

CURRICULUM STANDARDS AND RELEVANT COMPETENCIES

MPCAC 2017 Curriculum Standards with Operational Definitions

The 2017 MPCAC Standards provide increased specificity in curricular criteria for accreditation, particularly emphasizing student competence as the expected outcome. This document provides examples of operational definitions for each curriculum standard. Programs seeking accreditation or reaccreditation may provide evidence that each standard is met in ways that are appropriate for the applicant program; generally, these will include yearly student reviews, practicum/internship evaluations (by faculty and supervisors), skills ratings, projects that reflect skills applications, comprehensive examinations (written or oral), and the like. An important MPCAC principle is program flexibility in meeting MPCAC standards and it is in that spirit that these operational definitions are offered. The question will be whether programmatic efforts reflect the overall meaning of each standard.

Standards	Operational definitions of standards
	B.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. <i>Ethical/Legal Standards and Policy</i> : Demonstrates knowledge and application of ethical concepts, and awareness of legal issues regarding professional activities with individuals, groups, and organizations

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<p>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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates knowledge of typical legal issues, including child and elder abuse reporting, confidentiality, and informed consent • Identifies key documents/policies that guide the practice of psychology and counseling (e.g., ACA Ethical Code, APA Guidelines) • Discusses ethical implications of professional work • Recognizes and discusses limits of own ethical and legal knowledge
<p>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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes the importance of basic ethical concepts applicable in initial practice (e.g. child abuse reporting, informed consent, confidentiality, multiple relationships, and competence) • Identifies ethical implications in cases and understands the ethical elements present in ethical dilemma or questions • Discusses ethical dilemmas and uses ethical decision-making models in supervision, staff meetings, presentations, applied settings
<p>c. Ethical Conduct: Integrates ethical values into professional conduct</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates honesty and integrity; values ethical behavior • Demonstrates appropriate boundary management • Is able to articulate knowledge of own moral principles and ethical values in discussions with supervisors and peers about ethical issues
<p>2. <i>Professional Values and Attitudes</i>: Exhibits behavior and comportsment that reflect the values and attitudes of counseling and psychology</p>	

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<p>a. Evidences adherence to professional values throughout professional work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies honesty and integrity across multiple situations • Demonstrates ability to discuss failures and lapses in adherence to professional values with supervisors/faculty as appropriate
<p>b. Demonstrates understanding of counseling and psychological practice as an applied behavioral science</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates understanding of core scientific conceptualizations of human behavior • Cites scientific literature to support an argument when appropriate • Evaluates scholarly literature on a topic as needed • Consults literature relevant to client care
<p>c. Maintains professionally appropriate communication and conduct across different settings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizes appropriate language and demeanor in professional communications • Demonstrates professionally appropriate personal hygiene and attire • Demonstrates awareness of the impact of one’s own behavior has on others (e.g., peers, faculty, clients, public, the profession) • Follows policies and procedures of institution
<p>d. Assesses personal accountability and accepts responsibility for own actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes responsibility for own actions • Turns in assignments in accordance with established deadlines • Demonstrates personal organization skills • Plans and organizes own workload • Follows policies and procedures of institution • Follows through on commitments • Appropriately seeks consultation when needed

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<p>e. Demonstrates concern for the welfare of others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays initiative to help others • Articulates importance of concepts of confidentiality, privacy, and informed consent • Demonstrates compassion (awareness of suffering and the wish to relieve it) for others • Determines when response to client needs takes precedence over personal needs
<p>f. Displays an appropriately defined professional identity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates knowledge of the program and profession (training model, core competencies) • Demonstrates knowledge about practicing within one’s competence • Has membership in professional organizations • Attends relevant training opportunities (e.g., colloquia, workshops, conferences)
<p>B. Evidence-based theories and practice of counseling and psychotherapy</p>	
<p>1. <i>Knowledge</i>: Demonstrates knowledge of individual and group theories of counseling and psychotherapy consistent with program orientation and goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the development of evidence-based practice in interventions • Cites scientific literature to support arguments • Evaluates scholarly literature on practice-related topics • Demonstrates appropriate knowledge of counseling and psychotherapy theories in case reports and case conceptualization
<p>2. <i>Relationships</i>: Relates effectively with individuals, groups, and communities</p>	
<p>a. Forms and maintains productive and respectful relationships with clients, peers/colleagues, supervisors, and professionals from within and across disciplines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms effective working alliances with clients • Works with supervisors effectively • Demonstrates appropriate judgment about when to consult a supervisor • Collaborates effectively with others (e.g., in peer, departmental, institutional, and professional activities)

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<p>b. Negotiates differences and handles conflict satisfactorily</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates respectful and collegial interactions with those who have different professional models or perspectives • Acknowledges own role in difficult interactions • Initiates respectful discussion regarding disagreements with colleagues or supervisors
<p>c. Provides effective feedback to others, receives feedback non-defensively, and integrates feedback appropriately</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides verbal feedback to client regarding assessment and diagnosis using language the client can understand • Acknowledges feedback received from supervisors in a professional manner • Is an active participant in any remediation plan involving academic, therapeutic, and/or interpersonal competencies
<p>d. Communicates clearly using verbal, nonverbal, and written skills in a professional context; demonstrates clear understanding and use of professional language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands terms and concepts used in professional texts and in others' case reports • Uses professional terms and concepts appropriately and clearly (e.g., in discussions, case reports) • Communicates clearly across expressive modalities • Prepares clearly written assessment reports • Presents clinical process to supervisor in a succinct, organized, well-summarized way
<p>3. <i>Intervention</i>: 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)</p>	

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<p>a. Formulates and conceptualizes cases; plans and implements interventions utilizing at least one consistent theoretical orientation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulates a theory of change and identifies interventions to implement change • Demonstrates the ability to select interventions for different problems and diverse populations related to the practice setting • Writes case conceptualization reports and collaborative treatment plans incorporating evidence-based practices taking into account clients’ social locations cultural context • Engages in effective evidence-based therapeutic strategies with clients by applying compelling research findings to clinical practice • Integrating knowledge of human development into treatment planning and tailoring (e.g., selecting developmentally appropriate interventions and adapting interventions as necessary to meet clients’ developmental needs)
<p>b. Displays skills in developing the therapeutic alliance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays appropriate active listening skills • Helps client explore stated concerns with appropriate questions • Displays warmth and a caring attitude in a therapeutic context
<p>c. Evaluates intervention progress and modifies intervention or prevention strategies on the basis of evaluation of clients’ or groups’ progress and/or client feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes instances of lack of progress and actions taken in response • Utilizes systematic assessment strategies to track client progress • Demonstrates ability to evaluate treatment progress in context of evidence-based interventions • Describes modifications to intervention strategies based on integration of evaluation efforts
<p>C. Multiculturalism and diversity Demonstrates knowledge, self-awareness, and skills in working with individuals, groups, and communities who represent various cultural and personal backgrounds and characteristics</p>	

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<i>1. Knowledge and Self-Awareness:</i>		
a.	a. Demonstrates knowledge and awareness of <u>self</u> , 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates basic knowledge of literatures on individual and cultural differences as it applies to self• Articulates how group values and norms influence who one is and how one relates to other people• Articulates the range and complexity of one’s sociopolitical variables (e.g., of race, of gender, of sexual orientation) on the basis of historical contexts• Uses knowledge and awareness of self as a cultural being to monitor one’s effectiveness as a professional• Recognizes own biases and handles them appropriately• Knows when to initiate supervision about diversity issues as they pertain to oneself• Demonstrates knowledge and awareness of the systemic and pervasive effects of oppression and privilege on self

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<p>b. b. Demonstrates knowledge and awareness of <u>others</u>, as shaped by individual and cultural diversity and context.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates basic knowledge of literatures on individual and cultural differences as it applies to others • Articulates how group values and norms influence who others are and how they relate to other people • Articulates the range and complexity of others’ sociopolitical variables (e.g., of race, of gender, of sexual orientation) on the basis of historical contexts • Uses knowledge and awareness of others as cultural beings to monitor effectiveness as a professional • Knows when to initiate supervision about diversity issues as they pertain to others • Demonstrates knowledge and awareness of the systemic and pervasive effects of oppression and privilege on others
<p>2. <i>Skills</i>: 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks out literature on individual and cultural differences to inform interactions with others • Applies cultural tailoring effectively to evidence-based assessment practices, interventions, consultations, and all other professional activities • Engages in respectful interactions that reflect knowledge of individual and cultural differences • Able to discuss power differential related to sociopolitical variables as it pertains to the therapeutic relationship • Initiates supervision about diversity issues • Advocates for clients to mitigate or diminish the effects of oppression
<p>D. Theories of psychopathology and relevant classification systems</p>	
<p>1. <i>Knowledge</i>:</p>	

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<p>a. Demonstrates knowledge of theories of psychopathology, including but not limited to, biological and sociocultural theories</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands contemporary theories of psychopathology and relates them to current treatment practices • Articulates the biological, cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and sociocultural underpinnings of psychopathology • Synthesizes the complex underpinnings of psychopathology to explain the etiology of psychological disorders
<p>b. Demonstrates knowledge of classification systems of behavior and evaluates limitations of those systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes the prominent symptoms in diagnosing the most common forms of psychopathology • Understands the status of our diagnostic system in the context of research and treatment • Understands the difference between a categorical and dimensional diagnostic system and articulates the advantages and disadvantages to both approaches to diagnosis • Understands transdiagnostic factors related to psychopathology diagnosis • Recognizes cultural bias in the diagnosis of psychopathology and understands the importance of using this awareness to engage in culturally competent practices
<p>2. <i>Skills:</i> Applies concepts of normal/ abnormal behavior to case formulation, diagnosis, and treatment planning in the context of stages of human development and diversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates proficiency in the use of the most recent DSM and/or ICD as diagnostic tools • Demonstrates ability to identify overlapping symptoms and to use concepts of differential diagnosis • Synthesizes etiological factors and current symptoms to formulate comprehensive case conceptualizations • Critically evaluates empirical research in the area of psychopathology and uses it effectively in treatment practices • Applies knowledge of human development (e.g., theories, milestones, and major research findings) to diagnosis and case conceptualization • Demonstrates ability to assess cultural factors and biases in the context of psychopathology, and refine both diagnosis and conceptualization accordingly

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E. Tests, measurements, and other assessments of behavior	
1. <i>Knowledge:</i>	
a. Demonstrates knowledge of content, reliability and validity, and purposes of assessment measures frequently used by counselors and psychological practitioners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates ability to match presenting concerns with relevant measures • Demonstrates knowledge of scoring and metrics of common measures
b. Evaluates strengths and limitations (including cultural limitations) of administration, scoring, and interpretation of assessment measures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates knowledge of norms for common measures • Demonstrates understanding of cultural biases impacting the applicability of common measures to diverse populations • Demonstrates understanding of procedures to collect assessment data (e.g., from structured and semi-structured interviews)
2. <i>Skills:</i> Selects and utilizes appropriate assessment measures across domains of functioning, practice settings, and cultural groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies appropriate assessment measures for cases seen at practice site • Consults with supervisor regarding selection of assessment measures • Collects accurate and relevant assessment data (e.g., from structured and semi-structured interviews) • Utilizes measures consistently for progress monitoring • Accurately scores and interprets assessment measures • Uses measures only as designed.
F. Research methods and program evaluation	
1. <i>Knowledge:</i>	

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<p>a. Demonstrates knowledge of scientific methods commonly used by counselors and psychology practitioners in their clinical work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrates understanding of relevant research designs (e.g., experimental, longitudinal, cross-sectional, single-case, qualitative) ▪ Demonstrates knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of relevant research designs, including threats to internal and external validity ▪ Demonstrates understanding of the relationship between reliability and validity ▪ Demonstrates understanding of statistical hypotheses testing and basic knowledge of statistical methods
<p>b. Demonstrates knowledge of use of scientific methods to add to the knowledge base of counseling and psychology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrates knowledge of how different types of research have contributed to understanding of human development (including career development) and human behavior (biological, social, affective, cognitive) ▪ Demonstrates understanding of how research informs evidence-based and multicultural practice in counseling
<p>c. Demonstrates knowledge of application of scientific methods to evaluating practices, interventions, and programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrates understanding of how to evaluate research to determine its value in informing clinical practice ▪ Demonstrates knowledge of how to incorporate scientific principles into clinical practice (i.e., assessment, conceptualization, and intervention) ▪ Demonstrates basic knowledge of how to evaluate the efficacy of interventions and programs ▪ Uses scholarly literature to support clinical decision-making
<p>2. <i>Skills</i>: Critiques published research effectively</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluates research to determine its usefulness in informing clinical practice, designing interventions, and evaluating programs • Cites scientific literature to develop informed arguments
<p>G. Career development and/or the role of work in peoples' lives</p>	

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<p>1. Demonstrates knowledge of the role of work in peoples’ lives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates the importance of exploring clients’ current work situations, past employment history, and vocational aspirations, and how those contribute to behavioral health (and ways behavioral health contribute to work outcomes) • Demonstrates awareness of role of work as a source of social support and ways to bolster resilience • Demonstrates understanding of how an individual’s multiple roles (including worker role) intersect
<p>2. Demonstrates understanding of the development of work and career choices across the life span</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a developmental perspective in helping clients develop career decision-making skills and the ability to appropriately navigate work transitions through the life span • Demonstrates understanding of how contextual factors (intersections of individual and cultural differences) influence the pursuit and experience of work
<p>H. Biological basis of behavior Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the relationship between biological factors and human functioning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate knowledge of the basic structure and function of the nervous system • Demonstrate knowledge of normative neurological development (including emotion regulation and stress reactions) as well as the biological functions implicated in common diagnoses • Describe the mechanisms by which common psychotropic medications affect the nervous system and behavior

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<p>I. Developmental basis of behavior Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of human development, wellness, and learned bases of behavior across the lifespan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate understanding of key developmental theories of human behavior and related processes • Demonstrate understanding of the reciprocal and interactive influence of human biology and the environment (i.e., nature and nurture) on behavioral development • Demonstrate knowledge of normative milestones and common critical and sensitive periods throughout the lifespan • Demonstrate knowledge of key risk, protective, and resiliency factors that influence behavioral development
<p>J. Social/organizational/community basis of behavior</p>	
<p>1. Demonstrates knowledge of individuals in the context of their environment and how the environment (e.g., geographical, ideological, demographic, familial, institutional) affects functioning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates understanding of the interactive nature of the person and environment • Demonstrates understanding of the role of cultural factors and social norms on individuals (e.g., attitudes, stereotypes, prejudice, the mechanisms of attitude change) • Demonstrates knowledge of self and how the self contributes to cognitive processes in social interaction (e.g., situational influences of self-perception, impact of self and other schemas on performance) • Demonstrates understanding of the dynamics of intergroup relationships, social influence, conflict, and cooperation. • Demonstrates understanding of the role of prevention in working with clients

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<p>2. 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates understanding of pre- and post-intervention programs to address systemic issues in a variety of settings • Demonstrates understanding that social agencies and institutions can target specific issues • Demonstrates understanding of the impact of environmental context, including an exploration of possible system changes, relevant to the client
<p>K. Understanding and use of supervision during applied experiences</p>	
<p>1. <i>Knowledge:</i> Demonstrates understanding of the role and practice of supervision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates understanding of the importance of openly exploring clinical material and receiving feedback • Demonstrates understanding that supervision differs from other professional relationships (e.g., therapeutic) • Demonstrates understanding that supervisors may have differing viewpoints • Demonstrates understanding that supervision is in the service of maximizing treatment effectiveness and clients' well-being • Seeks supervisor's perspective in a timely manner
<p>2. <i>Skills:</i></p>	
<p>a. Responds appropriately to supervision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents clinical information in effective ways • Is able to articulate attitudes, values, and beliefs toward diverse others • Demonstrates the ability to openly explore clinical material and accept feedback • Uses supervision to improve performance by applying feedback • Engages in discussion with supervisor about one's own reaction to clients

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<p>b. Engages in reflective practices by synthesizing supervisor feedback and experience in applied work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognizes impact of self on others• Understands multiple individual and cultural identities as they impact clinical work• Generalizes supervision feedback to new clinical situations• Ability to critique one's own performance (e.g., on video, audiotape)• Displays ability to adjust performance as situations require• Uses supervision to improve performance
<p>c. Engages in appropriate self-care strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Takes actions recommended by supervisor for self-care• Builds self-care into daily and weekly routines