

MPCAC 2017 STANDARDS

We are pleased to announce our revised MPCAC 2017 standards. They were approved by the MPCAC Board on Nov. 10, 2016, after an extensive period of input from stakeholders and the public. An implementation schedule will be posted by Jan. 1, 2017.

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SCOPE

Master's in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council accredits counseling and psychology master's programs, located in regionally accredited colleges and universities in the United States, that educate students in the science-based practice of counseling and psychological services.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the MPCAC is to accredit academic programs that provide science-based education and training in the practice of counseling and psychological services at the master's level, using both counseling and psychological principles and theories as they apply to specific populations and settings. Although programs may vary in the specific model of training and professional development utilized, commitment to science-based education is emphasized in the interest of providing services that are culturally responsive and that promote the public good.

MPCAC objectives are as follows:

- To promote master's level preparation in the practice of scientifically-based, culturally responsive counseling and psychological services that promote the public interest of all people.
- To promote the integration of science and practice as a goal for practitioners working in the areas of counseling and psychological services.
- To encourage academic programs to conduct continuing review, evaluation, and improvement of their education and training, utilizing measurable outcome criteria.
- To encourage flexibility through experimentation and innovation in the design and implementation of training programs.
- To cooperate with other agencies and organizations in promoting education and training in the practice of master's level counseling and psychological services.
- To provide accreditation for training programs in counseling and psychological services which can be viewed by professional and regulatory bodies, as well as the public, as an indicator of quality preparation.

[The following replaces the current ACCREDITATION STANDARDS Section III. B.]

B. Program Orientation and Core Curriculum

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1. The program should be identifiable as educating counseling and psychological service practitioners, using evidence-based counseling and psychological principles and theories as they apply to specific populations and settings. This is defined primarily through the coursework, field work, and disciplinary affiliations of those who teach in and administer the program.
2. The program should be the equivalent of at least two academic years of full-time study. This would normally include a *minimum* of 48 semester hours, or the equivalent quarter hours, which must include the supervised experience described in #3 below.
3. The program must include significant supervised experiences, a *minimum* of 600 hours across at least two semesters. At least 40 percent of the supervised experiences should be direct contact hours. Supervisors must be appropriately credentialed (commensurate with program goals and relevant state requirements). Faculty supervisor to student ratio must allow for sufficient oversight. In most cases, this ratio would be 1:8.
4. The coursework in the program should emphasize the scientist-practitioner model, which includes the use of current scholarly and research literature to inform practice. The aim is to produce graduates who are scientifically-minded and who remain current in their fields, translating current scholarship and multicultural/diversity knowledge and awareness into practice. The program must reflect a commitment to recognizing varying degrees of applicability of such knowledge and skills to specific populations and settings.
5. The program must demonstrate evidence of students' professional competence, in the standards described A to K below. Competence must be gained by completion of the program through academic and applied experiences.

A. Professional identity, and ethical and professional standards

1. *Ethical/Legal Standards and Policy*: Demonstrates knowledge and application of ethical concepts, and awareness of legal issues regarding professional activities with individuals, groups, and organizations
 - a. Knowledge of ethical, legal and professional standards and guidelines: Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of relevant ethical/professional codes, standards and guidelines, laws, statutes, rules, and regulations
 - b. Awareness and application of ethical decision making: Recognizes situations that challenge adherence to professional values and applies an ethical decision-making model to ethical dilemmas
 - c. Ethical Conduct: Integrates ethical values into professional conduct
2. *Professional Values and Attitudes*: Exhibits behavior and comportsment that reflect the values and attitudes of counseling and psychology

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- a. Evidences adherence to professional values throughout professional work
 - b. Demonstrates understanding of counseling and psychological practice as an applied behavioral science
 - c. Maintains professionally appropriate communication and conduct across different settings
 - d. Assesses personal accountability and accepts responsibility for own actions
 - e. Demonstrates concern for the welfare of others
 - f. Displays an appropriately defined professional identity
- B. Evidence-based theories and practice of counseling and psychotherapy
1. *Knowledge*: Demonstrates knowledge of individual and group theories of counseling and psychotherapy consistent with program orientation and goals
 2. *Relationships*: Relates effectively with individuals, groups, and communities
 - a. Forms and maintains productive and respectful relationships with clients, peers/colleagues, supervisors, and professionals from within and across disciplines
 - b. Negotiates differences and handles conflict satisfactorily
 - c. Provides effective feedback to others, receives feedback non-defensively, and integrates feedback appropriately
 - d. Communicates clearly using verbal, nonverbal, and written skills in a professional context; demonstrates clear understanding and use of professional language
 3. *Intervention*: Applies evidence-based intervention and prevention strategies designed to alleviate suffering and to promote health and well-being of individuals, groups, and/or organizations (e.g., career, group, family, and/or systems-level interventions)
 - a. Formulates and conceptualizes cases; plans and implements interventions utilizing at least one consistent theoretical orientation
 - b. Displays skills in developing the therapeutic alliance
 - c. Evaluates intervention progress and modifies intervention or prevention strategies on the basis of evaluation of clients' or groups' progress and/or client feedback
- C. Multiculturalism and diversity

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Demonstrates knowledge, self-awareness, and skills in working with individuals, groups, and communities who represent various cultural and personal backgrounds and characteristics

1. *Knowledge and Self-Awareness:*

- a. Demonstrates knowledge and awareness of self, as shaped by individual and cultural diversity (e.g., cultural, individual, and role differences, including those based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status) and context.
 - b. Demonstrates knowledge and awareness of others, as shaped by individual and cultural diversity and context.
2. *Skills:* Applies knowledge of self and others as cultural beings in assessment, treatment, consultation, and all other professional interactions; is able to work effectively with diverse individuals in assessment, treatment, and consultation.

D. Theories of psychopathology and relevant classification systems

1. *Knowledge:*

- a. Demonstrates knowledge of theories of psychopathology, including but not limited to, biological and sociocultural theories
 - b. Demonstrates knowledge of classification systems of behavior and evaluates limitations of those systems
2. *Skills:* Applies concepts of normal/abnormal behavior to case formulation, diagnosis, and treatment planning in the context of stages of human development and diversity

E. Tests, measurements, and other assessments of behavior

1. *Knowledge:*

- a. Demonstrates knowledge of content, reliability and validity, and purposes of assessment measures frequently used by counselors and psychological practitioners.
 - b. Evaluates strengths and limitations (including cultural limitations) of administration, scoring, and interpretation of assessment measures.
2. *Skills:* Selects and utilizes appropriate assessment measures across domains of functioning, practice settings, and cultural groups.

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F. Research methods and program evaluation

1. *Knowledge:*

- a. Demonstrates knowledge of scientific methods commonly used by counselors and psychology practitioners in their clinical work
- b. Demonstrates knowledge of use of scientific methods to add to the knowledge base of counseling and psychology
- c. Demonstrates knowledge of application of scientific methods to evaluating practices, interventions, and programs

2. *Skills:* Critiques published research effectively

G. Career development and/or the role of work in peoples' lives

1. Demonstrates knowledge of the role of work in peoples' lives

2. Demonstrates understanding of the development of work and career choices across the life span

H. Biological basis of behavior

Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the relationship between biological factors and human functioning

I. Developmental basis of behavior

Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of human development, wellness, and learned bases of behavior across the lifespan.

J. Social/organizational/community basis of behavior

Demonstrates knowledge of individuals in the context of their environment and how the environment (e.g., geographical, ideological, demographic, familial, institutional) affects functioning. Demonstrates understanding of the use of systems changes (whether by prevention or intervention) to enhance the functioning of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and/or institutions.

K. Understanding and use of supervision during applied experiences

1. *Knowledge:* Demonstrates understanding of the role and practice of supervision.

2. *Skills:*

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- a. Responds appropriately to supervision
- b. Engages in reflective practices by synthesizing supervisor feedback and experience in applied work
- c. Engages in appropriate self-care strategies