



UNIVERSITY OF
SAINT JOSEPH

CONNECTICUT

Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling

Program Handbook 2025-2026

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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
rdytonwhite@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 Psychological Services

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

Weather Cancellation

When campus is closed, classes may be cancelled or held remotely. The course instructor will inform students if a virtual class meeting will be held. Students can receive text alerts regarding campus closings by registering at <https://www.usj.edu/student-life/campus-safety/text-message-alerts/>.

Accreditation



The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) 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 2023.

Effective through October 31, 2031, CACREP has conferred accreditation on the following programs:

Program	Degree	CACREP Program Area
Clinical Mental Health Counseling	MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling	Clinical Mental Health Counseling
School Counseling	MA in School Counseling	School Counseling

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.

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 preparing highly effective professional counselors through relationship-based and student-focused education. The programs aim to equip students to serve children, adolescents, adults, and families in a diverse range of school and community settings. Graduates are prepared to provide ethical, culturally responsive and sustaining, developmentally grounded, and evidence-informed counseling. They are equipped to engage in social justice advocacy, serving in their communities and their professions as agents of positive change.

Counseling Programs Values and Beliefs

- **Holism and wellness:** Development of the whole person is important not only for graduate students as learners but also for professional counselors. A counselor's primary therapeutic tool is the self in relationship, and counselors support the holistic wellness of their students and clients.
- **Relationship and community:** Strong interpersonal relationships and community are a foundation to graduate students' learning and to professional counseling. Respect, integrity, empathy, and unconditional positive regard are essential in interpersonal and community relationships and collaboration.
- **Diversity and cultural humility:** Cultural humility and responsiveness support diversity in the counseling profession and are essential to equity and inclusion for all graduate students and their future clients and students.
- **Compassionate service and social justice:** Counselors embody genuine and altruistic care for students and clients with diverse backgrounds and needs. Compassion is foundational to their ability to meet those needs with equity and to work toward dismantling interpersonal, institutional, and structural racism and other social inequities.
- **Counselor competence and ethical practice:** Counselors must demonstrate professional dispositions, adhere to the ethical codes of their professions, and practice within the bounds of their competence. Counselors embrace ongoing learning and development throughout their careers.
- **Academic excellence:** The academic development of counselors is an essential foundation for the knowledge, critical thinking, awareness, and skills that support effective and ethical service in their professions.

Welcome

Welcome to the Counseling master's degree programs at the University of Saint Joseph (USJ). This handbook provides important information for students in both the School Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) programs, and all students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with its contents as well as the policies found in the USJ Catalog and Student Handbook. In addition, separate handbooks for the two programs' practicum and internship experiences are available and are distributed before students begin the field experience placement process. For questions about the policies and procedures of the program, students should consult with their advisor or any core faculty member.

Matriculation

To matriculate into either the School Counseling or the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program, a student must complete the USJ Graduate Application, submit undergraduate transcripts, two letters of recommendation, the admissions essay, and a current resume, and they must complete an interview with a program faculty member. The Office of Admissions provides the necessary support for the application procedure. Once admitted, students are required to attend the Counseling New Student Orientation scheduled during the week before classes begin.

Overview of the Programs

The CMHC and School Counseling master's degree programs at USJ are housed in the Department of Counseling and Applied Behavioral Studies. The CMHC program prepares students to work as licensed clinicians in community-based mental health agencies, integrated healthcare organizations, nonprofit organizations, college counseling centers, private practice, and other settings that provide professional mental health care. Graduates have all the educational requirements for Connecticut's Licensed Professional Counselor credential and all of the requirements for licensing in many other states. The School Counseling program prepares students to work with elementary, middle, and high school students in K-12 schools and to provide leadership in programming to support their social and emotional wellness as well as academic success. Graduates are eligible for the Connecticut Board of Education's school counselor certification immediately after completion of the program. Students anticipating practice in other states should consult those states' licensing and certification boards to learn their requirements.

Both programs require 60 credits and take three years to complete on a full-time basis. Students completing a part-time program will take four years to finish. All courses are focused on the application of knowledge and skills in the practice of counseling. Some courses are content-based and require primarily academic assignments with some hands-on practice. Other courses are skills-based and require primarily demonstration of counseling skills and techniques. The curriculum is ordered in such a way that each semester builds on the knowledge and skills from previous semesters. Students progress through the program as a cohort, allowing them to form strong collegial relationships along the way.

The teaching approach is student-focused and relational, and faculty employ a variety of classroom teaching methods including lecture, interactive and group work, demonstration, role play, and skills

practice. Assignments may require writing, research, creative activities, group work, online communication, presentations, and more. Although faculty provide settings, materials, opportunities, and guidance for learning, students are ultimately responsible for their own learning and are expected to take initiative in pursuing deeper understanding and to ask for clarification or support when needed. Asking for help is considered an essential element of success.

The content of the courses includes the eight core content areas required by CACREP:

1. Professional orientation and ethical practice
2. Social and cultural diversity
3. Human growth and development
4. Career development
5. Helping relationships
6. Group work
7. Assessment
8. Research and program evaluation

In addition, counseling children and adolescents, crisis and trauma counseling and substance use disorders, and mental health assessment topics are addressed. In these shared subject areas, CMHC and school counseling students are in combined classes and have the opportunity to learn about work in both clinical and school settings.

In the second year of the program, CMHC and School counseling students begin to take some courses specific to their different professions. The CMHC program provides additional learning in counseling with families, sexuality counseling, and treatment planning. The School Counseling program includes content on working with exceptional children, leadership in school programs, and counseling for postsecondary planning.

In the final year of each program, students complete three semesters of field experience. School counseling students complete their practicum and internship in two different public school settings under the supervision of certified school counselors. CMHC students complete a single year-long placement in a mental health provider setting under the supervision of licensed clinicians. During the practicum semester, students spend a minimum of 10 hours per week at their field placement site, and during the two internship semesters, 20 hours per week. Details are available in the CMHC Practicum and Internship Handbook and the School Counseling Practicum and Internship Handbook.

Comprehensive Examination

Students must pass the Counselor Education Comprehensive Examination (CECE) 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. The exam is built on the same knowledge base as other national exams, and study materials recommended for the National Counselor Exam are appropriate for preparation for the CECE. 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. If a student does not pass the comprehensive examination, they will be required to sit for the next scheduled comprehensive exam.

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.

Advisement

In the counseling programs, a faculty advisor is assigned to each student upon admission. The advisor is the program director for the student's area of specialty. Students will find their advisor listed on their individual programs of study. Students should consult their advisor about any changes they need to make to their programs of study. All core faculty are available to speak with students about other advising topics, such as special interests, research projects, career, or work-life-study balance.

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 from the Department Chair. Typically, 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. The program admission decision will be based on graduate work already completed and the potential for success in the new program.

Technology Requirements

Students are required to use a personal device for communication, assignments, and other program tasks. If a student does not have access to a computer, the library has several computers available during its open hours for student use. Students may also speak with the department chair about borrowing a laptop from the university.

Students in the counseling programs are required to use a number of software applications and online platforms to communicate, create and submit assignments, and complete registration and other university and program procedures. These include Outlook for email, document creation applications (e.g., Word and PowerPoint), statistics applications (e.g., SPSS), Tevera for practicum and internship documentation, USJ's student portal, and Microsoft Teams and Blackboard learning management systems. To handle protected information, the counseling programs require that students use private channels in Microsoft Teams to create and share recordings of practice counseling sessions with their instructors in skills-based courses and to share client-based assignments during fieldwork. The IT Service Desk provides help with all software required for USJ programs.

Tevera is the counseling programs' management system used to track students' development in skills and dispositions as they progress through the program. Tevera is also used to complete and store documentation for students' practicum and internship. Assessment data collected in Tevera is used for program evaluation. Students pay a one-time fee of \$220 collected with tuition for first-semester classes. Tevera remains available to alumni after graduation as a portfolio for professional development records and tracking hours toward licensure.

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 may be 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. Summer semester classes last for either 11 weeks, meeting once a week for 3.5 hours, or 8 weeks, meeting twice a week for 2.5 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 a 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. More time each week is expected for assignments during the shorter summer semesters.

Program Evaluation and Student Assessment

The objectives and learning outcomes of the School Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling Programs are assessed using a variety of data sources and collection methods. The data for each year are analyzed during the summer semester by the program faculty. The data are then reviewed by the core faculty, who make decisions about program improvements and establish yearly goals. An annual report based on goals for the year is posted on the program webpage each year and provided to stakeholders, including students currently in the program, program faculty, institutional administrators, and site supervisors.

Some of the assessment tools used for program evaluation are also used to review individual students' knowledge, skills, and dispositions. In addition to course grades, students are provided

regular evaluation through use of the Counseling Competencies Scale-Revised[®]. After each of the skills-based classes and during the practicum and internship semesters, faculty and field experience supervisors complete the scale, and students are able to monitor their progress through Tevera, the online program management platform. The faculty meet once in the fall and once in the spring semesters to review all students' development utilizing and creating remediation plans when needed.

Program Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

The School Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling programs aim to

1. Recruit and retain a diverse group of counseling students each year.
2. Prepare counseling students for employment in a range of counseling settings working with diverse clients and students.
3. Maintain an inclusive, culturally responsive, and engaging learning environment based in strong interpersonal relationships and student-focused and pedagogically sound teaching practices.
4. Continuously engage in self-reflective practice and ongoing program evaluation.
5. Ensure the following student learning outcomes:

For students in both programs:

- a. Case conceptualization: Counseling students employ a holistic wellness framework and a multicultural, developmental, and ecological lens to understand diverse individuals in the context of their families and communities.
- b. Counseling skills: Counseling students develop empathic and collaborative working alliances with students and clients and employ theory-based, evidence-informed, and culturally responsive assessment tools and counseling techniques to support their growth.
- c. Social justice: Counseling students apply a social justice mindset and serve as an advocate and champion for clients and students in historically marginalized populations while promoting inclusivity- and equity-driven individual, group, and systems interventions.
- d. Professional skills and dispositions: Counseling students demonstrate responsible and professional behavior, application of ethical standards as delineated in the professional codes, compliance with state and federal laws, and appropriate consultation and collaboration skills with other professionals.
- e. Research: Students use current knowledge to inform their practice or contribute to the knowledge base of the counseling professions through innovation and research.
- f. Self of the counselor: Students practice self-reflection, self-care, and cultural humility to support healthy and effective professional counseling relationships.

For School Counseling students:

- g. Data-driven practice: Students empower P-12 students and their families for academic, social, emotional, college and career success through the design, implementation, and evaluation of data-driven comprehensive counseling services in elementary, middle, and high schools

For Clinical Mental Health Counseling students:

- h. Assessment and diagnosis: Students engage in research-based and culturally informed assessment and diagnostic practices to support effective treatment planning and clinical interventions for diverse individuals, families, and groups.

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 and advising 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 for the full length of each class period. 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 Appendix A. 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 counselors and teachers. Finally, each cohort of students within the programs forms a community sharing classes and challenges as they study, practice, and grow together. Students are encouraged to build relationships and support one another as they practice counseling skills together and face the demands of the graduate program. These collegial relationships are valuable ground for developing professional relationship skills.

Counseling skills and relationships require personal self-awareness and ongoing commitment to personal growth. Students can expect personal growth as they learn throughout the program and will be asked to reflect on that growth in various class assignments. The faculty will seek to support students in that growth through their role as teachers and supervisors. When students experience challenging moments of growth they are encouraged to embrace these times as part of their professional as well as personal development. They should seek support from peers, family and friends, faculty, and mental health professionals outside the program as appropriate to those relationships.

Professional Conduct

In relationships

Graduate school and the relationships that are part of the experience 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.

If a student experiences conflict with one or more other people in the program (student or faculty), the following steps are recommended:

1. Speak with the person directly using “I” statements and listening skills to hear that person’s perspective and needs. Try to come to a mutual understanding.
2. If speaking with the person is not fruitful, or if the student fears retaliation, the student should approach a faculty member or the program director for support in resolving the conflict.
3. Reflect on any personal issues brought up in the conflict and reflect on them and/or seek support for ongoing growth.

Class attendance

Students should plan their time carefully and treat their classes and coursework as they would a job. Class times should be prioritized since they meet only once a week. Classes meet in the evenings to support working students, and students should schedule job and family commitments around their class schedule. Vacations should be planned during breaks between semesters. Absences are sometimes unavoidable, but more than one absence in a course may impact a student’s grade. A student who encounters an extenuating circumstance requiring multiple absences should make arrangements with the course instructor and/or the program director for completion of the course.

Confidentiality in the Counseling programs

Confidentiality is a prime concern in the counseling profession for many reasons, including establishing and maintaining client trust, and compliance with HIPAA and FERPA regulations in healthcare settings and schools. Students in the counseling programs will be required to uphold confidentiality in various circumstances, including interactions with other students as well as clients in fieldwork sites. In some cases, students share from their personal experience as part of class assignments or discussions. When this occurs, the information and interactions should stay in the group where they occurred. When students work with clients in their fieldwork sites, they are required to remove identifying information when sharing cases in classes and to share the cases only within their site and their current supervision group on campus. To maintain confidentiality, students must avoid public settings when talking about clients and when completing assignments or holding virtual meetings.

Communication

Students 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 at a minimum to read university and program information and respond to faculty messages. 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 director.

Written assignments

All papers for Counseling program assignments must be double-spaced using APA format, including title page, in-text citations, and the reference page, unless otherwise specified by the instructor. Students should follow the *American Psychological Association Publication Manual*, 7th edition. 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 those who speak multiple languages.

For help with APA format 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.

In addition to writing academic and research-based papers, students will 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

Dress and body ornamentation should be thoughtfully chosen with students' professional role in mind. Students should be aware of how their appearance and manner impact others in a clinical or school setting, including their impact on counseling relationships. It is recommended that students choose attire and presentation that is expressive of their individual personalities, compatible with their classroom and field work settings, and conducive to effective counseling relationships with the populations with whom they work.

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 \(2014\)](#).

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 take seriously their ethical responsibility to monitor the readiness of students wishing to enter the counseling professions. The [ACA Code of Ethics](#) 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 function as an educational team to assess and monitor any limitations that may impede a student's progress in the program and/or delivery of effective counseling services. This assessment addresses academic and non-academic aspects of the student's performance. If a student discloses personal information that impacts their learning or progress in the program to a faculty member, the faculty member may share that information with other program 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 they observe student behavior that is inappropriate, unprofessional, and/or raises questions regarding that student's readiness for the profession.

A feedback and remediation process may be initiated by a program faculty member when a student exhibits 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 an inability to effectively work and 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; exploitation of clients; emotional, physical or verbal abuse; vindictive action toward clients; and stealing from clients
- Behaviors that pose a risk to others or to competently engaging in counseling practice
- Repeated failures to carry out academic or field placement responsibilities
- Repeated non-attendance and/or tardiness in classes, at field placement and other required departmental functions
- Lack of insight into negative consequences of own behavior or frequent blame of others or external factors for failures and difficulties in the academic or field placement environment
- Intolerance of different points of view, constructive feedback or supervision
- Failure to maintain regular contact with supervisors, including 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

Feedback and remediation process

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 member will provide verbal (oral or written) feedback to the student and specify future behaviors expected of the student. The faculty member may offer support for the student's ongoing growth. If the student does respond openly to the feedback and demonstrate change, the faculty member will follow these steps:

- 1) The faculty member will complete the formative feedback section of the Feedback and Remediation Form (see Appendix B) and share it with the program director.
- 2) The faculty member will meet with the student to share the form and discuss the nature of the observations made, the reasons for concern, the future behavior expected, and a timeline for observing change. The faculty member will document the outcome of this discussion, document a remediation plan, and obtain the student's signature. It will then be the student's responsibility to meet the stated expectations within the established timeline and communicate with the faculty member to review the changes made.
- 3) The faculty member will share the signed remediation plan with the program director. They will also share the concern and the status of the feedback and remediation process with the program faculty at a regular meeting.
- 4) By the end of the semester, the faculty member will add a follow-up note to the Feedback and Remediation Form to indicate whether or not the concern has been resolved and share it with the student and the program director.

If a concern is not resolved within the course of the class in which it arose or if a concern is observed by more than one faculty member, the program director will meet with the student to plan further remediation and discuss possible consequences of not demonstrating the required behaviors.

- 1) The program director will create a program-level remediation plan with the student including both a follow-up meeting with the student and a date for faculty review.
- 2) Prior to the review date, the student may provide, in writing, any information that they wish to have the faculty consider during the review process.
- 3) At the review date, the program director will consult with the program faculty and department chair for a formal review. 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, providing evidence that necessary changes have been made, granting an administrative leave of absence, or dismissal from the program.
- 4) The chair will send a formal report of the faculty's decision and recommendations to the student and the school dean.

If a student is dismissed from the Counseling program, they may appeal by following the Graduate Academic Dismissal Appeal Procedure in the USJ Catalog.

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 and the possibility of repeating coursework. Earning a grade of C or below in two courses necessitates a reconsideration of candidacy and the possibility of repeating coursework. 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 a 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.

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, they may walk at that year's May graduation ceremony. A student completing their 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 the Title IX Coordinator by 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.

Office of Accessibility Services

The University of Saint Joseph is committed to providing equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities. At USJ, the Office of Accessibility Services ensures a university experience that gives individuals with disabilities the same access to programs, opportunities, and activities as all other students. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, USJ provides reasonable accommodations to eligible students. The services offered by the Office of Accessibility Services at USJ are designed to meet the unique educational needs of all students with documented permanent and temporary disabilities. If you have a disability which may impact your academic achievement in this course and you require accommodations, you must provide the appropriate documentation to the Office of Accessibility Services. Please note that academic accommodations cannot be provided prior to your professor's receipt of an Accommodation Letter and are not retroactive. Please visit the Accessibility Services page on the USJ Website for information about registering for services. You can also contact the office directly at Accessibility@usj.edu.

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. 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.

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 Professional Counselor Associate 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> .

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

School Counseling program graduates who wish to secure the LPCA or 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/> .

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 Core Academic Skills for Educators Tests including reading, writing, and mathematics. Verification of test scores is required by the start of Practicum.

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/>.

Appendix A

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.ccain.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.etschoolcounselor.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) or Dr. Jessica Motroni Banik (jessicabanik@usj.edu), the Chapter Co-Advisors.

ACES – Association for Counselor Education and Supervision

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

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

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.

Appendix B

School Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling Programs Counseling Skills and Dispositions Feedback and Remediation Form

Student Name:

Course:

Faculty Name:

Date:

FORMATIVE FEEDBACK

Being in the student role provides students with the opportunity to learn and demonstrate the professional role skills and dispositions required for work as a counselor. When a student demonstrates behaviors that do not show development in these skills and dispositions, the faculty member holding the concern will speak with the student to provide feedback. If the student does not make changes in response to the feedback, the faculty member will complete this form.

Describe student behaviors of concern in the relevant area(s):

- **Class attendance and participation:**
- **Professional role and communication:**
- **Response to feedback:**
- **Assignments and documentation:**
- **Mastery of course content:**
- **Counseling skills and competence:**

REMEDIATION PLAN

This section of the document should be completed in discussion with the student at a faculty-student meeting.

Behaviors expected of the student going forward:

1. :
2. :
3. :

Plan to achieve and demonstrate these behaviors (these should be specific actions with a timeframe that should be created with the student during a meeting with the faculty member):

1. :
2. :
3. :

Follow-up plan (choose one):

- Date and time of follow-up meeting with faculty member are scheduled:

OR

- Follow-up to be arranged with the program director

By signing below, the student indicates that they have received the feedback and agree to the remediation plan and follow-up.

Student signature _____ Date _____

Faculty signature _____ Date _____

Program director signature _____ Date _____

FOLLOW-UP NOTE

This section is to be completed by the faculty member or program director after the follow-up meeting.

Outcome of follow-up meeting:

This form will be placed in the student's program file but will not be included in their academic record (transcript).