



**Master of Science in
Clinical Mental Health Counseling
Student Handbook**

July 2024



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Welcome Message from the Dean

Welcome!

It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I welcome you to the M.S. Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program at West Coast University. This is where the journey begins. This is where your journey towards enlightenment, personal growth, and transformation begins. As the Founding Dean of the Counseling Program, it is truly an honor to extend my warmest greetings and heartfelt congratulations as you embark upon this extraordinarily significant and life-changing chapter of your academic and professional lives.

In choosing our program, you have chosen a path that is at once honorable and rewarding. Counseling is not merely a profession---it is a calling, a commitment to helping others to navigate the complexities of life, to heal, to cope, and to develop resilience. Now more than ever, we need you. We need you to help individuals, families, and communities heal. You bring you, and we'll teach you the rest. We will teach you the art and science of how to help and guide individuals through their darkest moments, toward their true north, offering hope, and instilling in them the belief in their own inherent strength and potential.

Both our institution and our program stand as a beacon of academic excellence and student success, driven by a dedicated faculty team and staff who are passionate about fostering a culture of academic rigor, compassionate care, and inclusivity. We will teach you the knowledge, skills, and ethical framework essential to becoming passionate, competent, culturally and trauma informed professional counselors.

As you take your first step on this critically important journey, I encourage you to thoroughly embrace the learning experiences that await you. I challenge you to take risks and engage in thoughtful discussions, challenge conventional wisdom, and dare to explore the depths of your own curiosity and sense of wonder about the process of change. This is a place where we see you; we value you, your ideas matter, and, perhaps most importantly, you matter.

Each of you brings unique talents, perspectives and life experiences that will serve to enrich the tapestry of our community. As you build friendships and professional networks, remember that our collective strength is the foundation of our program's success and, indeed, we will change the world. One day at a time. One person at a time.

I have no doubt that you will rise to the occasion and exceed even your own expectations. And I also challenge you not to be afraid to lean in as we are to help and support you along the way. I ask that you embrace this opportunity with an open heart and an open mind. Together, we will build a legacy of compassion, healing, and a commitment to positive and lasting change in the lives of countless individuals and communities.

Again, welcome. May your journey be deeply fulfilling and transformational.



Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Colleen R. Logan".

Colleen R. Logan, PhD, NCC, LPC-S
Program Director/Dean Counseling Program
West Coast University



West Coast University

University Objectives

- To provide degree programs in fields of study that lead to professional success.
- To provide academic and support services to enhance student success.
- To provide a caring environment that is supportive and concerned with each student's success.
- To provide curricula, facilities, equipment and qualified faculty to prepare students for employment in an ever-changing job market.
- To offer innovative and alternative modes of educational delivery to meet the needs of students' personal and professional schedules.
- To assist in meeting the employment needs of related professions.

University Values

- Academic Integrity and Intellectual Honesty - We are committed to a culture where ethical conduct governs our interactions.
- A Culture of Mutual Respect - We believe each member of the University community can significantly contribute to the fulfillment of our mission.
- Student Learning - We are committed to continuous assessment, evaluation and improvement of student learning.
- The Communities We Serve - We take very seriously our responsibility to make a positive impact on the communities that surround us geographically and professionally.
- A Student-Centric Culture - We believe it is our institutional responsibility to identify, understand, and respond to student needs.
- Agility and Responsiveness - We respond quickly to the needs of our students, faculty, and associates.
- Innovation and Creativity - We are committed to bringing innovation and creativity to the development and delivery of instruction, and in identifying solutions to complex and challenging problems.
- Diversity - We encourage diversity of thought, ethnicity, culture and experience recognizing that through multiple and often differing perspectives offered in a collegial setting, the best ideas emerge.
- Efficient Use of Resources - Through our stewardship, we develop solutions that make the best use of investments in time and other resources.

University Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

West Coast University is committed to creating a community built on integrity, creativity, diversity and mutual respect. Our core values are strengthened by an environment that encourages innovation and intellectual honesty — values that are elevated when the rich diversity of our backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives are seen. To achieve this level of excellence, we deem it both fundamental and essential that all members of our university community feel secure and welcome, that everyone nurtures a culture of mutual respect, and that all voices can be heard. It is the responsibility of all community members to ensure that these values are strengthened and upheld.



University Commitment to Diversity, Excellence, and Inclusion

To achieve our mission of providing accessible healthcare education to the next generation of healthcare professionals, West Coast University strives to create a climate of collaboration, personal accountability, and innovation within and across our programs and campuses. Our success depends on the vigorous exchange of ideas – a network that thrives when diversity of lived experiences, viewpoint, and understanding is heard. Our commitment to our global community and responsibility to one another is expressed in the following statement:

University Community Commitment

West Coast University is committed to actively pursuing an environment of inclusiveness for all students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds. We value diversity defined by, but not limited to, ethnicity, culture, gender, socioeconomic class, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, learning styles, and political perspectives.

University Community Values

WCU has a longstanding history of upholding and honoring the following community values, which all students, associates, faculty and administrators pledge to defend. West Coast University is a community dedicated to academic integrity and intellectual honesty, innovation and creativity, efficient use of resources, diversity, agility and responsiveness and we demonstrate our commitment to each other by creating a student-centric culture of mutual respect and serving and caring for the communities which we each call home.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

The CMHC Program adheres to all policies related to non-discrimination outlined by West Coast University in the University Catalog. Additionally, we adhere to the program Mission, and Goals for the equitable treatment of students, faculty, and staff.

Campus Security

The WCU-Center for Graduate Studies (CGS) and WCU-Texas campuses will have security personnel on duty during operational hours and remote surveillance 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There is constant video monitoring of the perimeter and common areas within the building to ensure safety for students and faculty members.



Disability Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), West Coast University abides by the regulation that “no otherwise handicapped individual” shall be excluded from participation in programs and services offered by the University “solely by reason of the handicap.” WCU is committed to providing reasonable accommodations.

Below is an example of some of the responsibilities of the WCU Disability Office:

1. Disability Office maintains confidential records.
2. Disability Coordinator(s) conducts initial meeting with the student to review services and required documentation.
3. Disability Coordinator(s) receives documentation from the student and conducts initial review and evaluation (verifies appropriate documentation, complete submission of documents, verifies disability, if needed consults with faculty, program chair, administrative departments, etc.).
4. Disability Coordinator(s) meets with the student to review documentation and appropriate/reasonable accommodations.
5. Disability Coordinator(s) certifies approved accommodations
 - a. Provides the student with “Letter of Accommodation(s)”.
 - b. The student signs “Letter of Acknowledgement and Student Responsibility”.
 - c. When available, provides the student with additional disability information and resources.

The above list of responsibilities is not all inclusive and may be affected by the timeliness of the student request and the nature of the accommodation requests. The ADA does not require institutions to provide accommodations that result in undue burden or fundamentally alter the nature of the course or relevant academic program. Students should submit written requests with supporting documentation at least six weeks prior to the beginning of the first day of classes or as soon as practical.

To request reasonable accommodations students should contact the Student Affairs Office at their campus and speak with the Disability Services Coordinator.



System & Browser Requirements

	RECOMMENDED	MINIMUM
Operating System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Windows 10 (latest stable release) (64-bit) Mac OS X 10.16 or higher (64-bit) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Windows 10 (64-bit) Mac OS X 10.13 (64-bit)
Processor	Intel i7 (64-bit) Amd Ryzen 7 (64-bit)	Intel i5 (64-bit) Amd Ryzen 5 (64-bit)
Memory	8 GB of RAM or higher	4 GB of RAM
Monitor Resolution	1920 x 1080 or higher	1024 x 768
Free Hard Disk Space	20 GB or higher of free space	10 GB of free disk space
Additional Hardware and Accessories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External mouse Power bank Protective sleeve or padded bag 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speakers and microphone or headset Webcam Power cord / charging cord / charger
Internet Connection	Broadband (high-speed) Internet connection with a speed of 3 Mbps or higher	Broadband (high-speed) Internet connection
Internet Browser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Google Chrome (latest stable release) Mozilla Firefox (latest stable release) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Microsoft Edge 88+ Safari 13+
Microsoft Office	All active WCU students are provided with a free copy of Microsoft Office 365. You can download Office by logging into your WCU email	
Adobe Acrobat Reader	Adobe Acrobat Reader (latest stable release). Acrobat Reader may be required for course documents within Canvas. You can download Reader for free from the Adobe website.	
Accessibility Technology (if needed)	JAWS (latest stable release)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit the Microsoft website for details (third-party software may have an additional cost) Visit the Apple website for details (third-party software may have an additional cost)
Third-party Electronic Publishers	Your instructor may choose to include an electronic publisher (for example, a collection of readings, articles, video clips. Because the electronic publisher content varies, you may or may not have additional system requirements. Check with your instructor or with the third-party publisher for specific requirements.	
Third-party Assessment (quiz, test, or exam)	<p>Additional Software</p> <p>Your program may require third-party examination software to be downloaded, such as: Respondus Lockdown Browser, Respondus Monitor, atiSECURED, ExamSoft, or similar. During examinations using a third-party software, status bar updates, tabbing, cookies, microphone, speakers and camera may be required to be enabled.</p> <p>Device Registration with WCU</p> <p>All personal devices used for assessment must be registered with WCU IT department to ensure capability and software requirements are met (Machine and User Authentication). Students will be allowed to register up to two devices.</p> <p>Device Types and Size Requirements*</p> <p>Acceptable devices used for assessment include laptops (PC or Mac) with a minimum screen size of 11 inches.</p> <p><i>*Please note a Chromebook or tablet may NOT be used for assessments.</i></p>	
Mobile Device Use and Support	<p>Mobile device is defined as a smartphone or tablet computer. Mobile device use is acceptable for classroom learning activities if allowed by the faculty. However, mobile devices may NOT be used for any assessment (quiz, text, or exam). Full mobile support for Canvas course content varies by course and third-party publishers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobile Apps Recent versions for iOS or Android are supported for various mobile applications such as Canvas mobile and the official West Coast University app. Review the guidelines in the Google Play store or Apple App store for specific device requirements. Mobile Browser Full mobile support for Canvas course content varies by course, third-party publisher, and proctored examination requirements. For current Canvas mobile browser support information, visit the Canvas Community at community.canvaslms.com 	



Counseling Services

West Coast University recognizes that students may experience personal problems that can adversely affect personal fulfillment and their education. To assist students who may need that extra support, WCU offers a free, confidential Student Assistance Program (SAP) to students. SAP services are provided by Aetna, a private, national consulting and service firm that specializes in student assistance consultations.

If students need some help with everyday life issues, or if they find themselves in a crisis situation, the Student Assistance Program (SAP) is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days per week through a toll-free number. WCU encourages students to utilize the SAP on a “when in doubt, call” basis. Problems that are appropriate for the SAP include, but are not limited to, problems or issues involving relationships with spouse or significant other, relationships with siblings or parents, relocation, stress, financial or legal problems, depressions, substance abuse, and anxiety.

Call toll free: 1.877.351.7889

Email: AskSAP@aetna.com

Visit: www.aetnaSAP.com, then enter your school ID: WCUSA



Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program (CMHCP)

Program Mission

The Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program's mission is to prepare students with the knowledge and skills needed to be culturally competent, trauma informed, and stalwart advocates for social justice, ensuring equity and access to effective and affirmative clinical mental health care for all.

Program Learning Outcomes

- 1. Cultivate a Professional Identity:** The program is designed to help students establish a strong professional identity as a clinical mental health counselors who prioritize the value of the therapeutic relationship as a critical pathway to facilitate healing, empowerment, and the emotional and mental well-being of their clients.
- 2. Develop Comprehensive Knowledge and Competence:** The program helps prepare students to gain a broad and comprehensive understanding of essential areas in the counseling field, including ethical and legal behaviors, developmental theories, clinical interventions, psychopharmacology, substance use disorders, addictive behaviors, human sexuality, crisis and trauma, career counseling, psychopathology, and culturally competent assessment and evaluation methods.
- 3. Apply Evidence-Based Interventions:** The program helps prepare students to solely rely on evidence-based interventions for substance use disorders, addictive behaviors, co-occurring disorders, trauma, and various mental health conditions, while always considering cultural competencies and diversity to enhance the effectiveness of their clinical practice.
- 4. Cultivate a Culturally Competent Identity:** The program aims to help students establish a professional identity as culturally competent clinical mental health counselors, emphasizing the use of the therapeutic relationship to promote healing, empowerment, and emotional and mental well-being while working effectively and affirmatively with diverse individuals, couples, families, and communities.
- 5. Demonstrate Proficiency in Clinical Skills:** The program goal is to teach students how to use effective and affirmative clinical skills when working with individuals, couples, families, and groups/communities across the lifespan. Students are taught how to develop expertise in providing comprehensive and culturally competent mental health services to clients from diverse backgrounds.
- 6. Foster a commitment to social justice and advocacy.** The program seeks to compel students to become social justice advocates, clinical mental health professionals who serve their communities in various capacities, including clinical practice, administrative roles, and other leadership positions. Students will be taught how to use their counseling knowledge, attitudes, and skills to contribute positively and effectively to the well-being and positive development of the broader community.

<https://westcoastuniversity.smartcatalogiq.com/current/west-coast-university-catalog/graduate-programs-of-study/master-of-science-in-clinical-mental-health-counseling/master-of-science-in-clinical-mental-health-counseling-mscmhc/>



Admission Requirements

The following documents must be uploaded to the Program's Exxat portal no later than the first term and again before beginning practicum. Note that clinical sites may require additional clearances.

1. Background clearance for participation in the program
2. Negative comprehensive drug screening(s)
3. Meeting all immunization/vaccination and TB clearance requirements

A student applying for admission to the MSCMHC program at West Coast University must:

1. Have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution with a 3.0 cumulative GPA or higher.
2. Submit a copy of official transcripts and/or International Transcript Evaluation, prior to the end of the add/drop period of the first term.
3. Provide a Statement of Purpose
4. Provide two (2) professional letters of recommendation.
5. Complete two Interviews. The admissions interview and a group interview with program administration.
6. Complete an enrollment agreement consisting of program policies, costs, completion requirements, and other student obligations, if accepted into the program.

For reference, please view the admissions requirements in the catalog. [Click here to access.](#)

Probationary Admissions Requirements

Applicants with an undergraduate GPA of 2.79-2.99 may be considered for probationary admission after meeting the following additional admissions requirements:

- The applicant must provide a letter of intent.
- The applicant must be approved for admission following an interview with the Dean/Associate Dean.
- The applicant must satisfy all other program admission requirements.

A student admitted under the probationary admissions pathway must achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.0 on all coursework attempted over the first semester (two terms). Students who meet this standard will be converted to a full admit status and will be subject to the standard Satisfactory Academic Progress requirement for the duration of their program. Students must meet this requirement by the end of the first semester (two terms) or will be withdrawn from the university.

Students accepted under the probationary admissions pathway will be considered regular students and eligible for Title IV if the student otherwise qualifies for funding for the first semester of their program of study while completing the requirements for full admission to their program.

Liability Insurance

Counseling students engage in many role plays, fictional counseling scenarios, and other activities/experiences that sometimes become more personal than intended, particularly during an Immersive. They will also require liability insurance to begin their practicum and internship experience. WCU does not make referrals for liability insurance. We do make information available, but it is not an endorsement and it is the students responsibility to investigate and determine if the company meets their specific needs and financial requirements. [CPH Insurance](#) provides insurance coverage for students prior



to entering practicum and internship. The American Counseling Association (ACA) [provides insurance](#) for students in practicum and internship.

Advising

Student Program Advising

Upon beginning the program, all CMHC students are assigned an academic advisor to guide them throughout the program for academic and clinical performance and progress and to promote their professional identity as clinical mental health professionals and future counselors.

Student Advisors through Student Affairs

In addition to program advisement, each student is assigned a Student Advisor (introductions made via the LMS, email, telephone, text, and in-person). Student Advisors are committed to assisting all West Coast University students in a holistic approach. To assist students most effectively, the Student Advisors incorporate and provide the following:

- A safe place for students to discuss social, personal, and academic concerns.
- Resources West Coast University offers all students.
- West Coast University University policy and procedures.
- Information about student life, student engagement, student organizations, and events.
- Technology resources, support, and training.
- Registration support.
- Assistance with stress management, time management, study techniques, leadership skills, and much more.

To provide a proactive and intentional approach the student-advisor partnership begins at the time of enrollment. The advisor strives to establish early intervention strategies aligned with program and student goals to enhance the learning experience and ultimately persist through the program. Our goal is for the student to be able to demonstrate core competencies, personal, social, and professional growth required to fulfill their educational and professional goals.

Degree Requirements

Graduating with a degree in clinical mental health counseling from WCU requires that students

- Earned a minimum 3.0 GP.
- Successfully completed all CMHC courses, including Immersives
- Earned no more than 2 grades of C (more than 2 grades of C require courses be repeated.)
- Earned a minimum of an A or B in practicum and internship



Curriculum Design

The CMHC program curriculum follows a specific sequence. All students progress through the program as a single cohort, completing all coursework and program requirements in sequence. The program encourages and requires an atmosphere of professionalism, collaboration, and non-competitiveness for students to meet program goals and course and program expectations.

Term	Courses	Term	Courses	Term	Courses
1	CMHC 505	5	CMHC 545	9	CMHC 685
	CMHC 510		CMHC 550		CMHC 650
2	CMHC 515	6	CMHC 645	10	CMHC 690 A
	CMHC 530		CMHC 670	11	CMHC 690 B
Term	Courses	Term	Courses	Term	Courses
3	CMHC 535	7	CMHC 655	12	CMHC 690 C
	CMHC 560		CMHC 665		
4	CMHC 520	8	CMHC 680		
	CMHC 560		CMHC 683		

At its discretion, West Coast University reserves the right to make reasonable changes in program content, class schedules, policies, procedures, materials, and equipment as it deems necessary to improve students' educational experiences. When the class size or curriculum warrants, classes may be combined or separated. When federal, state, accreditation, or professional changes affect students currently in attendance, the University will make the appropriate changes and notify the students accordingly.



Course Requirements (Blended and Online)

Course Number	Course Name	Total Credit Hours
CMHC 505	Foundations of Clinical Mental Health Counseling	3
CMHC 510	Professional Orientation: Legal and Ethical Issues in Counseling	3
CMCH 515	Counseling Theories and Practices	3
CMHC 520	Crisis/Trauma Response and Intervention	3
CMHC 525	Social and Cultural Foundations	3
CMHC 530	Individual Counseling Skills and Practice w/ Immersive I	3
CMHC 535	Human Growth & Development	3
CMHC 545	Career and Lifestyle Assessment	3
CMHC 550	Couples, Marriage, and Family Counseling	3
CMHC 560	Research Design and Program Evaluation	3
CMHC 645	Group Counseling and Practice	3
CMHC 650	Addictions and Substance Abuse	3
CMHC 655	Human Sexuality	3
CMHC 665	Psychopathology	3
CMHC 670	Individual Evaluation and Assessment	3
CMHC 680	Psychopharmacology	3
CMHC 683	Advanced Skills, Theories, and Legal/Ethical w/ Immersive II	3
CMHC 685	Practicum	3
CMHC 690 A	Clinical Mental Health Internship I	2
CMHC 690 B	Clinical Mental Health Internship II	2
CMHC 690 C	Clinical Mental Health Internship III	2
Total Credit Hours:		60

[Click here to see this in the catalog.](#)



Minimum Passing Grade

Students in the MS in Clinical Mental Health program must earn a 3.0 GPA to enter practicum and to graduate. A grade of B in classes is appropriate. If, however, students earn a C in a course, please note that only two grades of C are acceptable to enter practicum. More than two Cs will require the student to repeat classes. Students in CMHC 530 Individual Counseling Skills and Practice w/ Immersive I, CMHC 645 Group Counseling and Practice, and CMHC 683 Contemporary Topics: Advanced Skills, Theories, and Legal/Ethics w/Immersive II must receive a grade of B. Only grades of A or B are acceptable in practicum or internship.

Student Retention (progress, persistence), Remediation, and Dismissal

The program and West Coast University consider student progress and persistence critical to student success and have many resources to support students. Student progress and persistence begin when a student applies to the counseling program and continues with support from their program academic advisor and the student advisors through academic affairs.

Professional Dispositions

Professional behavior in counseling includes “the commitments, characteristics, values, beliefs, and behaviors that influence the counselor’s professional growth and interactions with clients, faculty, supervisors, and peers, including working in a diverse, multicultural, and global society with marginalized populations (CACREP 2024). Professional dispositions also include developing your counseling and professional identity and includes behaving respectfully in the classroom, in the field, and towards each other. Attendance in classes, preparation, the quality of a student’s participation, and commitment to professional growth and development for your success and the well-being of your clients. Professional behavior applies in your attitude and work in the program and when you are at your site for practicum and internship. It is the responsibility of the faculty and administration of the counseling program to consistently evaluate all students.

Performance Evaluation (Knowledge, Skills, Dispositions)

As noted above, faculty are required to take on a gatekeeping role and evaluate students’ knowledge, skills, and behaviors in the program. Evaluations are conducted twice per program during the immersives, and students can review and discuss the evaluation at that time. Suggestions and support will be provided as necessary.

Remediation Policy

The purpose of a remediation plan is to support students faced with academic and/or attitude concerns to be guided in their personal and professional growth and supported in the successful completion of their counseling program.

If a student’s GPA falls below 3.0, or if a student is asked to leave their practicum or internship, a remediation plan outlining what the student must do to remain in the program will be implemented. After meeting with the student and related faculty or site supervisors, remediation plans are developed.

Incomplete Work

The CMHC program coursework is sequenced with one course building upon the prior courses. All work must be completed within the specific term for a student to continue to the next term. Students who do not complete their work in a timely manner will delay their program and may be dismissed from the program.



Grade Appeal

Students who wish to file a grade appeal when the assigned grade is a non-passing grade must do so within two business days of notification of failure or two days of the Wednesday of the final week of the term/semester, whichever comes first. The student must meet this deadline to avoid becoming out-of-sequence in the subsequent term/semester of instruction, assuming the appeal is approved.

Students appealing a *non-failing* grade have until the end of the first week of the subsequent term/semester to file an appeal, as the outcome of the appeal will presumably not impact the student's ability to continue through his/her program of study.

The Grade Appeals Process and related forms are available in the Registrar's Office. The process steps for a grade appeal are as follows:

1. Consult with the faculty member who issued the grade for reconsideration of the grade or the record, utilizing the grade appeals form. Appeals of failing grades will be addressed within two (2) business days of receipt.
2. If, after consultation with the faculty member, the student wishes to appeal the grade further, or if the faculty member is either unavailable or does not respond within the time frame outlined in step one, the student should request in writing to the academic program Dean/Chair of his/her academic program, within two business days, an investigation of the grade. The academic program Dean/Chair may investigate the matter personally or refer it to a designee. The investigation will be conducted by the end of the first week of the following term. After the investigation, the academic program Dean/Chair shall issue a finding in writing that either concurs with the faculty member regarding the grade or, in some instances, requires the faculty member to revise the grade based on demonstrable evidence that the initial grade was in error.
3. If a student feels that his/her grade appeal has not been handled appropriately, or that the grade assigned was based on instructor bias or unfair treatment, the student may utilize the Student Complaint/Grievance Procedure outlined in the University catalog.
4. The student shall be given a written summary of the conclusion of the appeal (using the Grade Appeals form). If the student believes the summary to be inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the privacy or other rights of the student, the student may insert a written statement in the record.

A successful grade appeal does not guarantee the ability to advance to the next course in sequence in the subsequent term. [West Coast University - Final Grade Appeal \(smartcatalogiq.com\)](https://www.smartcatalogiq.com/en/wcu/academic-affairs/grade-appeals)

Academic Dismissal

Earning a GPA of 3.0 (B) is required in this program. Students who fall below a 3.0 GPA must raise their GPA to a 3.0 in the following term. The CMHC program is sequenced, and content is built on prior coursework. Students who do not complete their work in a timely manner may be dismissed from the program. Students who cannot do so will be dismissed from the program. Students may also be dismissed from the program due to failure to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) or because of Conduct Committee actions. [West Coast University - Graduate University Dismissal Appeal Policy \(smartcatalogiq.com\)](https://www.smartcatalogiq.com/en/wcu/academic-affairs/academic-dismissal)



Accreditation Statement

The Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accredits counseling programs and educational content in a variety of specialization areas at the master's and doctoral levels. The standards for CACREP accreditation are rigorous for courses and clinical experiences. CACREP is recognized as an accreditor by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

The CMHC Program is not CACREP accredited. While most accreditors grant accreditation prior to program starts, CACREP requires evidence that the program and its students meet specific requirements during the accreditation process. The MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program is CACREP-aligned, meaning that during the development of the curriculum CACREP 2024 standards were followed. WCU and the CMHC program will submit their CACREP self-study once the first group of students enters fieldwork in accordance with CACREP procedures. The self-study is the first step toward the formal pursuit of CACREP accreditation.

According to CACREP, "students in a program seeking accreditation shall be considered graduates of a CACREP program if they receive their degree within eighteen (18) months prior to when accreditation is conferred, and if the program can verify that the student completed the CACREP program requirements" ([CACREP Policies Governing Recognition of Graduates 5.a.](#)).

Certification and Licensure

Each state has different licensure requirements, and each student is responsible for researching specific licensure requirements for the state where they seek to be licensed. WCU has not conducted a review of individual state licensure requirements and eligibility to practice. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each student to conduct their own research and analysis on the requirements of their desired state for licensure. Note that state licensure requirements can and do change, and students are responsible for staying current with these changes.

Read more about the licensure online at: <https://www.bbs.ca.gov/applicants/lpcc.html>

Read more about the NCMHCE Exam at: <https://www.nbcc.org/licensure/examregistration>

Texas state licensure process: The Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors - Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council (BHEC) website lists the requirements needed to become a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor. After completing our MSCMHC program and other requirements listed on the BHEC, students will be able to sit for the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (NCMHCE) through the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC)

Read more about the licensure online at: <https://www.bhec.texas.gov/texas-state-board-of-examiners-of-professional-counselors/applying-for-a-license/index.html#lpc-as>

Read more about the NCMHCE Exam at: <https://www.nbcc.org/licensure/examregistration>

In the states where our MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program is available, non-accreditation by CACREP is not a barrier for licensure. Licensure and certification requirements vary across states, and many states will review your specific coursework if taken from a non-accredited program, to determine eligibility.



Portability/Written Endorsement Policy

Written endorsements are often required when a counselor licensed in one state wants to demonstrate that they meet the practice requirements in another state. Only former students who have demonstrated adherence to ethical standards, personal maturity essential for a counseling professional, and clinical and academic competence may receive an endorsement or referral letter. All program requirements, including completion of practicum and internship under the supervision of an appropriately credentialed supervisor, must be met. Field supervisors or faculty supervisors typically provide written endorsements.

Counseling Compact

The Counseling Compact is an **interstate compact** allowing professional counselors licensed *and* residing in a compact member state to practice in other compact member states without the need for multiple licenses. For more information, visit [Counseling Compact](#).



Policies and Procedures

The policies and procedures of the CMHC program apply to all students, faculty, and staff of the program, regardless of location. However, if different than program policies, clinical site policies, will prevail when students and faculty are at those clinical sites.

All students must participate in immersive experiences. Students unable or unwilling to participate in immersives will be unable to complete the program and need to withdraw.

Attendance and Absences

Class attendance and engagement are critical to successfully working with clients and others as a professional counselor. Active attendance is determined by participation in immersives and active and continued participation in blended or online courses. Canvas will record attendance in all online work. Students must monitor their attendance in classes. Students will be withdrawn from classes for any of the following:

- Lack of recorded attendance by the end of the add/drop period
- Lack of recorded attendance for 14 consecutive calendar dates, excluding holidays and scheduled breaks. If holidays or scheduled breaks directly impact a student's ability to comply with this clause, the university will extend this period, with appropriate documentation, until the next scheduled opportunity for the student to show attendance.

[West Coast University - Attendance Policy \(smartcatalogiq.com\)](https://smartcatalogiq.com/wcu/attendance-policy)

Blended

Students in the blended program in either Texas or California must be available to participate in immersives and any sessions held on campus. Students should attend the WCU-Texas or WCU-CGS facilities.

Online

Students in the online program must participate in immersives at whichever campus is closest to them. Immersives are not optional.

Asynchronous/Synchronous Session

Your instructor may schedule optional synchronous/live sessions using Zoom in Canvas. Please check your course announcements for specific dates and times. Counseling is a relational profession. There are times when students share personal information; therefore, to maintain student privacy and confidentiality, these sessions will not be recorded.

Discussion Board Statement

The Online Discussion Board can keep us connected with our classmates. It is not an informal chat room; students can benefit from this assignment only as much as they put into it. Answers and replies should be thoughtful and considerate and use graduate-level language and grammar. Students are expected to reflect thoughtfully and exchange ideas on the topics for the week as they relate to you personally. References are only required when citing copywritten material (anything you did not write or design). Reflections and contributions to the topic should be clear, complete, and accurate.



Personal responses are due by Wednesday of each week. When a student replies to the prompt, posts from others will appear. Read and respond to at least two classmates before class ends (Sunday, 11:59 p.m.). When responding to classmates, expand or clarify a point made in their answer, offer an additional position, validate their post with an example, or disagree. If a student disagrees with the views of another student, please be constructive and respectful. Criticize a position but not the author. State the point precisely and ensure you have not misinterpreted the writer's work. Offer reasons or explanations for your feedback.

Discussion boards will require reading course material. **Late discussion responses and replies will receive NO credit.** Check answers for spelling and grammar and use APA Style. It might be easier to compose answers and copy and paste them into the Discussion Board.

Posts must be a minimum of two paragraphs, and the response to each of the other posts must be a minimum of one paragraph to receive credit for discussion boards. Each paragraph should be 5 to 8 sentences in length. ("I agree with what you said" or a variation of this does not receive credit). Responses should move the conversation forward.

NOTE: Late work is only accepted if the instructor clears extenuating circumstances.

Academic Honor Code

All students must comply with the [West Coast University Academic Honor Code](#) as outlined in the WCU Student Handbook.

Note on using AI: Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology can be used as a tool to support learning. AI can give ideas, keywords, or other information to explore; it should not be the content of your work unless properly cited. See the [WCU Student Handbook](#) for a complete description of how AI is to be used and not used.

APA Style

Students must use APA Style for all written work. Here is a link to the [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#) (OWL) general formatting information for APA Style. This site is free to the student and uses the most current version of APA.

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_for_mat.html

Ethical Behavior

Students are expected to abide by the ethical code of the [American Counseling Association](#), the [American Mental Health Counselors Association](#), and other organizations or legal codes (e.g., CA, TX, etc.). Students are responsible for being aware of the codes and laws that apply to them and comply where applicable.

Classroom Behavior

To create a supportive, safe, and engaging learning community, face to face or online, communication with and between all students and faculty should be open and respectful. This is also necessary in all written communication. Please remember that it is difficult to decipher tone, humor, and sarcasm in written forms. Check yourself before sending an email or text and check yourself when receiving one. How might the text or email be interpreted? Check the [student handbook](#) for specific policies relating to conduct both inside and outside the learning environment.



Group Assignments

Policy on group assignments/projects: Everyone must take part in group assignments/projects. All group members will earn two grades for the assignment/project – a group grade for all members and an individual grade based on an anonymous peer group survey provided to the instructor. Once formed, groups cannot be altered or switched except for reasons of extended excused circumstances (i.e., each case will be individually evaluated). Please note that for group assignments, grade points earned will be the same for all members in the same group unless it is determined that a group member did not contribute equally. The requirements of each assignment/project will be specified in Canvas in advance of each due date.

Group project etiquette

Please remember that each student must demonstrate responsibility and accountability when working within groups.

- Canceling, not showing up, and not contributing your share is not acceptable. Complete your assigned section and provide feedback on the other sections.
- Be respectful of everyone's time, schedule, sacrifices, ideas, etc. Group work requires critical thinking and problem solving as well as flexibility and collaboration in putting together everyone's collective knowledge and skills.
- Therefore, take the time to research and share knowledge and skills. Discuss and edit as needed. Demonstrate collaboration in written and verbal contributions. Everyone should have contributed verbally and have evidence of their written contribution.

Please note that failure to adhere to the above may impact individual grades and may affect overall progression in the program.

NOTE: As soon as possible, communicate with group members, set goals and due dates prior to final submission, and follow through! Remember that putting your name on a document or allowing someone to put their name on a document and/or taking credit for someone else's ideas/work is plagiarism and is not ethical behavior.

Exxat Prism

The counseling program uses Exxat Prism as our data management system for accreditation documentation. Exxat allows us to collect, organize, and manage our program and student information. Students will be given access to the system to create their student profile, communicate with advisors, receive important announcements, and upload documentation. [Exxat - Login](#)



Professional Counseling Associations and Organizations (in progress)

Associations/Organizations	Contact Information
American Counseling Association	6101 Stevenson Ave, Suite 600 Alexandria, VA 22304 800-347-6647 Email – www.counseling.org
American Mental Health Counselors Associations	107 S West St 779, Alexandria, Virginia, 22314 (703) 548-6002
Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs	500 Montgomery Street, Suite 350 Alexandria, VA 22314 Phone: (703) 535-5990
National Board of Certified Counselors	3 Terrace Way Greensboro, NC 27403 336-547-0017 Email – nbcc@nbcc.org



Title IX Nondiscrimination Policy and Notice of Nondiscrimination

West Coast University (WCU) does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX and its regulations, including in admission and employment.

WCU's Title IX nondiscrimination statement is provided: on the website under <https://westcoastuniversity.edu/legal/title-ix>; in the catalog, in the student handbook, and in the employee handbook. The Title IX policy and grievance procedures are provided on the website under: <https://westcoastuniversity.edu/legal/title-ix>.

Inquiries about Title IX may be referred to the WCU Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Coordinators, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both. Contact information for OCR is available here: <https://ocrcas.ed.gov/contact-ocr>.

To report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or make a complaint of sex discrimination under Title IX, please refer to the Title IX Coordinator or the Deputy Coordinators.

The Title IX Coordinator is:

Audrey Kaplan, Vice President Compliance and Risk Management
151 Innovation Dr. Irvine, CA 92617
akaplan@westcoastuniversity.edu / Tel: 949-743-5765

The Deputy Title IX Coordinators are:

Mandy DeJong, Senior Compliance Liaison
151 Innovation Dr. Irvine, CA 92617
mdejong@westcoastuniversity.edu / Tel: 949-783-4952

This Deputy Coordinator has responsibility for providing modifications/supports for pregnancy or related conditions for students.

Nina Khiev, Regulatory Compliance Associate
151 Innovation Dr. Irvine, CA 92617
nkhiev@westcoastuniversity.edu / Tel: 949-783-4826

This Deputy Coordinator has responsibility for providing guidance to students who have questions about Title IX regarding the actions of other students.

Leslie Zarrelli, Executive Director, HR Business Partner
151 Innovation Dr. Irvine, CA 92617
lzarrelli@westcoastuniversity.edu / Tel: 202-794-7768

This Deputy Coordinator has responsibility for providing modifications/supports for pregnancy or related conditions for employees/faculty and for any Title IX complaints that include an employee as a party, but no student as a party.



Attestations

Attestation for professional performance

I, _____, understand and agree that my grades for CMHC 530 and CMHC 683 will be based on counseling skills, knowledge, and dispositions. I understand that my inability to demonstrate competency in counseling skills and knowledge, or my difficulty in demonstrating appropriate dispositions may require that I be placed on a remediation plan and that successful completion of the remediation plan will permit me to move forward in the program. If I am unable to meet the requirements of the remediation plan, my graduation may be delayed, or I will not be able to complete the CMHC program.

Student Signature

Date

Name (Please print)

Handbook Attestation

My signature below is my acknowledgment that I have read the clinical mental health student handbook in its entirety and that I understand my responsibilities. I recognize that I should keep the handbook available for reference. Violations of the handbook policies and procedures could result in a referral to the Conduct Committee that may lead to dismissal from the program. Policies are subject to change at any time and I need to review them often.

Student Signature

Date

Name (Please print)