  - For Fall start: The Wednesday or Friday the week before class starts (August), from 8:00 am -3 pm.
  - For Spring start: Usually the Wednesday or Friday the week before class starts (January), although this may vary.
  - For Summer start: This date will be announced depending on the number of students starting in the summer.
- These orientation meetings are mandatory. Please plan to arrange your schedule accordingly.
- Attend all Individual and Group Supervision according to rules, and begin counseling. All hours will be recorded on an electronic tracking platform called Tevera. The Practicum Students will receive information about enrolling in Tevera and instruction during the Orientation time. The cost (as a Textbook cost) is \$200. This is a one-time fee, and the student will have access and use of this software platform for the rest of their career.
- The Clinical Practice component of the Counseling Degree Programs consists of three 3-credit hour components: Practicum, Internship 1 and Internship 2. The Practicum is 16 weeks, and each Internship is 18 weeks. The total number of weeks equals 50 weeks. Occasionally, students do not complete the number of required direct hours for the two Internships (120 each, approximately 6 hours of direct client contact for each week) within the 36 weeks period. In this case the student will be required to enroll in a second Internship 2.
- ● Students interested in an LPC license: If a student completes their total 240 hours during the combined 36 weeks for Internships 1 & 2, they have the option of taking an additional Internship 2 to accrue additional hours if needed to meet licensure requirements in another state. Most states require 240 direct contact hours, and 600 Indirect hours. However, there are a few states with greater requirements. . Please check other state requirements if you plan on moving out of Louisiana.
- Students interested in a LMFT license: If a student completes their total 240 hours during the combined 36 weeks for Internships 1 & 2, they have the option of taking an additional Internship 2 to accrue additional hours if needed to meet licensure requirements for the LMFT, which is 500 direct hours, with 250 of those hours in couple and family work. For students seeking licensure in Louisiana, these 500 hours can be applied (and subtracted from) the total 1900 direct client hours required to move from the Provisionally Licensed MFT to the Licensed MFT.

### **Clinical Phase (Internship 1 and 2)**

- Successfully complete Practicum, complete 5<sup>th</sup> core course—Counseling Theories and Therapies, or Clinical Assessment of Marriage and Family with a 3.0 average (which ever one you have not yet completed), and the 6<sup>th</sup> core course—Cognitive Behavioral Counseling OR Brief Solution Focused Counseling; continue with the rest of courses in the curriculum. Turn in Paperwork to complete Practicum and Enroll in Internship 1. The enrollment link is at the end of the Assignment section on your practicum syllabus, or on Blackboard COUN6380KS Clinical Practice. **Make decision about whether to apply to remain at LMCCC or to apply to work at an external site.** It is recommended that you explore the information about external sites on Tevera, and attend announced meetings about external sites. Study the Placement Sites List, pray about sites, and select a site. Please talk with peers or Dr. Steele, or the LMCCC Associate Director about any sites for which you have questions. You will need to contact the site to see if they have any positions for Intern students open. If there are openings, set up an interview with the Site Supervisor.
- You must indicate your plan to stay at LMCCC or to go to another site at least 4 weeks before changing to your Internship. During your Practicum, about mid-term you can complete the Notification of Intent to Close or Graduate if you plan to leave the LMCCC.
- Please be aware that many sites only accept new students at the beginning of the fall term, and the time of application for these positions can be as early as March or April to begin in the fall.
- Contact the Site Supervisor of your selected site to inquire if there are openings. If there are, set up an interview with the Site Supervisor.
- It is recommended that you take a copy of your resume, including a list of the counseling courses you have completed, pertinent ministerial experience (for example, work with children, etc.), and past work experience. Ask appropriate questions about responsibilities at the site such as scheduling, date/time of orientation to the site, assignment of supervisor, etc.
- Movement to an external site is only allowed at the term breaks (end of fall supervision term; end of spring supervision term; end of summer supervision term). Once the term has started, students are not allowed to move to a different site.
- • You must indicate your plan to stay at LMCCC or to go to another site at least 4 weeks before changing to your Internship. During your Practicum, about mid-term you can complete the Notification of Intent to Close or Graduate if you plan to leave the LMCCC.
- Please be aware that many sites only accept new students at the beginning of the fall term, and the time of application for these positions can be as early as March or April to begin in the fall.
- Contact the Site Supervisor of your selected site to inquire if there are openings. If there are, set up an interview with the Site Supervisor.
- It is recommended that you take a copy of your resume, including a list of the counseling courses you have completed, pertinent ministerial experience (for example, work with children, etc.), and past work experience. Ask appropriate questions about responsibilities at the site such as scheduling, date/time of orientation to the site, assignment of supervisor, etc.

- Movement to an external site is only allowed at the term breaks (end of fall supervision term; end of spring supervision term; end of summer supervision term). Once the term has started, students are not allowed to move to a different site.

**See more detailed information in the NOBTS Practicum and Internship Manual, found on Blackboard: Course shell for COUN6380KS**

### **Expectations of Students**

The student has final and ultimate responsibility for performance throughout the master's level program. This responsibility is to be fulfilled in the following areas:

1. The student must adhere to the applicable dates published in the *Graduate Catalog* and the guidelines outlined in this manual and the NOBTS Practicum & Internship Manual for registration and submission of various counseling program documents, such as applications, petitions and requests.
2. All written materials submitted to NOBTS must be the original work of the student, who is responsible and accountable for content, form, style, and editing.
3. The student is responsible for maintaining regular contact with the advisor for direction and counsel throughout the program. The student should consult with the Advisor before registering each semester.
4. The student is responsible for maintaining current information on address, phone, email, and emergency contact information with the seminary via NOBTS online. Updated information also should be shared directly with the counseling program office.
5. Students enrolled in the NOBTS Counseling Programs are preparing for a career that requires the highest standards of practice, research, scholarship and community advocacy. Therefore, appropriate behavior should be evident in all communications (e.g., verbal, written in discussion boards, emails) with other students, staff and faculty, site practicum and internship personnel, and of course clients. Failure to demonstrate professionally sound behavior could jeopardize the student's status in the program. The counseling faculty will evaluate students in areas of proficiency on an ongoing and consistent manner in all settings in which faculty and students interact. This interaction can include formal and informal settings such as classroom, online communication, advising, and personal conversations. Specifically, the counseling program faculty expects students enrolled in the NOBTS Counseling Programs to demonstrate the following behavioral standards:

### **Ethical Conduct and Development**

- All students in the counseling program are expected to behave in an ethical manner throughout their training. Violations of the ACA Code of Ethics or the NOBTS code of conduct, and/or failure to take steps to rectify violations, are considered extremely serious and may result in termination from the program.
- Although students are expected to adhere to the ACA Code of Ethics and the NOBTS code of conduct as a guide to their behavior throughout their program, reading these codes is just the beginning of understanding professional ethics. Being an ethical counselor-in-training involves understanding the underlying principles and values associated with professional codes of ethics. These are built upon a strong commitment to biblical principles, developing a set of beliefs that guide one's everyday practice, being able to discern potential as well as realized ethical problematic situations, and having the

character to stand by these when faced with challenging situations. This is an essential component of your professional development. In addition, students are expected to demonstrate the ability to integrate faith and spirituality into counseling where appropriate in an ethically competent manner.

### **Personal Conduct and Development**

Students are expected to demonstrate:

1. A willingness and ability to give appropriate feedback and to receive and integrate feedback from faculty, supervisors, and peers. Students are expected to be open to receiving feedback from others, including verbal or written comments in private or public settings. A teachable and open attitude is expected of all students. Thus, regardless of the quality of the feedback, students are expected to prayerfully consider the possibility that valuable feedback is found in the comments. Students who are aware of another student's behavior or performance that violates the seminary's code of conduct, the American Counseling Association's Ethics Code, or behavioral standards of the counseling program have a responsibility to intervene. This includes notifying program faculty and/or the program director.
2. An ability to control personal stress, psychological dysfunction, and/or excessive emotional reactions that interfere with personal, professional or interpersonal functioning. Counseling is an interpersonal profession in which counselor leaders are provided with a level of influence upon their domains of practice. Therefore, it is essential that they are not impaired by intrapersonal or interpersonal liabilities. Students are expected to monitor their own behavior and address any personal issues that might impair their performance in academic or counseling settings or jeopardize the well-being of faculty, staff, clients, or peers. Students are encouraged to discuss personal concerns about themselves as well as their ability to function in academic and counseling settings with academic and faculty advisors, clinical supervisors and/or with any member of the faculty. Although it is a goal of the counseling program to help students reach their professional goals it remains the primary responsibility of the faculty to protect the public, the student body, and the profession.
3. Emotional and mental stability and maturity in interaction with others, including the ability to maintain healthy boundaries, communicate appropriately, successfully manage personal anxiety or uncomfortable feelings, work collaboratively with others, and resolve interpersonal conflict. This proficiency will be evaluated throughout the program in all interactions with faculty, staff, administrators, supervisors, adjuncts, and fellow students; including both verbal and written communications.
4. A lifestyle that is consistent with a Christian testimony. It is expected that students will conduct themselves in a manner that reflects Christian love (e.g., John 13:34-35; Philippians 2:2-4; Colossians 3:14-15; James 2:8; 1 Peter 4:8-10; 1 John 4:7-8). Feedback to others should be given in the most professional and Christ-like manner possible. In keeping with the apostle Paul's teachings, students are expected get along with others as much as possible (cf. Romans 12:18), to not hold grudges (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Ephesians 4:31-32; Leviticus 19:17-18), and to encourage one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11). A mark of spirituality and psychological maturity is loving the unlovable and demonstrating the fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Though we all struggle to live the Christian life as we should, especially when under stress, we are to challenge ourselves to pursue holiness.

## **Academic & Professional Conduct and Development**

Students are expected to demonstrate:

1. Attainment of scholastic competency in all coursework as evaluated through the NOBTS course grading policy.
2. A willingness and ability to acquire and integrate professional standards into one's repertoire of professional behavior. Students must conduct themselves with an awareness that their conduct, personal appearance, attitudes, values, and behavior influence client, peer, and general public opinions. They are expected to demonstrate professionalism so these constituencies view them in a manner consistent with the spirit of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and the profession of counseling.
3. An ability to acquire leadership and professional skills to reach an acceptable level of competency. The counseling program provides a learning environment in which students become vulnerable as they test out new behaviors and acquire new skills as counselor leaders.
4. Acquisition of, and ability to apply counseling skills with a diverse population and to a standard acceptable for Master's level counselors. These skills are evaluated throughout the Counseling Program, including assessment through the use of the Counselor Competency Scale (CCS-R).
5. Adherence to the professional identity and standards as outlined by the American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics and the *NOBTS Handbook*. This proficiency is evaluated during the program in all interactions with faculty, staff, administrators, supervisors, adjuncts, and fellow students; including both verbal and written communications.

## **Appeal Policy**

A student may appeal an academic decision of a professor. The following procedure is available to all students:

1. **Initial Complaint:** In accordance with the teaching of scripture, complaints should first be voiced directly to the professor, administrator, staff member, or other person(s) perceived to have offended in an attempt to remedy the matter. If the matter is not remedied, the student may file a formal complaint.
2. **Formal Complaint:** A student may file with the Dean of Students written complaints regarding non-academic matters. A student may file with the Division chair written complaints regarding academic matters.
3. **Hearing:** If a formal complaint is made, the student will be afforded a hearing before the Division chair. At either the request of the student or the Division chair, the Dean of Students may be invited to a hearing related to academic matters. At the hearing, the student will be given an opportunity to voice the complaint. This opportunity shall include the right to offer witnesses and other evidence in his or her defense.
4. **Findings:** The Division chair shall notify the student in writing of the findings and of the decision, if any, regarding the grievance.
5. **Appeal Procedure:** The student may appeal the decision of the Division chair to the Graduate Academic Dean.
6. **Academic Dean's Decision:** The decision of the Academic Dean will be communicated

to the student, and to the administrative officers involved.

7. **Final Appeal Procedure:** The final appeal to the Academic Leadership Council must be in writing and delivered to the Provost's office within 24 hours of receipt by the student of the committee's decision. The student may appeal the ultimate decision of the committee to the President. In such instance, the decision of the President regarding the matter shall be final.

Additional policies on student conduct can be found in the most recent edition of the NOBTS Student Handbook.

## **Policy for Student Retention, Remediation, and Dismissal**

### **Student Retention**

- All counseling students are assigned a faculty advisor upon entry into the program. The faculty advisor provides the first level of support in student retention and remediation.
- The faculty advisor meets annually with the students assigned to them to review academic progress, progress in Key Performance Indicators, and progress in the development of Professional Dispositions.
- The faculty advisor also provides guidance and information to the student on academic issues, including course options and course load. Students are encouraged to consult with their advisors regarding any difficulties they may experience in the program.
- During clinical practice, Individual Supervisors (either faculty members, Ph. D. CES students under the supervision of a faculty member, or an External Site supervisor who is in monthly contact with the Clinical Director) are assessing progress in clinical skills, dispositions and gain of knowledge related to the application of counseling theories.
- The seminary also provides personal and financial counseling for students.

### **Grounds for Dismissal**

- Although faculty members desire to help students remediate problematic performance, there are several reasons a student will be immediately dismissed from the program:
  1. A student fails to meet minimum Graduate School requirements as identified in the Graduate Catalog
  2. A student fails to pass the comprehensive examination (CPCE) on the third attempt. (The exam may be taken 3 times, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> attempt are at the student's expense--\$75 each time.) Failure is defined as one Standard Deviation under the CPCE national mean.
  3. If the student does not improve the identified academic performance or professional conduct to an identified acceptable level, the student can be dismissed from the counseling program after implementation of the first three steps of the remediation process (listed below).

### **The Remediation Process and Steps**

Those students assessed as having difficulty will receive written and oral feedback concerning their progress from their advisor. All written feedback is placed in the student's program file, including student written responses to feedback received. Students who are identified as having deficiencies in one or more of the three areas evaluated are provided the following assistance in order to improve their performance:

#### 1. Problem Identification Meeting

Academic Problems: The advisor meets with the student and gives specific examples of the



difficulties, shortcomings, or problematic conduct which have been identified by the faculty. The student and the advisor then discuss minimal change expectations and procedures. A decision is made at this time as to the seriousness of the problem, and if it is recurring. Steps for resolution are recommended and both parties agree upon a time-frame for remediation. A contract is written at this time and is signed by the student and the advisor, with the understanding that the faculty will review the student's progress at the end of the agreed upon time-frame for remediation.

**Clinical Practice Problems:** These problems are usually categorized as either Professional Disposition Issues or Documentation Issues. They are addressed in the same manner above, but instead of the advisor meeting with the student, the student's Individual and/or Group Supervisor(s) consults with the Clinical Director, then will meet with the student to begin the remediation process.

## 2. Recurring or Critical Problems

If the situation is a continuing one, or is critical, a team of faculty members may be appointed by the program coordinator to meet with the student. Concerns will be delineated in writing and given to the student prior to this meeting. During this meeting, the student is given specific information about the recurring or critical problem, the steps needed for resolution, and the time-frame allowed prior to determining if further action must be considered. A contract clearly stating areas which need to be improved, and the methods and time-frame needed for improvement, is written and signed by the student and the involved faculty members. A copy of this agreement is given to the student and the original is placed in the student's program file.

## 3. Insufficient Progress, Dismissal, Advising

If the student does not make expeditious progress within identified time-frames toward resolution of the identified problem(s), and if the faculty agree that the student will not be able to successfully achieve the academic, counseling, and/or intrapersonal/interpersonal effectiveness objectives of the program, then recommendation for dismissal of the student from the program is considered. If this decision is made by vote of the Counselor Program Faculty, it is then forwarded to the Division head. The student will be notified in writing and academic and vocational advising will be offered to the student.

## 4. Due Process Procedures

Unless the problem involves a major disciplinary action that is in the focus area of the Dean of Students, all of the preceding steps are handled by the Counselor Program Faculty. The Seminary and the program policies are written to assure students that their rights are respected and due process is followed. If a student wishes to challenge a program decision regarding retention in the program, the student has the right to an appeal process, as detailed in the student appeals process above. The Counselor Program Faculty members believe that the stated procedures are in accord with the accepted educational practices and guidelines of the American Counseling Association Ethical Standards. Faculty members, through continual student evaluation and appraisal, must be aware of the personal limitations of the student that might impede future performance. Faculty members must not only assist the student in securing remedial assistance but also screen or remove from the program those individuals who are unable to provide competent services.

## Written Endorsement Policy

Students will receive endorsements from counseling faculty for credentialing and employment based upon their proficiency in the counseling program in their areas of specialization. Before endorsement, faculty members will examine a student's records, including grade point average and completion of program requirements, along with a determination that the student is competent to meet the requirements of the position or credential related to the endorsement request. Students need to give written (with signature) permission for any references or recommendations or endorsements requested. The written permission will be placed in the student's file.

## About Process Groups

New Student Process Group (COUN5000) is a non-credit, requirement for all entering students, to be completed the first semester, and if not possible, no later than the second semester.

What is a Process Group?

An unstructured group where you have the opportunity to receive perspectives, support, encouragement and feedback from other group members. These interactions help you become more self-aware.

These process groups will focus on helping you identify and explore emotional reactions that you have had as you begin the counseling program at NOBTS.

The goals of this group are:

1. Students will identify strengths and areas for growth in their personal lives as they enter the counseling profession
2. Students will begin developing interpersonal skills essential for counselors

How are we going to get there?

1. By setting individual goals
2. By recognizing and sharing thoughts and feelings as they happen in group: talking about what's going on in the "here and now"
3. By listening carefully to others and responding with empathy and understanding

How Can I Get the Most Out of Group Therapy?

- **Define goals.** Take time before each session to define your goals for that session. Nevertheless, being flexible about your goals is also important. You may be surprised to find that your goals continue to change throughout the group process.

- **Recognize and express reactions and feelings.** Pay close attention to what you are feeling as you are sharing or others are sharing. If you are having difficulties recognizing and expressing your thoughts or feelings, ask the group to help.
- **Give and receive feedback.** Giving and receiving feedback can be a major component of your experience in group therapy. The purpose of feedback is to help others identify patterns, personal presentations, unrecognized attitudes, and inconsistencies. Feedback can be one of the most effective ways to deepen any relationship.
  - Tips for giving feedback:
    - Feedback needs to be concrete and specific, brief but to the point, and representative of both your feelings and thoughts.
    - Be specific about what you're responding to (particular remark, gesture) ▪ Share both positive and negative feedback
    - Give feedback as soon as possible
  - Tips for receiving feedback:
    - The best way to get feedback is to request it from specific individuals, those whose impression means the most to you. Find out from others in the group how they perceive you. What role do they see you taking on in the group? What are your "blind spots"?
    - Seek clarification from the member or verify with other members if the feedback you've received matches their perceptions as well
    - Beware of becoming defensive, but if you feel yourself becoming defensive, it might be a good idea to share it.
- **Take time for yourself.** You have the right to take group time to talk about yourself. Many people feel that other's issues are more important, while some have a difficult time facing feelings, or have fears of appearing "weak". By recognizing what the reluctance means, you begin the growth process.
- **Avoid giving advice.** Sometimes we really want to offer advice to someone who is struggling, but often when we do, we fail to let that person feel heard. Most group members learn that giving advice, suggestions and solutions is seldom helpful. For advice-givers, it takes time to learn how to express personal reactions, communicate understanding, give support, and listen attentively.
- **Take risks.** Experiment with different ways of behaving and expressing yourself. By taking risks, you can discover what works for you and what doesn't. This may mean expressing difficult feelings, sharing information you usually keep secret, or confronting someone about something upsetting to you.
- **Ask questions.** If you are wondering about or confused about something that has just been said or has just occurred in the group, then seek clarification from group members or group leaders. It's likely others may have the same questions that you have.

### After You Graduate:

1. Read carefully all the requirements posted by the licensing board in the state in which you are seeking licensure.
2. All verification of clinical practice hours is completed by the Clinical Director. Please contact him or her directly to request a verification letter, or send the Clinical Director the required form in the state where you are applying. If the form has to be notarized, please send payment for the cost.
3. Faculty members may be contacted to request letters of recommendation or referral on an individual basis. When requesting a letter of recommendation, please include in writing any necessary addresses and specific people to whom the letter needs to be addressed. If a form is required, please send a copy of the form, or the appropriate electronic link.