Clinical Mental Health Counseling
and
School Counseling

Program Handbook
2022-2023
Table of Contents

USJ Resources Quick Reference Guide 4
Mission 5
Accreditation 6
Introduction 7
Programs of Study 7
  MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling 7
  MA in School Counseling 7
  Dual Credential Plan 8
Transfer Credits 8
Changing Programs 8
Advisement 8
Core Program Content 8
Comprehensive Examination 11
Course Delivery 12
Students as Professionals 12
  Growth in Community 12
  Professional Conduct 13
  Professional Readiness Statement 14
  Dismissal for Non-Academic Reasons Appeal Process 17
Grades, Grading, and Academic Progress Policies 17
  Grade Requirements for the Counseling Programs 17
  Other Grading and Credit Policies 18
  Academic Integrity 18
Additional USJ Policies 18
  Degree Completion and Application 18
  Non-discrimination Policy 18
  Student Accessibility Services 19
  Sexual Harassment Policy 19
  Student Grievance Policy 20
After Graduation 20
  Endorsement, Licensure, and Certification 20
  State of Connecticut Requirements for LPC 20
  State of Connecticut Requirements for School Counselor Certification 21
  Credentialing Outside Connecticut 22
Appendix: Professional Organizations 23
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USJ Resources Quick Reference Guide

Public Safety
Emergency
860-231-5222
Office, parking permits
860-231-5742

Office of Diversity and Inclusion/ Title IX
Handles discrimination issues and sexual harassment and assault reports
860-231-5499
rdyonwhite@usj.edu

Office of Information Technology
Service Desk, Pope Pius XII Library
860.231.5310
http://myit.usj.edu

Office of the Registrar
Transcripts, records, and all registration issues
860-231-5225
registrar@usj.edu

Center for Academic Excellence
Content tutoring, writing tutoring, and academic success tutoring
860-231-5514
caeappt@usj.edu

Office of Accessibility Services
Accommodations for students with disabilities
860-231-5481
accessibility@usj.edu

Bursar
Tuition, fees, payment of bills
860-231-5266 860-231-5278
bursar@usj.edu

Student Financial Services
Scholarships, financial aid, loan plans
860-231-5223
financialaid@usj.edu

The Career Development Center
Career counseling and services
860-231-5551
careercenter@usj.edu

Student Health Services
Medical services and student health
860-231-5530
healthservices@usj.edu

Counseling and Wellness Center
In-person and tele-health counseling
860-231-5233

Pope Pius XII Library
Circulation Desk: 860-231-5209
Reference & Instruction: 860-231-5558

The O’Connell Athletic Center
Free for all students
860-231-5410

Office of Student Affairs
860-231-5267
studentaffairs@usj.edu

A Graduate student orientation is provided in Blackboard and provides more details about these resources. All offices and services can also be accessed through the website at www.usj.edu.

Weather Cancellation

When campus is closed, classes may be cancelled or held remotely. The course instructor will inform students of the status of the class meeting. Students can receive text alerts regarding campus closings by registering at https://www.usj.edu/student-life/campus-safety/text-message-alerts/.
# Table of Contents

USJ Resources Quick Reference Guide 4
Mission 5
Accreditation 6
Introduction 7
Programs of Study 7
  MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling 7
  MA in School Counseling 7
  Dual Credential Plan 7
  Transfer Credits 8
  Changing Programs 8
  Advisement 8
Core Program Content 8
Comprehensive Examination 11
Course Delivery 12
Students as Professionals 12
  Growth in Community 12
  Professional Conduct 13
  Professional Readiness Statement 14
  Dismissal for Non-Academic Reasons Appeal Process 17
Grades, Grading, and Academic Progress Policies 17
  Grade Requirements for the Counseling Programs 17
  Other Grading and Credit Policies 18
  Academic Integrity 18
Additional USJ Policies 18
  Degree Completion and Application 18
  Non-discrimination Policy 18
  Student Accessibility Services 19
  Sexual Harassment Policy 19
  Student Grievance Policy 20
After Graduation 20
  Endorsement, Licensure, and Certification 20
  State of Connecticut Requirements for LPC 20
  State of Connecticut Requirements for School Counselor Certification 21
  Credentialing Outside Connecticut 22
Appendix: Professional Organizations 23
University of Saint Joseph Mission

The University of Saint Joseph, founded by the Sisters of Mercy in the Catholic tradition, provides rigorous liberal arts and professional education for a diverse student population in an inclusive environment that encourages strong ethical values, personal integrity, and a sense of responsibility to the needs of society.

Counseling Programs Mission

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling Master of Arts programs are committed to educating counselors who will provide effective growth-oriented interventions, advocacy, and leadership when serving the needs of individuals in the many diverse communities in which they work and reside.
Accreditation

Accreditation Statement

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) is the official organization that accredits graduate programs that prepare counseling professionals—counselors, counseling supervisors, and counselor educators. CACREP sets standards for Counseling Program institutions, administration, faculty, curriculum, and program evaluation. In a self-study every eight years, the program faculty presents evidence of the extent to which the program meets or exceeds those standards. They submit the self-study in writing and then host an on-site team that CACREP sends to observe program operations directly. The USJ Counseling Programs were last accredited in 2013.

Effective through March 31, 2023, CACREP has conferred accreditation on the following programs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>CACREP Program Area</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Mental Health Counseling</td>
<td>MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling</td>
<td>Clinical Mental Health Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Counseling</td>
<td>MA in School Counseling</td>
<td>School Counseling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The University of Saint Joseph is accredited by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE), Inc., Accreditation of an institution by the NECHE indicates that it meets or exceeds criteria for the assessment of institutional quality periodically applied through a peer group review process. An accredited school or college is one which has available the necessary resources to achieve its stated purposes through appropriate educational programs, is substantially doing so, and gives reasonable evidence that it will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Institutional integrity is also addressed through accreditation.

Each of the programs at the University of Saint Joseph has been reviewed and approved by the State of Connecticut Office of Higher Education. Additionally, the School Counseling Program has been accredited by the Connecticut State Department of Education.

*The Programs completed the reaccreditation application process in July and expect an extension of the accreditation until the reaccreditation decision is announced by the CACREP Board of Directors in March 2023.*
Introduction

The Counseling faculty want students to have a successful academic and clinically enriching experience. Faculty members are assigned as academic advisors as soon as students enter their respective programs and are available to assist students as they progress through the programs. However, it is important that students take responsibility for knowing the content of this handbook as well as the policies that govern graduate studies at the University of Saint Joseph (USJ). Advisors and instructors will assume students have read through this handbook, the USJ Catalog, and the USJ Student Handbook. Students should review these documents periodically while they are enrolled in the program. For specific questions and concerns, students should speak directly with their advisor or a core member of the faculty.

Programs of Study

Students must matriculate (be admitted) into either the Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) or the School Counseling program. To be matriculated, a student must complete the USJ Graduate Application, submit undergraduate transcripts, provide two letters of recommendation, submit the admissions essay, and provide a resume. They must also complete an interview with a program faculty member. The Office of Admissions provides the necessary supports for the application procedure.

Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling

The CMHC program is committed to educating counselors who will provide leadership in serving the mental health needs of individuals across the lifespan. This program offers an education that is holistic, reflecting an integration of mind, body, and spirit. The purpose of a community mental health counselor’s intervention is seen as facilitating individual growth towards fulfilling one’s human potential. This program focuses on helping counselors design and implement interventions that attend to the wide span of personal problems that emerge from handling the stresses and strains of modern life. Counselors are prepared to work in community mental health centers, private practice, social service agencies, health services organizations, businesses, and educational or religious settings.

The Master’s degree requires 60 credits, of which 9 are associated with a year-long field experience during the final year. In addition to the coursework and field experience, passing the Counselor Education Comprehensive Exam is required for graduation.

Master of Arts in School Counseling

The School Counseling program is committed to educating counselors who will provide leadership in serving the developmental needs of children in a school community. The purpose of a counselor’s intervention is seen as facilitating growth towards the student’s full academic and psychosocial potential. The program focuses on assisting future counselors with a wide range of issues that confront students, teachers, and parents across the full span of the school years (K-12). Therefore, school counselors who graduate from the University of Saint Joseph are prepared to work with elementary, middle, and high school students and to assist them with the types of challenges that they face as they grow and develop.
The Master’s degree requires 60 credits, of which 9 are associated with three semesters of field experience. In addition to the coursework and field experience, passing the Counselor Education Comprehensive Exam is required for graduation.

**Dual Credential Plan**

In the spring semester of their first year, students will have the opportunity to apply for a plan to complete the educational requirements for both the School Counselor Certification and the Licensed Professional Counselor credentials during their degree program. Because of the requirements of the respective credentials, students wishing to pursue requirements for both must be accepted and enrolled in the School Counseling (SC) program. In addition to the 60 credit School Counseling program, these students must complete two semesters of Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) internship. The CMHC internship is usually completed during the summer and fall of the student’s final year. The student’s anticipated graduation date is not affected.

**Transfer Credits**

Normally, a maximum of six credits may be transferred from another accredited graduate school into a University of Saint Joseph graduate program. Exceptions to this maximum are noted under specific program descriptions. To be eligible for transfer credit, a course to be transferred must carry a grade of B or higher. The transfer of credits is not granted automatically. Application forms for transfer of credit are available in the Department Chair. Normally, the coursework in such transfer requests must have been completed within the last six years.

**Changing Programs**

Students who wish to transfer from one program to another program must meet with the Program Director for that program and be admitted into the program. The program admission decision will be based on graduate work already completed and the potential for success in the new program.

**Advisement**

In the counseling programs, a faculty advisor is assigned to all students upon admission. The advisor is the Program Director for the student’s area of specialty. Each student will find their advisor listed on their individual Program of Study. Students should consult their advisor about any necessary changes to their Programs of Study. Students are invited to speak with any faculty member about other advising topics, such as special interests, career, or work-life-study balance.

**Core Program Content**

The professional counseling programs seek to prepare students to be effective counselors in a dynamic profession that is carried out in an constantly changing world. The programs are structured to enable students to develop a professional identity and master the knowledge and counseling skills necessary for entry-level professional practice. The faculty aim to educate students and foster their development such that they are fully prepared for careers in public schools, private/charter schools,
clinic and outpatient mental health settings, hospitals, residential programs, educational institutions, private practices, and any other settings where counseling is provided.

The two programs share the majority of their required courses, and the learning in each program is enriched through exposure to the setting and role of the other specialty. Students can expect to attend classes with a combination of CMHC and School Counseling students throughout the program. In their second year, CMHC students begin courses that support their preparation to work with a wide variety of mental health problems in clinical settings, and School Counseling students begin courses specific to their anticipated roles in school settings.

The core content areas for both counseling specialty areas are the same. This content is addressed in eight broad domains of study:

1. **Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice**
   - History and philosophy of the counseling profession
   - Professional roles, functions, and relationships with other human service Providers, including strategies for interagency/inter-organization collaboration and communications
   - Counselors’ roles and responsibilities as members of an interdisciplinary emergency management response team during a local, regional, or national crisis, disaster, or trauma-causing event
   - Self-care strategies appropriate to the counselor role
   - Counseling supervision models, practices, and processes; professional organizations, including membership benefits, activities, services to members, and current issues
   - Professional credentialing, including certification, licensure, and accreditation practices and standards, and the effects of public policy on these issues
   - The role and process of the professional counselor advocating on behalf of the profession;
   - Advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impede access, equity, and success for clients
   - Ethical standards of professional organizations and credentialing bodies, and Applications of ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling

2. **Social and Cultural Diversity**
   - Multicultural and pluralistic trends, including characteristics and concerns within and among diverse groups nationally and internationally
   - Attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences, including specific experiential learning activities designed to foster students’ understanding of self and culturally diverse clients
   - Theories of multicultural counseling, identity development, and social justice
   - Individual, couple, family, group, and community strategies for working with and advocating for diverse populations, including multicultural competencies
   - Counselors’ roles in developing cultural self-awareness, promoting cultural social justice, advocacy and conflict resolution, and other culturally supported behaviors that promote optimal wellness and growth of the human spirit, mind, or body
   - Counselors’ roles in eliminating biases, prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination.
3. **Human Growth and Development**

- Theories of individual and family development and transitions across the life span
- Theories of learning and personality development, including current understandings about neurobiological behavior
- Effects of crises, disasters, and other trauma causing events on persons of all ages
- Theories and models of individual, cultural, couple, family, and community resilience
- A general framework for understanding exceptional abilities and strategies for differentiated interventions
- Human behavior, including an understanding of developmental crises, disability, psychopathology, and situational and environmental factors that affect both normal and abnormal behavior
- Theories and etiology of addictions and addictive behaviors, including strategies for prevention, intervention, and treatment
- Theories for facilitating optimal development and wellness over the life span

4. **Career Development**

- Career development theories and decision-making models
- Career, avocational, educational, occupational and labor market information resources, and career information systems
- Career development program planning, organization, implementation, administration, and evaluation
- Interrelationships among and between work, family, and other life roles and factors, including the role of multicultural issues in career development
- Career and educational planning, placement, follow-up, and evaluation
- Assessment instruments and techniques relevant to career planning and decision making
- Career counseling processes, techniques, and resources, including those applicable to specific populations in a global economy

5. **Helping Relationships**

- An orientation to wellness and prevention as desired counseling goals
- Counselor characteristics and behaviors that influence helping processes
- Essential interviewing and counseling skills
- Counseling theories that provide the student with models to conceptualize client presentation and that help the student select appropriate counseling interventions consistent with current professional research and practice
- A systems perspective that provides an understanding of family and other systems theories and major models of family and related interventions
- A general framework for understanding and practicing consultation
- Crisis intervention and suicide prevention models, including the use of psychological first aid strategies

6. **Group Work**

- Principles of group dynamics, including group process components, developmental stage theories, group members’ roles, and behaviors, and therapeutic factors of group work
- Group leadership or facilitation styles and approaches, including characteristics of various types of group leaders and leadership styles
• Theories of group counseling, including commonalities, distinguishing characteristics, and pertinent research and literature
• Group counseling methods, including group counselor orientations and behaviors, appropriate selection criteria and methods, and methods of evaluation of effectiveness
• Direct experiences in which students participate as group members in a small group activity, approved by the program, for a minimum of 10 clock hours over the course of one academic term.

7. Assessment
• Historical perspectives concerning the nature and meaning of assessment
• Basic concepts of standardized and non-standardized testing and other assessment techniques, including norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment, environmental assessment, performance assessment, individual and group test and inventory methods, psychological testing, and behavioral observations
• Statistical concepts, including scales of measurement, measures of central tendency, indices of variability, shapes, and types of distributions, and correlations
• Reliability (i.e., measurement error theory, models of reliability, and the use of reliability information)
• Validity (i.e., evidence of validity, types of validity, and the relationship between reliability and validity)
• Social and cultural factors related to the assessment and evaluation of individuals, groups, and specific populations
• Ethical strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment and evaluation instruments and techniques in counseling

8. Research and Program Evaluation
• The importance of research in advancing the counseling profession
• Research methods such as qualitative, quantitative, single-case designs, action research, and outcome-based research
• Statistical methods used in conducting research and program evaluation
• Principles, models, and applications of needs assessment, program evaluation, and the use of findings to effect program modifications
• The use of research to inform evidence-based practice
• Ethical and culturally relevant strategies for interpreting and reporting the results of research and/or program evaluation studies

Comprehensive Examination

Students must pass the Counselor Education Comprehensive Examination in order to graduate from the program. It requires the student to demonstrate the ability to integrate and apply content learned throughout the program. The exam consists of 120 multiple choice questions, 15 in each of the eight core content areas required by CACREP and listed above. The passing score for the exam is norm-referenced and based on the current national mean.

Students may sit for the Comprehensive Exam once they are enrolled in Practicum and receive approval from their advisor or Program Director. The exam is offered in early February of each
year. In special cases, additional dates may also be offered. A student who does not pass the comprehensive examination will be required to sit for the next scheduled comprehensive exam in its entirety.

**Course Delivery**

The program courses are delivered in person on the USJ campus, with the exception of one course in School Counseling and two in CMHC that are delivered in a synchronous online format. In the synchronous online format, students meet with their instructor and classmates virtually for regular class sessions while completing out-of-class assignments online.

The fall and spring semesters are 15 weeks long, and all classes meet once a week for 2.5 hours. The summer semester is reduced to 11 weeks, and classes are accelerated and meet once a week for 3.5 hours. To allow students to work during their graduate program, all classes are scheduled in the evenings. Students should be prepared to attend classes two to three evenings per week on a schedule that varies by semester. Although students may have a choice of meeting times for some courses, they should plan their personal and work schedules to allow for classes anytime between 4:00 and 9:15 pm, Monday through Thursday. For each fall and spring course, students are expected to spend a minimum of 6 hours per week on assignments outside of class in addition to the 2.5-hour class meeting each week. In the summer courses, the expectation is a minimum of 8 hours per week spent on outside assignments.

**Students as Professionals**

Students in the Counseling programs are expected to invest fully in their own growth as professionals and as counselors-in-training as they progress through the program. They are expected to participate fully in all program activities, including but not limited to orientations, class sessions, and supervision meetings. Class participation is as important as completing written assignments, and students are expected to be fully present and engage in class discussions, group activities, and practice counseling sessions. Students are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism and respect toward one another and the faculty, and to communicate openly with faculty about their unique interests and needs.

**Growth in Community**

When students enter the Counseling programs, they are becoming part of a community at several levels. Broadly, they are joining the community of professional counselors internationally, nationally, and in the state of Connecticut. Students are encouraged to pursue that community through memberships in professional associations. (Several relevant associations are listed in the Appendix). At another level, students are joining the community of USJ Counseling students, graduates, and faculty, who share the mission of the program and seek to be skilled and dedicated helpers. Graduates of the USJ programs work throughout the state and beyond, and some serve as site supervisors during students’ field experience. Finally, each cohort of students within each of the programs forms a community sharing classes and challenges as they grow together. Students are encouraged to build relationships and support one another as they practice counseling skills together, complete assignments, and face the demands of life from within and without the program.
Professional Conduct

Graduate school is a challenging endeavor, and being in the counseling profession means that students can expect to grow as persons, professionals, and counselors as they navigate the program. Relationships with peers, faculty, and colleagues in their field experience settings allow for practice and growth in professional conduct. Students are expected to treat their graduate school relationships as they would in an employment setting. This means treating one another and faculty with respect and care, as counselors would treat those whom they serve.

Class attendance
Student should plan their time carefully and treat their classes and coursework as they would a job. Since each class meets only once a week, class meeting times should be prioritized. Although courses meet in the evenings to support working students, students should schedule job and family commitments around their class schedule. Vacations should be planned during breaks between semesters. More than one absence in a course may impact a student’s grade.

Confidentiality in the Counseling programs
Confidentiality is a prime concern in the Counseling field for many reasons, including establishing and maintaining client trust and HIPAA regulation of personal health information in many counseling settings. To help students learn to handle protected information properly, the Programs require that students use private channels in Microsoft Teams to share recordings of practice counseling with their instructors in most courses. This is in preparation for the field experience courses, where Microsoft Teams will be the tool used to collect and review client-specific assignments. Training will be provided for using Microsoft Teams, and instructors will set up private channels in courses where they are needed. The IT Service Desk also provides help with all the Microsoft Office products.

Communication
Although faculty provide the settings, materials, opportunities, and guidance for learning, students are ultimately responsible for their own learning. They must engage in professional and proactive communication, which is essential to success in the Counseling programs. To ensure strong communication, students should access their USJ email accounts every one to two weekdays to read university and program information and respond to faculty inquiries at a minimum. Students should also take initiative to speak with faculty about any questions or concerns they have about classes. Concerns at the program level should be taken to the Program Directors.

Written assignments
All papers for Counseling program assignments must be double-spaced using APA format for references and citations. Consult the American Psychological Association Publication Manual, 7th ed. (2019, APA). Papers must be well-organized, express concepts in a clear and fluid manner, and develop ideas with enough elaboration and detail to adequately demonstrate understanding and critical thinking. Standard mechanics of writing (i.e. spelling, punctuation, verb tense, etc.) should be used. It is understood that language and syntax may vary among a diverse student body, especially English Language Learners.

For help with APA format and style and other aspects of writing, students can make appointments with writing tutors at the Center for Academic Excellence (CAE). Information about the CAE can be found under Academic Services on the USJ webpage. The Purdue Online Writing Lab webpage
is also an excellent resource for writing and applying APA style. All research papers must be submitted electronically unless otherwise directed to allow faculty to use tools to check for plagiarism.

In addition to writing academic and research-based papers, students will also be required to engage in reflective writing, which is more personal in tone, as well as clinical writing, which uses discipline-specific language. Faculty provide feedback on writing mechanics and style as well as content throughout the program to support students’ writing development.

**Professional presentation**

Professional counselors should be aware of how they present in a clinical or school setting and of how their presentation may impact their students or clients. Students are encouraged to keep this in mind when making choices about their appearance in class and in the field experience setting. It is recommended that students choose attire and presentation that is compatible with that of other professionals in their setting.

**Student conduct**

Students are expected to engage in personal conduct that does not violate criminal or civil statutes of the State of Connecticut, is consistent with the USJ Student Code of Conduct (see USJ Catalog), and falls within the guidelines set by the American Counseling Association (ACA) through the [ACA Code of Ethics (2014)](https://www.acacounseling.org/Documents/2014%20Code%20of%20Ethics%20Final.pdf).

The USJ Student Code of Conduct, which can be found on the USJ website under Student Life, details the types of student behaviors that will result in disciplinary action, including possible dismissal from the University. Students who violate the Code may be referred to the Student Affairs Office for disciplinary action in addition to any actions taken by the program faculty. Conduct violations by a student off-campus in related academic activities (e.g. internship) will be handled in the same way as if the violation had occurred on-campus.

**Professional Readiness Statement**

The faculty of the CMHC and School Counseling programs recognize and takes seriously their ethical responsibility to monitor the readiness of students wishing to enter the counseling profession.

The [ACA Code of Ethics](https://www.acacounseling.org/Documents/2014%20Code%20of%20Ethics%20Final.pdf) states that counselors (counselor educators) must provide students and supervisees with periodic performance appraisal and evaluation feedback throughout their training programs. Sections F.6.b, F.9.a. and F.9.b. (2014) of the Code hold that counselor educators are obliged to address personal and professional limitations of students and supervisees:

**F.6.b. Gatekeeping and Remediation**

Through initial and ongoing evaluation, supervisors are aware of supervisee limitations that might impede performance. Supervisors assist supervisees in securing remedial assistance when needed. They recommend dismissal from training programs, applied counseling settings, and state or voluntary professional credentialing processes when those supervisees are unable to demonstrate that they can provide competent professional services to a range of diverse clients. Supervisors seek consultation and document their decisions to dismiss or
refer supervisees for assistance. They ensure that supervisees are aware of options available to them to address such decisions.

**F.9.a. Evaluation**

Counselors clearly state to students, prior to and throughout the training program, the levels of competency expected, appraisal methods, and timing of evaluations for both didactic and clinical competencies. Counselor educators provide students with ongoing performance appraisal and evaluation feedback throughout the training program.

**F.9.b. Limitations**

Counselor educators, through ongoing evaluation, are aware of and address the inability of some students to achieve counseling competencies. Counselor educators do the following:

1. Assist students in securing remedial assistance when needed,

2. Seek professional consultation and document their decision to dismiss or refer students for assistance, and

3. Ensure that students have recourse in a timely manner to address decisions requiring them to seek assistance or to dismiss them and provide students with due process according to institutional policies and procedures.

The faculty take the ethical responsibilities stated and implied in the ACA Code of Ethics seriously. Therefore, the faculty will function as an educational team to assess and monitor the presence of any limitations that may impede a student’s progress within the program and/or in the delivery of counseling services. This assessment will address academic and non-academic (interpersonal functioning) aspects of the student’s performance.

Professional role review may be initiated by the program faculty member when a student exhibits the following behavior in one discrete episode that is a violation of law or of the ACA Code of Ethics and/or when a student exhibits a documented pattern of recurring behavior which may include but is not limited to the following:

- Performance or behaviors that demonstrate poor interpersonal skills and an inability to effectively communicate with others, often evidenced by repeated complaints from the field supervisor, other students or departmental faculty
- Unethical, threatening or unprofessional conduct
- Behaviors that place clients at risk during a field placement, including current substance abuse problems; exploitation of clients; emotional, physical or verbal abuse; vindictive action toward clients; or stealing from clients
- Behavioral displays that pose a risk to others or to competently engaging in counseling practice
- Consistent inability or unwillingness to carry out academic or field placement responsibilities
- Frequent excuse-making when tasks, assignments, tests, appointments are not completed in a timely manner or require rescheduling
- Consistent non-attendance and/or tardiness in classes, at field placement and other required departmental functions
- Lack of insight into negative consequences of own behavior and frequent blame of others or external factors for failures and difficulties in the academic or field placement environment
- Inability to tolerate different points of view, constructive feedback or supervision
- Failure to maintain regular contact with supervisors, which includes keeping them apprised of clinical and ethical issues pertaining to clients.
- Dishonest academic practices, including but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aiding and abetting deception or dishonesty, and the falsification of records or official documents
- Verbal or physical aggressiveness toward others

If a student discloses personal information that impacts their learning or the program to a faculty member, the faculty member may share that information with other faculty to the extent necessary to assess the student’s ability to serve in the role of a professional counselor. Faculty members may also consult each other if it is observed that a student behaves in a manner that is inappropriate, unprofessional, and/or raises questions regarding that student’s readiness for the profession.

When a faculty member observes a student who, through behavior or manner of presentation, compromises the educational process, relevant sections of the ACA Code of Ethics, and/or the welfare of clients or fellow students, the Faculty will follow these prescribed steps:

1) The faculty member will complete the Formative Student Development Feedback Form and share it with the program director and department chair.

2) The faculty member who has concerns about the student will meet with the student to discuss the nature of the observations made and the reasons for concern. During this meeting, specific expectations for future behavior and/or manner of interpersonal presentation will be stated. The faculty member and the student will discuss options open to the student for remediation and change. This will be documented as a Remediation Plan. It will then be the student’s responsibility to take appropriate steps toward meeting the stated expectations within the established timeline. The faculty member will write a follow-up letter to the student documenting the discussion and any agreement reached regarding expectations for change and desired outcomes. A copy of the follow-up letter will also be sent to the student’s advisor and placed in the student’s file. The nature of the faculty member’s concern and content of discussion during the meeting will be noted during the next regular departmental review of the student’s progress.

3) Should the faculty member or other faculty members continue to observe problematic behavior, written notification will be sent to the student specifically documenting the nature of the observations, the earlier attempt to address concerns with the student, and the lack of observable improvement. A copy of this letter will also be sent to the Program Director, Department Chair, and the Dean’s Office.

4) Once this letter is received, the student’s advisor will call a meeting with the student and the faculty member who has written the notification of concern. If the faculty member voicing the concern is the student’s advisor, the Department Chair will call this meeting. During this
meeting, the nature of the concern and related issues will be reviewed. Together the faculty member, the student, and the student’s advisor (or Program Director) will discuss possible options to appropriately address the concerns for the purpose of remediation.

5) If the Faculty see no measurable improvement a final formal review of the concerns based on the Remediation Plan will be conducted. Prior to the review, the student may provide, in writing, any information that they wish to have the Faculty take into account during the review process. The options open to the faculty in such cases include but are not limited to the following: course selection recommendations, pacing of course enrollment, delaying of the field experience, a recommendation of entering counseling and providing evidence that necessary changes have been made, granting an administrative leave of absence, or dismissal from the program. A formal report of the Faculty’s decision and recommendations will be sent to the student and the Academic Dean.

Dismissal for Non-Academic Reasons Appeal Process

A student has the right to formally appeal any decision made by the faculty. A student who has been dismissed from the program may start the appeal process by writing a letter to the Department Chair requesting reinstatement. The letter should include the reasons for which the student believes they should be reinstated. If an appeal is granted, the student remains on probation for a stated time and will be monitored for the required behavior change. A student who is dismissed from the program may reapply to the University of Saint Joseph after three academic semesters following dismissal (see the USJ Course Catalog for details).

Grades, Grading, and Academic Progress Policies

Grade Requirements for the Counseling Programs

In the Counseling programs, a grade of C or below in any course necessitates review by the Department. Earning a grade of C or below in two courses necessitates a reconsideration of candidacy and the possibility of repeating course work. Consistent with the Graduate Academic Probation and Dismissal Policy, a GPA below 2.67 or receipt of a grade of D+ or below results in either academic probation or dismissal from the program. In addition to academic probation, the Counseling programs may require a student to repeat the course.

Competency in the counseling skills taught in Skills and Techniques in Counseling (COUN 541), Advanced Counseling Skills (COUN 585), and Group Process and Dynamics (COUN 531) is crucial for counseling practice, students must be able to demonstrate proficiency in them before progressing to the field experience. Therefore, in order to progress in the program, students must earn a grade of B or better in COUN 541, COUN 585, and COUN 531. A student who receives a grade of B- or below will be required to re-enroll in the course before progressing in the program.

Practicum (COUN 568/566), Internship I (COUN 570/573), and Internship II (COUN 571/574) courses are graded on a Pass/Fail basis. In order to receive a grade of “Pass” in these courses, students must earn an final grade of B or better.
Other Grading and Credit Policies

Please refer to the USJ Catalog’s Academic Policies and Procedures for information on Incomplete grades, repeated courses, and academic probation, dismissal, and grade appeal.

Please refer to the USJ Catalog’s Registration section for information on dropping and adding courses, withdrawing from courses, taking a leave of absence, withdrawal from the University, and administrative withdrawals.

Instructions for transcript requests can be found under the Registrar’s office page on the USJ website.

Academic Integrity

One of the values of the Counseling professions is veracity or truthfulness. Thus, the Counseling programs as well as the University take academic integrity violations, including plagiarism and misrepresentation of work, unassigned collaboration, cheating, and cyberfraud, very seriously. Please see the University’s Academic Integrity and Student Grievance Policies in the USJ Catalog.

For help with avoiding plagiarism, students may consult a Writing Consultant at the Center for Academic Excellence (CAE) on campus. The CAE offers in-person and remote tutoring for all stages of written assignments as well as some content areas. Information about the CAE can be found on the USJ website under Academic Services.

Additional USJ Policies

Degree Completion and Application

Requirements for the degree should be completed within six years from the date of matriculation. The department chair may grant an extension for completion of the degree. Students are expected to matriculate no later than the completion of two courses (6 credits). The department chair may grant an extension for completion of the degree.

Information will be sent to each student from the Registrar’s Office regarding the Application for Graduation. USJ holds one commencement ceremony in May of each year. If a student’s graduation date is anticipated to be August, s/he may walk at that year’s May graduation ceremony. A student completing his/her degree requirements by the end of the Fall semester will have a December graduation date on their diploma and may participate in the commencement ceremony the following May.

Non-discrimination Policy

The University of Saint Joseph prohibits discrimination against any persons on account of their race, color, religious creed, age, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, transgender status, marital status, national origin, ancestry, disability (including, but not limited to, intellectual disability, present or past history of mental disorder, learning disability or physical disability),
genetic information, homelessness, prior conviction of a crime, or any other characteristic protected by law, in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and employment practices (unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification related to employment).

Inquiries concerning the University’s non-discrimination policies may be referred to Deborah Spencer, Human Resources director /Title IX coordinator, 860.231.5390 or email titleIX@usj.edu, or to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 8th Floor, Five Post Office Square, Boston MA 02109, telephone 617.289.0111, TDD 800.877.8339, fax 617-289-0150, or email ocr.boston@ed.gov.

**Student Accessibility Services**

Appointments may be made by calling 860.231.5481. The Student Accessibility Services, located in the Center for Academic Excellence, recommends reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. As required by law, eligibility for accommodations must be supported by appropriate educational, medical or psychological documentation. It is the student’s responsibility to self-identify and request accommodations and support services each semester. Accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis using information contained in the official documentation provided by the student. Students must obtain a letter from the Coordinator of Student Accessibility Services to be officially supported; accommodations are not retroactive. The Coordinator of Student Accessibility Services assists students with disabilities in their growth as self-advocates and in arranging for their individualized accommodations. Accessibility Services is part of Student Academic and Career Services, which also houses the CAE, Academic Advising and Career Development

**Sexual Harassment Policy**

The University of Saint Joseph is committed to providing an environment free from gender-based discrimination and harassment. The University of Saint Joseph is dedicated to a healthy and safe learning and living environment in which members of the community can realize their full potential, free from all forms of gender or sex discrimination and sexual misconduct including interpersonal violence and stalking. As such, the University complies with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance. The University of Saint Joseph strives to ensure that no student or employee is excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of any University program or activity on the basis of sex. Any employee who is aware of a University student subject to possible sexual misconduct is required to report their concerns to a designated Title IX Coordinator/Deputy. Any University of Saint Joseph community member who has questions about the policy or the grievance procedures should seek clarification from the University’s Title IX Office.

The University Title IX Deputy Coordinators are: Deborah Spencer, Director of Human Resources, Mercy Hall, dspencer@usj.edu, 860-231-5390 and

Rayna Dyton-White, Director of Diversity & Inclusion, Lourdes Hall, rdytonwhite@usj.edu 860-231-5487
Student Grievance Policy

A student with a grievance should confer first with the instructor and his/her advisor. If the grievance needs further discussion, the student brings it to the Department Chair and then to the School Dean, if necessary. Should further consideration of the issue be required, it is brought to the Provost who then calls together an ad hoc committee of a student, instructor, advisor, department chair, and Dean. Please see the Course Catalog for further details.

After Graduation

Endorsement, Licensure, and Certification

Students who have completed the required plan of study for the School Counseling Program will be endorsed for credentialing as School Counselors. Students who have completed the CMHC Program or the equivalent under Connecticut’s licensing statute will be endorsed for the Licensed Professional Counselor credential.

State of Connecticut Requirements for Licensed Professional Counselor

In the State of CT, the State Department of Public Health oversees the licensing of all health care providers. USJ faculty will endorse a student for licensure only when they have completed the degree requirements described below. In the case of students who have taken courses but have not completed the program of study, USJ faculty will verify specific areas of study.

All CMHC students must apply for the Licensed Professional Counselor Associate (LPCA) upon graduation in order to practice in CT. In CT an applicant for licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor Associate (LPCA) must meet the following requirements:

- A Master’s degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from a CACREP accredited institution

OR

- A counseling Master’s degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education,
- Sixty graduate semester hours in or related to the discipline of Clinical Mental Health Counseling,
- Coursework in each of the following areas: Human growth and development; social and cultural foundations; counseling theories; counseling techniques; group counseling; career counseling; appraisals or tests and measurements to individuals and groups; research and evaluation; professional orientation to mental health counseling; addiction and substance abuse counseling; trauma and crisis counseling; and diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional disorders
- A 100 hour Practicum and a 600 hour Internship taught by a licensed or certified professional counselor.
To meet the minimum qualifications in CT to obtain the **Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)** credential, an individual must meet the requirements for the LPCA, as detailed above, as well as the following post-graduation requirements:

- Three thousand (3,000) hours of postgraduate supervised experience in professional counseling,
- A minimum of one hundred (100) hours of direct supervision, and
- Successful completion of the National Counselor Examination for Licensure and Certification (NCE) or the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (NCMHCE).

For more detailed information and application for the **LPCA**, see [https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Practitioner-Licensing--Investigations/Professional-Counselor/Professional-Counselor-Associate](https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Practitioner-Licensing--Investigations/Professional-Counselor/Professional-Counselor-Associate).

For more detailed information and application for the **LPC**, see [https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Practitioner-Licensing--Investigations/Professional-Counselor/Professional-Counselor-Licensing](https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Practitioner-Licensing--Investigations/Professional-Counselor/Professional-Counselor-Licensing).

School Counseling program graduates who wish to secure the Licensed Professional Counseling (LPCA/LPC) credential must, at minimum, complete a full CMHC internship in order to receive LPC endorsement. School Counseling students should seek consultation with the School Counseling Program Director if they wish to extend their studies to obtain the LPC credential.

**State of Connecticut Requirements for School Counselor Certification**

Note: Students interested in work as a school counselor outside of Connecticut should research the requirement in the state where they plan to work. Information about USJ’s preparation for other states is available under “Professional Licensure” at [https://www.usj.edu/about/student-consumer-information/](https://www.usj.edu/about/student-consumer-information/).

The requirements for CT are noted below and highlighted with asterisks are items that require the endorsement of the faculty and/or Certification Officer at the University of Saint Joseph:

**Educational Requirements:** An undergraduate GPA of 2.67*; Master’s degree and has completed, as part of or in addition to the master’s degree, a minimum of 60 semester hours of credit in a planned program in school counseling services as attested to by an institution* approved for the preparation of school counselors

**Required Coursework:** (1) 60 semester hours of graduate credit in a planned program in school counseling services including course work in each of the following areas: Principles and philosophy of developmental guidance and counseling, psychological and sociological theory as related to children, Career development theory and practice, Individual and group counseling procedures, Pupil appraisal and evaluation techniques, and school-based consultation theory and practice; (2) Evidence of practicum and laboratory experiences in school counseling; (3) completion of study in special education comprised of not fewer than 36 clock hours including gifted and talented children and special-needs children in the regular classroom. All three requirements are verified through the
transcript. (4) A 700 hour supervised school counseling internship in a public school over the course of a full ten-month academic year.

Following the completion of a plan of study, the USJ School Counseling Program Director sends the needed verification to USJ School Certification Officer who then recommends students for K-12 certification and submits all information to the State Board of Education.

**Examination:** The Praxis I Pre-Professional Skills Tests (PPST) paper-based or computerized or a combined score of 1,100 or more on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), with no less than 400 on either the verbal or the mathematics subtest. Verification of the aforementioned test scores* are requested prior to admission to the program but must be received by the end of the second semester within the program.

**Credentialing Outside Connecticut**

Students interested in work as a school counselor outside of Connecticut should research the requirement in the state where they plan to work. Information about USJ’s preparation for other states is available under “Professional Licensure” at [https://www.usj.edu/about/student-consumer-information/](https://www.usj.edu/about/student-consumer-information/).
Appendix

Professional Organizations

The strength of any profession rests with the quality of professionals within it. Counseling students are strongly encouraged to join the professional associations that most closely match their career aspirations. Opportunities to become professionally involved with the associations will be addressed during your first-semester course Ethics and Standards of Practice (COUN 515).

ACA – American Counseling Association

www.counseling.org

The American Counseling Association is a not-for-profit, professional and educational organization that is dedicated to the growth and enhancement of the counseling profession. Founded in 1952, ACA is the world's largest association exclusively representing professional counselors in various practice settings. By providing leadership training, publications, continuing education opportunities, and advocacy services to more than 56,000 members, ACA helps counseling professionals develop their skills and expand their knowledge base. Student membership in ACA includes liability insurance, which is required during the field experience required by the programs.

ASCA – American School Counseling Association

www.schoolcounselor.org

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) supports school counselors' efforts to help students focus on academic, personal/social and career development so they achieve success in school and are prepared to lead fulfilling lives as responsible members of society. ASCA provides professional development, publications and other resources, research and advocacy to more than 30,000 professional school counselors around the globe.

AMHCA American Mental Health Counselors Association

www.amhca.org

AMHCA is a growing community of more than 6,300 clinical mental health counselors. AMHCA serves the professional needs of mental health counselors to make a critical impact on the lives of Americans and give a voice to our profession nationwide. AMHCA’s mission is to advance the profession of clinical mental health counseling by setting the standard for collaboration, advocacy, research, ethical practice, and education, training, and professional development.

CCA – Connecticut Counseling Association

www.ccamain.org

The Connecticut Counseling Association (CCA) represents Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC) and Licensed Professional Counselor Associates (LPCA) in the State of Connecticut. This association provides a formal network of professionals that assist in continued education and state legislative efforts that serve to enhance the profession. CCA holds a professional conference each year where Master’s degree students are invited to present posters on their research or areas of specialization in counseling.
**CSCA – Connecticut School Counselor Association**
[www.ctschoolcounselor.org](http://www.ctschoolcounselor.org)
The Connecticut School Counselor Association promotes excellence in professional school counseling by advocating for the role and programs of school counselors and by demonstrating leadership in developing new and supportive services and programs for its members. CSCA is the only organization in Connecticut dedicated to furthering the needs and mission of school counselors. CSCA is made up of hundreds of professional school counselors who share a common vision: to promote the academic, personal/social and career development needs of all students.

**Chi Sigma Iota:** The Counseling Program at USJ has a chapter of the Counselor Education Honor Society, Chi Sigma Iota. Students who are interested should contact Dr. Marte Ostvik-deWilde ([mdewilde@usj.edu](mailto:mdewilde@usj.edu)) or Dr. Jessica Motroni Banik ([jessicabanik@usj.edu](mailto:jessicabanik@usj.edu)), the Chapter Co-Advisors.

**ACES – Association for Counselor Education and Supervision**
[www.acesonline.net](http://www.acesonline.net)
ACES members are counselors, supervisors, graduate students, and faculty members who strive to improve the education and supervision of counselors in training and in practice. ACES and the regional associations host conferences to highlight research and best practices in supervision and in the training of counselors. ACES members have been and continue to be trailblazers in terms of the competencies for supervision, counselor training, research, multicultural competence, and advocacy. Many of the leaders of the counseling profession are members of ACES and there are always opportunities to become involved in leadership through task forces, committees, interest networks, and elected positions.

**CACREP Counsel for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs**
[www.cacrep.org](http://www.cacrep.org)
CACREP accredits master’s and doctoral degree programs in counseling and its specialties that are offered by colleges and universities in the United States and throughout the world.

**NBCC National Board of Certified Counselors**
[www.nbcc.org](http://www.nbcc.org)
The National Board for Certified Counselors, Inc. and Affiliates (NBCC), an independent not-for-profit credentialing body for counselors, was incorporated in 1982 to establish and monitor a national certification system, to identify those counselors who have voluntarily sought and obtained certification, and to maintain a register of those counselors. The NBCC offers a number of fellowships and scholarships for graduate students in Counseling, including the Minority Fellowship Program, which has been awarded to several USJ students.