

# **Master in Clinical Mental Health Counseling**

Southern Oregon University

## **CONDITIONS FOR ADMISSION AND RETENTION**

The Master in Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program has developed the following Conditions for Admission. These follow relevant principles of the *Code of Ethics* of the American Counseling Association. Respecting these guidelines, the faculty considers not only academic abilities and skill performance when making admission and retention decisions about students, but also such aspects as whether the student has appropriate levels of maturity, judgment, emotional stability, interpersonal skills, and self-awareness appropriate to fulfill professional roles in applied clinical mental health counseling.

### **A. ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS**

Students are expected to maintain at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA overall in all graduate coursework. Furthermore, students must receive grades of B- or better in all counseling courses and must negotiate the removal of incompletes in counseling classes within one year. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in academic probation and/or dismissal from the program.

### **B. CRIMINAL RECORD**

Professions in clinical mental health counseling often involve delivery of services to client individuals and organizations. Because of the trust placed in counselors by such clients, it is essential that they demonstrate professional integrity and responsibility in their professional conduct.

Furthermore, the State of Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors & Therapists, and similar licensing boards in other states and territories, ask applicants for licensure about previous criminal behavior. Committing a felony or misdemeanor related to counseling or other professional activities may be grounds for denying or revoking a license.

Lastly, having prior criminal convictions or traffic infractions will likely surface in the background check/fingerprint/driver's clearance process that internship sites conduct and, depending upon a number of factors, a student's history may prevent them from being accepted as an intern by the agency. The CMHC program has little recourse in these situations but to follow state law and agency policy. Furthermore, prospective CMHC students should note that inability to complete an internship will necessitate withdrawal from the CMHC program. If you have any concerns, please communicate as early as possible with the Program Chair and/or your faculty advisor.

### **C. PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPAIRMENT**

Counselors with untreated psychological disorders, emotional problems, and/or substance use disorders can significantly compromise the effectiveness of counseling and other professional activities and may injure their clients. If you are currently being treated for a psychological disorder with psychotherapy, medications, and/or hospitalization, we would like you to inform the faculty through your advisor.

If, in the judgment of the faculty, a psychological disorder, emotional and/or substance use problem is significantly compromising your work as a counselor in training, your continued participation in the CMHC program will be evaluated by the clinical faculty following the Evaluation and Retention Procedures. You may be asked to verify participation in a treatment program that deals with specific issues identified by the faculty. If adequate change is not forthcoming, further action may be taken by the faculty.

#### D. PERSONAL GROWTH REQUIREMENT

Students enrolled in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program are expected to participate as clients in an individual and group counseling experience during the time they are enrolled as graduate students. This requirement is based on a philosophy that recognizes the value of such an experience to the continuous development of self-awareness and personal identity. It is also based on the belief that first-hand experience as a client often bridges the existing gap between intellectual and emotional understanding of the client experience.

Students may choose to participate in individual or group counseling with a licensed mental health provider or someone approved by her/his faculty advisor. Counseling must be completed by the end of spring quarter of the first year in the program. This therapeutic experience should focus on personal growth and awareness rather than specific skills training. Important components could include: Sharing of here-and-now feelings, working out communication blocks, interpersonal feedback, individual expression of concerns, and/or expression of feelings about self, significant people in one's life, and other members of the therapeutic experience (for group setting). Each student is required to provide the graduate coordinator a written statement by the group or individual counselor, of consistent attendance and verification of at least 10 hours of individual and 10 hours of group counseling. Specifics of the counseling relationship will be kept confidential between student/client and counselor in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the American Counseling Association. Students will be required to assume any expense incurred.

#### E. CONDUCTING PRIVATE PRACTICE WHILE ENROLLED IN THE PROGRAM

Students may not independently offer mental health diagnosis, counseling, individual or organizational assessment, individual or organizational consultation services, or other professional services for which they are being trained, either gratis or for remuneration. Students who are approached by individuals or organizations to provide these or related services should discuss such offers with their advisor. Exceptions that do not violate ethical considerations may be granted in writing by the Program Coordinator. Information about actually providing services without written permission that comes to the attention of faculty will be investigated immediately following Evaluation and Retention Procedures.

#### F. LIABILITY INSURANCE

The Oregon Tort Claims Act (ORS 30.260-30.300) prohibits SOU from accepting liability for the acts, omissions, and conduct of students participating in practicum or internship assignments either on-campus or in off-campus agencies.

To protect students in the event of possible litigation, each student will be required to carry liability insurance to cover their professional work during practicum and internship assignments. Liability insurance is offered as part of student membership in the American Counseling Association or the American Mental Health Counseling Association. Coverage must be obtained no later than the first practicum experience and must be documented to the faculty.

#### G. SIGNED AGREEMENTS

Students selected for admission into the CMHC program will be asked to sign agreements:

- a) to participate as clients in personal counseling.
- b) not to engage in private practice without explicit written permission from the Graduate Coordinator.
- c) to adhere to the Code of Ethics of the American Counseling Association.
- d) to obtain student liability insurance
- e) to adhere to the CMHC Student Evaluation and Retention Procedures, as outlined below.

#### **Ethical Principles and Standards**

The CMHC Program believes that the stated procedures for selection, evaluation, and retention are in accordance with accepted educational practices and with the following mandatory standards of practice of the American Counseling Association (2014).

American Counseling Association Code of Ethics can be found at: <http://www.counseling.org/resources/aca-code-of-ethics.pdf>