

Student Handbook Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling

**Clinical Mental Health Counseling Track 57
hours**

Advanced Clinical Practice Track 55 hours

2025-2026

**Belmont University
College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
Mental Health Counseling Program
Nashville, TN 37212**

Introduction

Welcome to the School of Mental Health Counseling at Belmont University. This *Mental Health Counseling Student Handbook for the Ph.D. in Counseling* contains information intended to answer questions about the program and describe program procedures. When seeking information, students should also refer to the [Bruin Guide](#), Belmont University Graduate Admissions, and *Belmont University Graduate Catalog* in addition to this *Handbook*. Links containing additional information can be found at the end of this page.

While students are expected to adhere to policies in this handbook, [Bruin Guide](#), and [Belmont University Graduate Catalog](#), know that graduate procedures, course requirements, prerequisites, and other information is subject to change, and this handbook does not replace policies found in the [Belmont University Graduate Catalog](#). Faculty and advisors are available to assist should you have questions, but this is not a substitute for knowledge of Belmont University policies. It is the student's primary responsibility to understand and follow all policies and procedures.

<http://www.belmont.edu/prospectivestudents/index.html>

Graduate Admissions

**Belmont University
College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
615-460-5552**

Introduction

The distinguishing feature of Belmont University's mental health counseling program is its attention to human spirituality which is integrated into curriculum throughout every course in the program. The following information describes a proposed Ph.D. degree that continues the integration of human spirituality into coursework at the doctoral level. The Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling degree through the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences at Belmont University is unique among contemporary counseling programs in that it trains future counselor educators and doctoral level practitioners to research the efficacy of and utilize spiritual understandings when working with clients and embracing client resiliency. The program seeks to guide the forming of highly skilled professionals who will act with integrity in the world as agents of the ministries of healing and transformation serving individuals, couples, families, or larger groups and training future counselors to do the same. The program seeks to accomplish this goal through the integration of counseling and educational research, theoretical and educational principles, wisdom, insight, and values of the Church's care of soul's tradition. In pursuing this goal, the degree is congruent with the mission and vision of Belmont University as "a student-centered Christian community providing an academically challenging education that empowers men and women of diverse backgrounds to engage and transform the world with disciplined intelligence, compassion, courage and faith." As such, those entering the doctoral program in counseling will become not only multiculturally competent but also personally spiritually competent and tie practices to efficacious research as they progress through coursework. Because research regarding spiritual values and beliefs is limited in the counseling profession, this program helps students advance both the profession, future teachings in the field, and helps instill the use of both spiritual and traditional research-based practices as methods of assistance.

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Program Details

The School of Mental Health Counseling, located in the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, prepares professional counselors in four master's level tracks: 1). Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling; 2). Clinical Mental Health Counseling; 3). Clinical Pastoral Therapy; and 4) School Counseling. The program also houses the Doctor of Philosophy Degree consisting of two doctoral level tracks; 1) Counselor Education & Supervision and 2. Advanced Clinical Practice. The Master's level Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling track, as well as the Clinical Mental Health Counseling track, have been accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The school counseling track and the Doctor of Philosophy degree are preparing to submit documents for accreditation approval.

Purpose

Doctoral level counselors work in mental health counseling agencies, research facilities, educational training centers, and universities to assist clients facing a number of mental health issues and/or train a future generation of mental health professionals. The intent of the Ph.D. program is to provide for the increasing need for highly skilled counseling professionals in a manner that will be congruent with Belmont's historic commitments to Christian faith and values.

At the doctoral level, the 55 to 57-hour counseling program provides the academic training for counselors to work as faculty in universities or as highly skilled mental health practitioners in settings such as: counseling private practices, within community counseling agencies, addiction recovery centers, research agencies, behavioral health agencies, government mental health positions, or research centers. As such, doctoral level students learn advanced skills and research practices beyond those achieved at the master's and basic licensure level and assist families, children, and individuals facing a variety of mental health issues. Students must pass all licensure exams and complete all requirements for state licensure at the master's level before entering or during completion of the doctoral program.

The proposed degree consists of 2 specialty tracks (55-57 credit-hours depending on track) and will be offered primarily face-to-face at Belmont University using monthly weekend intensive courses and supplemented with online instruction throughout the term. The degree program is organized to be completed over 3 years.

Prerequisites

The Ph.D. in Counseling requires the completion of a master's degree from an accredited college or university. For applicants whose master's degree does not satisfy educational requirements for state license in a mental health profession, additional coursework may be required in order that the student is eligible for licensure upon graduation from the Ph.D. program. Depending on deficiencies, this could result in an applicant being required to take up to an additional 21 semester hours of coursework for the Ph.D. degree. Applicants should have a strong academic record with at least a 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) GPA.

Mission

The School of Mental Health Counseling seeks to train professional counselors who will act ethically as agents of the ministries of healing and transformation through efficacious counseling theory, techniques, skills, and respect for diversity.

Program Design

The Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling degree is a 60- semester hour program designed to prepare men and women to serve as advanced-level counselors and/or counselor educators in mental health practices or universities. Prospective students should be aware that for those who are not already licensed in a mental health discipline, licensure may require additional coursework. Educational requirements for counseling licensure vary from state to state, therefore, students should check their state's requirements against master's level transcripts prior to applying to the Ph.D. degree.

The Ph.D. degree in counseling is a cohort program that requires eight consecutive semesters (including summers). During their first semester, students take foundational courses integrating ethical and multicultural issues with spirituality. Each specialty track also takes one course tailored to their specialty area. During semester 2, students take a supervision course aimed at preparing them to train or mentor a future generation of counselors. Students also take 6 additional semester-credit-hours in their specialty area. The third semester starts with a study of research methods and advanced theories of change. Students in the Advanced Clinical Practice track begin accumulating field experience hours and those in the Counselor Education track become familiar with teaching and writing strategies.

Over the course of the degree, students are required to complete field experience consisting of 700 clock hours in mental health agencies, universities, research facilities, and other such systems based on specialty track. Students are required to secure their own placement for field experience in consultation with the program director and clinical coordinator. Students will be required to pass a background check and show proof of approved professional liability insurance prior to beginning the field experience component of the program.

The fourth, fifth and sixth semesters focus on higher level research statistics, field experience, and practical counseling courses. At the end of the fifth semester, students select a dissertation committee consisting of at least two faculty in the counseling program and one faculty member from outside the program. During the sixth semester, students must take a 2-day qualifying examination consisting of open-ended responses to each of the eight CACREP areas and specialty areas. Students who pass qualifying examinations may propose their dissertation design to the committee at the end of the sixth semester. Each of these steps culminate during semesters seven and eight as students submit IRBs, conduct research, and complete their dissertations.

The mental health counseling program will accept up to 21 hours of transfer credits from accredited universities. Students wishing to have courses transferred must contact the chair and submit syllabi for those courses under consideration. Transferred courses must meet CACREP accreditation standards as evidenced by course syllabi and be determined to directly replace a course on the Belmont Mental Health Counseling Program degree plan. Courses not meeting CACREP standards will not be accepted into the professional counseling or marriage and family counseling track.

Graduate Faculty

Professor Name:	Title:	Research Interests:
Dr. Janet Hicks	Department Chair and Professor	Child and Adolescent Counseling, School Counseling, Family Counseling, Career Counseling, Aggression

Dr. Tom Knowles-Bagwell,	Professor and Director of Doctoral Studies and Spiritual Integration	Pastoral Theological Method, Psychoanalytic Theory and Therapy, Clinical Supervision, Nature and Treatment of Addictions
Dr. Stephan Berry	Associate Professor	School Crisis Management, Trauma-Informed Schools, Creative Counseling Techniques
Dr. Layla Bonner	Associate Professor	African American mental health, Relationships, Family Wellness, Racial Trauma, Implicit Bias, Grief, Counselor Education
Dr. Amanda Grieme-Bradley	Associate Professor	Healthy Family Functioning. The Person of the Therapist, Therapeutic Presence
Dr. Olivia Bentley	Assistant Professor	Women, under-researched groups, substance use, co-occurring disorders, trauma-informed care, counselor education
Dr. Jenel Cassidy	Assistant Professor	Childhood Behavioral Problems & Trauma, Social Support & Post-Traumatic Growth
Dr. Mason Hale	Assistant Professor	Attachment to God, disaster response counseling, suicide prevention and intervention, thanatology, counselor education and supervision
Dr. Terri Tilford	Assistant Professor	Integration of AI and Mental Health, Wellness & Selfcare, Type 1 Diabetes, their Caregivers, and Mental Well-Being, College Student Mental Health and the Impact on Student Retention and Student Success
Dr. Mitchell Waters	Assistant Professor	The Intersection of Spirituality and Traumatic Stress, Spiritual and Religious Diversity in Counseling
Dr. Jon McKinnon	Lecturer	Intellectual Disabilities, Spiritual Formation and Integration in Counseling, Recovery for Experiences in Homelessness

Program Objectives

All mental health counseling students must achieve mastery in the eight CACREP counseling areas and specialty areas. Mastery is assessed through coursework, experiential activities, field experience rating forms, observation, examinations, case studies, as well as on the Doctoral Qualifying Examination. Following is a list of objectives completed by students in the Mental Health Counseling Program.

Program Objectives for Counseling

The Mental Health Counseling faculty have identified the following program objectives for doctoral level students:

- Identify aspirational ethics and resolve ethical issues using current codes of ethics
- Apply multicultural and cross-cultural counseling skills and current competencies in the teaching or counseling setting.
- Utilize culturally relevant strategies based on human growth and development

- Integrate vocational counseling knowledge into mental health counseling sessions, research, or teaching.
- Select and utilize efficacious counseling and supervision theories, consultation methods, counseling skills, and advanced techniques in sessions.
- Integrate the ASERVIC competencies of spiritual development into counseling supervision, consultation, and counseling sessions and teaching.
- Demonstrate appropriate screening practices and leadership of groups exhibiting a variety of mental health issues.
- Select, utilize, and interpret appropriate and ethical assessment instruments and techniques for a variety of mental health issues and research projects.
- Design and conduct research to improve counseling or teaching in the field of counseling.
- Be committed to serve as Christian advocates for students, children, and families within their communities
- Engage in caring and nurturing counseling, supervision, and/or teaching relationships with colleagues and students.

Overview of Ph.D. in Mental Health Counseling

The Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling is a 60-credit hour program (depending on specialty track selected) which will house two separate specialty tracks including: 1) Counselor Education and 2) Advanced Practitioner. The degree is described below.

Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling. At the doctoral level, the 60-hour counseling program provides the academic training for counselors to work as faculty in universities or as highly skilled mental health practitioners in settings such as: counseling private practices, within community counseling agencies, addiction recovery centers, research agencies, behavioral health agencies, government mental health positions, or research centers. As such, doctoral level students learn advanced skills and research practices beyond those achieved at the master's and basic licensure level that assist families, children, and individuals facing a variety of mental health issues. Students must pass all licensure exams and complete all requirements for state licensure at the master's level before entering or during completion of the doctoral program.

Details of Graduate Study at Belmont University

College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

The College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences Office is housed in the McWhorter Building on the second floor. The Dean of the college, Dr. Sharell Pinto, is responsible for administering policies and rules relating to graduate degree programs in the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. For more information, the college phone number is 615-460-5552.

Mental Health Counseling Program

The graduate Mental Health Counseling program is housed in the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. The Mental Health Counseling Program is directed by Dr. Janet Hicks (Professor and Chair) and Dr. Tom Knowles-Bagwell (Professor and Director of Doctoral Studies and Spiritual Integration) who report to the College Dean. Faculty in the School of Mental Health Counseling develop policies and procedures used within the program.

Expectations of Students

Students are expected to act professionally at all times and strive to improve scores on professional dispositions described later in this Handbook. Further, students must follow the ACA Code of ethics, AAMFT Code of Ethics, IAMFC Code of Ethics, AAPC Code of ethics and other relevant professional codes as well as the Belmont University Code of Conduct. Class attendance, respect of others' cultures, religions, gender, race, and ethnicity is required.

Probation, Suspension, and Dismissal

During faculty meetings throughout the year, counseling faculty discuss and rate student ethical/professional fitness to practice and academic performance. These discussions and ratings include student dispositions such as professionalism, adherence to ethical codes, and academic achievement. If students fail to maintain a grade point average of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scales), earn a "C" in a required course, or exhibit unsatisfactory academic integrity, professionalism, or ethical behavior, the faculty may suggest probation, suspension, dismissal, or remediation per conditions in this handbook as well as the [Belmont Bruin Guide](#).

It is the counselor or counselor-in-training's responsibility to be aware of signs of impairment, seek assistance for their problems, and notify program supervisors that they cannot provide acceptable services to clients. Counselors and counselors-in-training should seek appropriate professional services to remediate the problem(s) interfering with their ability to provide services.

It is the policy of the School of Mental Health Counseling that if a student has a physical, mental or emotional problem that could potentially harm clients or others, that student will be prohibited from seeing clients until the student has completed a remediation plan. For example, it is the policy of the Mental Health Counseling program that if a student has a documented relapse or a self-reported relapse, she/he will not see clients until a remediation plan is completed and the student can provide verified documentation of at least one year of "clean" time. While the student is in treatment, the student's therapist must report on the student's progress at specified times.

Fitness to Practice

Admission to the program does not guarantee fitness to remain in the program. Only those students who meet program standards will be allowed to continue in the program. Students pursuing a Ph.D. in Mental Health Counseling must meet fitness to practice standards that are assessed by faculty throughout the program. These standards include demonstration of emotional and mental fitness in their interaction with others as well as conformance with codes of professional counseling associations and of the state of Tennessee. Students who fail to demonstrate fitness or conformance to appropriate codes may be asked to enter a remediation plan in order to remain in the program. If a remediation plan is developed, students must demonstrate satisfactory remediation prior to being allowed to proceed toward graduation. In rare cases, a student's ability to practice may exceed remediation and a recommendation for dismissal from the program is possible.

Causes for Dismissal

Achievement in the School of Mental Health Counseling requires academic success as well as ethical behavior. Counseling requires adherence to codes of ethics, professional attitudes, and work habits. The following list details actions or behaviors considered just cause for immediate dismissal from the School of Mental Health Counseling:

1. Violation of Belmont University's Title IX policies.

2. Cheating, plagiarism, giving false information, or altering official records
3. Abuse or disrespect for supervisors, clients, peers, or faculty
4. Breaches of the rules or codes in the *ACA Code of Ethics*, *AAPC Code of Ethics*, and *Belmont University Student Code of Conduct*
5. Earning a failing grade in Field Experience Courses
6. Willful conduct that may cause injury
7. Harassment, discrimination, non-sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct as defined in the [*Belmont Bruin Guide*](#).

Academic Performance Evaluation

Because students are expected to maintain a 3.0 average at all times, students earning a grade below C in a course must schedule and attend a meeting with their faculty advisor. The faculty advisor then informs the remaining Mental Health Counseling Faculty about the content of the meeting. Next, Mental Health Counseling faculty review and make recommendations concerning the student's status in the program. Students earning a failing grade in a field experience course will be dismissed from the program. Students terminated may file an appeal by following the [*Belmont University Grade Appeals Procedures*](#). In addition, students failing CACREP standards and/or demonstrating failing performance on CACREP assessments should meet with the course instructor and discuss methods for improvement.

Time Limit for Completion. All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed within a period of seven consecutive calendar years from admission to candidacy, whichever comes first. Graduate credit for coursework taken more than seven calendar years old at the time of the final oral examination may not be used to satisfy degree requirements. Absent an extension, the student may be permitted to retake the qualifying examination, and, upon passing that examination, be readmitted to candidacy by the Graduate Faculty for some period of time not to exceed four years.

Final corrected (final) copies of the dissertation must be received in the program no later than one year after the final examination. Failure to complete this step will result in the degree not being awarded.

Non-Academic Performance Evaluation

Should a student exhibit unsatisfactory non-academic performance as listed in the "Causes for Dismissal" in this handbook, the faculty may decide on remediation, reprimand, probation, or dismissal from the program. Students disagreeing with the decision may appeal the decision by following the Student Appeals/Grievance Procedures located in the [*Complaint and Grievance Procedures*](#) on the Belmont University Graduate Catalog.

Faculty discuss student non-academic performance throughout the program and administer the *Student Disposition/Professionalism Rubric* as found at the end of this handbook three times (MHC 6005, MHC 6610 Internship 1, and MHC 6630 Internship in Mental Health Counseling II) during the program. Performance on this rubric is shared with students. Should low ratings be attained, faculty discuss ways students can improve performance and may place students on a remedial plan if needed. More information on this process can be found as follows in the next sections of this handbook.

Retention Policies and Student Appeals/Grievance Procedures

The School of Mental Health Counseling offers students the right to a fair hearing. Should students wish to file an appeal, students are responsible for providing the burden of proof. Following are the steps students follow to resolve concerns:

- 1) Student appeals/grievances starting in the School of Mental Health Counseling are first considered informally by program faculty.
- 2) If unresolved, students may file an appeal through the Chair of the School of Mental Health Counseling.
- 3) Formal appeals are allowed only when prejudice, arbitrary, or capricious actions are involved.

Academic Related Appeals

The School of Mental Health Counseling follows the University policy regarding academic related appeals as follows:

Students have the right to appeal grades directly to the instructor if they believe that an incorrect grade has been assigned for the course. If a grade issue is not resolved after contact with the instructor, the student may appeal in writing to the Chair of the School of Mental Health Counseling. This must occur within two months of the start of the next semester. In the written appeal, the student must be prepared to demonstrate and document an unusual circumstance that warrants a review of the grade and evidence of the grade they believe should have been given by the instructor. All written appeals will be reviewed within one month of receipt by the chair and, if needed, by a committee of graduate faculty and graduate students, and responded to in writing either confirming or changing the posted final grade. A copy of this response will go to the Registrar's Office for the student's record.

Any appeal must be in writing and include appropriate documentation to support the student's position that a grade change is warranted.

The final grade referred to in the process is the instructor's posted grade, which may be viewed in the student's grade report on-line at the close of the term or part-of-term. It is solely the responsibility of the student to check that grades are posted for all courses taken during a semester and note the grade given for each class. All grade appeals must be requested within two months of the start of the next semester. Unless an active appeal is under review, after two months into the next semester, neither instructors nor the university will consider a grade change.

Once a final grade has been posted, the student may not petition the instructor to do additional work or extra credit to raise the grade awarded. Any grade change as a result of such action will be disallowed.

Low ratings on *Core Assessments* and *Specialty Area Assessments* are handled as follows.

Plan to Address Low Scores on Core Assessments or Specialty Area Assessments

As mentioned in the student handbooks, faculty follow the procedures below.

Informal Procedures

1. The program faculty initiate an informal meeting with the student to discuss performance issues (i.e., core assessment or specialty assessment score).
2. A remediation plan is developed by the faculty during a program meeting above to address concerns and the plan is shared with the student as part of the meeting. The faculty member teaching the course monitors student progress toward the remediation plan and meets regularly with the student to ensure plan compliance.
3. The faculty member(s) shares the student's performance issues and seeks consultation from other program faculty during a scheduled program meeting.
4. If the remediation plan is not successfully completed, the student will be asked to attend a formal meeting scheduled with program faculty and formal procedures are implemented as follows.

Formal Procedures

Formal Procedures are used when informal procedures fail to improve concerns or by student request. Following are steps taken when formal procedures are utilized:

1. The faculty member with concerns notifies the student about specific concerns and schedules a meeting with all mental health counseling program faculty, including the chair, to discuss concerns. The student, faculty member, program faculty, and other relevant parties are invited to attend the meeting. Students must be given 2 weeks' notice prior to the scheduled meeting. No party may be represented by an attorney at this meeting.
2. Mental Health Counseling faculty listen to issues from the faculty member and student.
3. After the meeting and within 7 days, faculty determine a plan of action. This plan may involve probation, suspension, dismissal, a remediation plan, or no action. A written remediation plan will be given to students needing this action and compliance is monitored by the concerned faculty member.
4. Follow-up meetings and/or reports will be shared by the concerned faculty member with program faculty at scheduled faculty meetings to ensure student compliance. If students do not comply with program faculty requirements or remediation, they will be dismissed from the program.

Students may file additional appeals regarding final grades as described in the section above.

Non-Academic Appeals and Retention Procedures

The Mental Health Counseling faculty adhere to the Ethical Standards of the American Counseling Association, International Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, and AAPC when rating students' nonacademic performance. Ratings on the *Student Disposition/Professionalism Rubric* are also considered. Low ratings on this form or other issues as discussed in this handbook are handled utilizing the following steps as follows:

Informal Procedures

1. The faculty member(s) initiates a meeting with the student to discuss performance issues.
2. A remediation plan is developed by the faculty member during the meeting above to address concerns and the plan is shared with the student as part of the meeting. The faculty member monitors student progress toward the remediation plan and meets regularly with the student to ensure plan compliance.
3. The faculty member(s) shares the student's performance issues and seeks consultation from other program faculty during a scheduled program meeting.

4. If the remediation plan is not successfully completed, the student will be asked to attend a meeting scheduled with program faculty and formal procedures are implemented as follows.

Formal Procedures

Formal Procedures are used when informal procedures fail to improve concerns or by student request. Following are steps taken when formal procedures are utilized:

1. The faculty member with concerns notifies the student about specific concerns and schedules a meeting with all mental health counseling program faculty to discuss concerns. The student, faculty member, program faculty, and other relevant parties are invited to attend the meeting. Students must be given 2 weeks' notice prior to the scheduled meeting. No party may be represented by an attorney at this meeting.
2. Mental Health Counseling faculty listen to issues from the faculty member and student.
3. After the meeting and within 7 days, faculty determine a plan of action. This plan may involve probation, suspension, dismissal, a remediation plan, or no action. A written remediation plan will be given to students needing this action and compliance is monitored by the concerned faculty member.
4. Follow-up meetings and/or reports will be shared by the concerned faculty member with program faculty at scheduled faculty meetings to ensure student compliance. If students do not comply with program faculty requirements or remediation, they will be dismissed from the program.

Students may file appeals as described in this handbook.

Mental Health Counseling Program Requirements

Admission and Program information follows.

Admissions and Graduation Requirements

Admission to the PhD program in Counseling, regardless of specialization, requires completion of a master's degree in counseling (minimum 60 SCH beyond the bachelor's degree). If students have not completed a master's degree in counseling and have not completed all coursework needed to comply with state licensure requirements when admitted into the program, they must complete the missing courses and be eligible for licensure by the completion of the Ph.D. program. Students must maintain a 3.0 GPA to maintain enrollment in the program.

Students must pass all coursework, a qualifying examination, and dissertation/oral examination within time limits described below to graduate.

Application Review

Students should submit applications to the Office of Student Admissions as early in the year as possible. Failure to submit all of the admissions materials to the Mental Health Counseling program early may result in the student being delayed for admission up to a year.

Doctor of Philosophy in Mental Health Counseling Degree (Ph.D.) Program and Course Matriculation Requirements

The first two semesters are intended to prepare students with information necessary to write a dissertation proposal and engage in specific clinical practice. During the first semester, students participate in advanced study of spiritual and multicultural concepts in counseling. Those in the advanced clinical practice track also start field experience the first semester and those in the Counselor Education track learn processes required to publish and teach. All students are exposed to numerous research proposals and begin writing draft proposals the first semester of enrollment. During the second semester, students build on counseling concepts and apply concepts by learning to serve as clinical supervisors. Students in the advanced clinical practice track continue with field experience and those in the Counselor Education track increase knowledge in career counseling as well as psychometrics and assessment. The first summer session introduces students to qualitative research methods and expands on knowledge of counseling theories. The second-year shapes students' knowledge with material on advanced group counseling techniques and introduces them to quantitative statistics and research methods. Students in both tracks gain experience through advanced clinical field experience. The program culminates with courses focusing on research methods, advanced field experience, and information needed to complete the dissertation.

Year One: Fall (9 hrs)

CTM 6005 Spiritually in the Clinical Encounter (3 hrs)

CTM 6006 Spiritual Traditions in Global Perspective (3 hrs)

CTM 6012 Seminar: Advanced Clinical Practice (2 hrs)

New Research Course (Res. Question, Problem) (1 hr)

Year One: Spring (11 hrs)

CTM 6014 Clinical Supervision: Theories and Practice (3 hrs)

CTM 6013 Spiritual Development and Religious Experience (3 hrs)

CTM 6012 Seminar: Advanced Clinical Practice (2 hrs)

CTM 6011 Teaching, Writing, and Publishing in the Counseling Field (3hrs)

Year One: Summer (9 hrs)

CTM 6007 Advanced Theories of Change (3 hrs)

CTM 6018 Qualitative Inquiry (3 hrs)

CTM 6012 Seminar: Advanced Clinical Practice (2 hrs.)

New Research Course (Res. Question, Problem) (1 hr)

Year Two: Fall (9hrs)

CTM 6016 Advanced Group Therapy: Theories & Practice (3 hrs)

CTM 6019 Quantitative Statistical Analysis (3 hrs)

CTM 6012 Seminar: Advanced Clinical Practice (2 hrs)

New Research Course (Res. Question, Problem) (1 hr)

Year Two: Spring (8 hrs)

CTM 6015 Mental Health Care in Contemporary Society (3 hrs)

CTM 6120 Advanced Quantitative Analysis & Mixed Methods (3 hrs)

CTM 6012 Seminar: Advanced Clinical Practice (2 hrs)

Year Two: Summer (9hrs)

CTM 6220 Advanced Qualitative Inquiry (3 hrs)

CTM 6225 Research Seminar (3 hrs)

CTM 6017 Advanced Human Systems in Clinical Practice (3hrs)

Year Three: Fall

CTM 6999_Dissertation (3 sem. hrs.)

Year Three: Spring

CTM 6999 Dissertation (3 sem. hrs.)

Experiential (9-10 sem. hrs.): Students are required to complete field experience as a part of the MMHC program. Depending upon track, field experience is completed over the course of a minimum of three consecutive semesters and consists of a minimum of 700 clock hours of counseling and counseling related activities in an approved setting. Students must pass a background check and give proof of approved professional liability insurance prior to approval for field experience.

Advising and Degree Plan

Upon enrollment in the Mental Health Counseling Program students are assigned a faculty advisor. The student is responsible for initiating meetings with the advisor prior to registration each semester. Each student is personally responsible for completing all academic requirements established by the University and submitting the degree plan.

Dissertation Policies, Candidacy, and Time Limits

As soon as the course of study for an applicant has been determined, an advisory committee of at least three members of the graduate faculty will be appointed by the Dean on the recommendation of the Program Director. This committee will meet as often as necessary with the applicant and will direct his or her work at all stages. Either the chair or the co-chair of a student's committee must be graduate faculty and be a member of the mental health counseling program faculty. Emeritus or retired faculty as well as other qualified individuals from outside of the university may serve as external members on the student's committee but may not serve as chair; no more than one external member may serve on a committee. External members must be approved by the Dean and Program Director after a careful review of their qualifications.

Faculty in the doctoral program conduct a formal review of their students' progress at least once each year. Any student not making satisfactory progress may be placed on probation and given conditions to meet to stay in the program. Continued unsatisfactory progress in any area of a student's work will be cause for dismissal from the program by the Dean of the College.

Time Limit. All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed within a period of seven consecutive calendar years from admission to candidacy, whichever comes first. Graduate credit for coursework taken more than seven calendar years old at the time of the final oral examination may not be used to satisfy degree requirements. Absent an extension, the student may be permitted to retake the qualifying examination, and, upon passing that examination, be readmitted to candidacy by the Graduate Faculty for some period not to exceed four years.

Final corrected (final) copies of the dissertation must be received in the program no later than one year after the final examination. Failure to complete this step will result in the degree not being awarded.

Admission to Candidacy. Authority for admitting an applicant to candidacy for a doctor's degree is vested in the Graduate Faculty and College Dean. Upon receipt of a recommendation from the student's advisory committee, the Dean or his representative will submit it to the Graduate Faculty for approval. By written communication, the Dean or his representative will transmit the results of the graduate faculty's action to the applicant, to the chairperson of the advisory committee, and to the director of the department. A student must be admitted to candidacy for the doctorate at least four months prior to the proposed graduation date.

Qualifying Exam: The examination requires a synthesis and application of knowledge acquired during the course of study for the doctoral degree; consequently, satisfactory performance in coursework does not necessarily guarantee successful performance on the qualifying examination. A student is eligible to stand for this examination after passing all required coursework (excluding dissertation) and receiving approval from the advisory committee chair. Students must pass the qualifying examination within 1 year of completing coursework. The

advisory committee prepares and conducts the qualifying examination alone or in conjunction with other graduate faculty as determined by the College Dean or his representative.

An applicant who does not pass the qualifying examination may be permitted to repeat it once after a time lapse of at least two months and not more than 12 months from the date of the unsatisfactory examination. Failure to pass the qualifying examination within the specified time will result in dismissal from the program irrespective of performance in other aspects of doctoral study.

Dissertation: The dissertation must demonstrate a mastery of the techniques of research, a thorough understanding of the subject matter and its background, and a high degree of skill in organizing and presenting the materials. Students must propose their topic/study to the committee a minimum of 4 months prior to the defense/final examination.

Final Examination. A final public oral examination, usually over the general field of the dissertation, is required of every candidate for the doctorate and must be held when school is in session and faculty are on duty. The oral examination must be scheduled by the student and the advisory committee after the committee has read the completed dissertation and prior to the defense deadline during the semester of graduation. Students should present their dissertation to all committee members at least three weeks before the defense date. All members of the committee participate fully in the examination and cast a vote of pass/fail after the oral examination.

Technology Resources and Competence Needed to Complete Program

Students must be able to create and use email, Internet searches, Microsoft Word, and other Belmont University Platforms to complete the program. While our program is primarily face-to-face, grades may be viewed through an online platform, registration occurs online, and assignments may require use of Microsoft Word or other platforms.

Credentialing/Endorsement

Several types of credentialing are available after graduating with a master's degree (MAMHC). Students must attain an internship or full licensure before practicing in the field. Only students who have completed all course requirements in the program, graduated with a master's degree in mental health counseling, and were previously admitted into the School of Mental Health Counseling will be eligible for licensure endorsement. Faculty will only credential students for licensure or certification in areas for which the student is trained and meets requirements.

Certification credentialing is also available through the National Board for Certified Counselors, the American Association for Marriage & Family Therapists, or the College of Pastoral Supervision & Psychotherapy. Certification does not equal licensure and does not grant a person permission to engage in clinical practice within the state. More information about certification is available through NBCC, AAMFT, IAMFC, CPSP, or from the mental health counseling faculty.

Types of Licensures

By state law, all persons practicing as professional counselors, marriage and family therapists, clinical pastoral therapists, and/or who practice counseling independently must be licensed. Those earning a Master's Degree in Mental Health Counseling from Belmont University have met the first of many steps needed to attain this state licensure. It is important to note that state licensure is a separate process from that of obtaining your master's degree and requires additional criteria. For example, Tennessee also requires that additional examinations be taken, and that post master's

level supervision be attained through a state qualified supervisor. Since state licensure is handled through the state and not through Belmont University, students are advised to seek licensure information through the Tennessee Department of Health's Counseling Licensure Board. State licensure boards have the ability to change policies, laws, reviewing procedures and protocols, and requirements without notice. Applying early and with faculty assistance is recommended. The university cannot guarantee licensure if board changes are made after you graduate.

Registration

The Schedule of Classes for the semester can be located on [Classfinder](#). Following a review of the classes listed in Classfinder, students should schedule an appointment with their faculty advisor if help is needed in determining courses to take for the next semester. After advising, students may log into the MyBelmont portal when Graduate Registration opens and register for their classes. Although advisors are knowledgeable about registration, it is the student's responsibility to become informed and adhere to registration as well as other graduate policies and procedures. Since a student's registration will be canceled if payment of fees is not made by university designated deadlines. It is important that the student carefully follow registration payment procedures.

Change of Registration

The [Belmont University Office of the Registrar](#) website offers information to help students understand drop/add procedures and deadlines.

Practicum and Internship Registration

Students may not enroll in field experience courses without first meeting all prerequisite requirements. Students should meet with their faculty advisor prior to registration.

Prior to enrollment in practicum, and internship classes, students must purchase professional liability insurance. Some counseling associations offer insurance with student memberships. Insurance is also available through Health Providers Service Organization (HPSO) at 800-982-9491 or ACA at 1-800-347-6647 x284. Student insurance is also available through other professional associations. Be sure to clarify with program faculty what does/does not meet requirements for insurance before making a purchase.

Practicum and internship sites for direct and indirect hours must be in Nashville or the Nashville area. Students are encouraged to consult the Field Experience Manual for the process of securing a Practicum and/or Internship site. Students are *strongly discouraged* from reaching out directly to any of the sites, but to instead complete the "Field Experience Placement Form" located within the Field Experience Manual before meeting with the Field Experience Coordinator, [Cory Bishop](#).

Commitment to Civility

Belmont University values integrity, collaboration, and humility. Faculty, staff, and students are committed to promoting a caring, Christian environment that supports transformational learning, academic integrity, open communication, and personal and professional growth among the diverse members of our academic community. We respect the civil expression of divergent perspectives. Civility is the art of treating others, as well as ourselves, with respect, dignity, and care. Civility is apparent when we are sensitive to the impact that our communications, practices, and behaviors have on others, and when we acknowledge each person's self-worth and unique contributions to the community as a whole.

As members of the Mental Health Counseling program, we are committed to learning and practicing in ways that allow every individual to develop their full potential to lead lives of meaning and purpose. The following are examples of how we create and sustain civility.

Support the autonomy and just treatment of self and others by facilitating an open, respectful, and caring environment.

- Accept responsibility and accountability for one's own behavior when interacting with students, faculty, and staff.
- Respect and protect the rights and property of others.
- Speak and behave in a manner that does not disrupt or interfere with the learning or work of others.
- Model personal and academic integrity and expect it from others.
- Demonstrate respect for others by actively discouraging prejudice, bias, bigotry, violence, coercion, or intimidation against any member of the academic community.
- Demonstrate a willingness to listen and to hear the perspectives of others.
- Explore controversial issues through open dialogue and respectful deliberation.
- Respect freedom of expression while recognizing that such tolerance does not require agreement with expressed ideas.
- Engage institutional resources and persons to resolve conflict when necessary.

We will not tolerate disrespectful or abusive speech or language in any form of communication including electronic, oral, verbal, or non-verbal. Each community member has the responsibility to foster a safe and supportive learning and work environment. This responsibility can include asking others to stop disrespectful or abusive speech and/or disruptive behavior. Collectively, faculty, staff and students in the School of Mental Health Counseling are responsible for ensuring a safe and supportive learning and work environment.

Professional Associations

Students are encouraged to seek membership in the professional association corresponding to their specialty track.

American Counseling Association: www.counseling.org

International Association of Marriage & Family Counselors <http://www.iamfconline.org/>

American Association of Pastoral Counselors: www.aapc.org/

State Associations

Tennessee Counseling Association <http://www.tncounselors.org/>

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility policies

The Mental Health Counseling Program in conjunction with the Welcome Home Diversity Council, Belmont's interdisciplinary council, is devoted to diversity and inclusion efforts across campus and is focused on enhancing and embedding a culture of inclusive excellence, meeting community members where they are. To facilitate this important work, the Council landed on a new, overarching tagline, the ***Belmont State of Mind: Initiative for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion***. This tagline houses all of the Council's diversity and inclusion initiatives, while featuring other on campus events that are focused on similar outcomes (i.e. diversity and inclusion).

The Belmont State of Mind is inclusive, it's celebratory, it's open-minded and welcoming, it's transparent and honors differences, it challenges ideals and encourages dialogue—these major tenets of the Belmont community have always been in place, the Council is eager to bring them to the forefront. The WHDC is excited to devote its time, effort and resources to recognizing, publicizing and celebrating the Belmont State of Mind throughout campus and encouraging all members of the Belmont community to do the same.

Belmont's definition of diversity is as follows:

"We are all created in the image of God, living as Christ's body on earth with respect to differences that include, but are not limited to, ethnicity, gender identity, race and sexual orientation. The institutional definition of diversity at Belmont is consistent with our mission to engage and transform the world with disciplined intelligence, courage and faith. Our words and actions toward everyone must be embodied with respect, dignity and compassion."

Affirmative Action

A copy of Belmont University's [Affirmative Action](#) policy is available from the Affirmative Action Office at the Office of Human Resources. These policies are upheld within the Mental Health Counseling Program.

Americans with Disabilities Act

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, The Office of Accessibility Services coordinates reasonable accommodations for all students needing assistance at Belmont University. If you need to request an accommodation based on the impact of a disability you should contact your faculty privately to discuss your specific needs and contact the Office of Accessibility Services in Student Affairs at 615-460-6407. Their office is located in the Beaman Student Life Center, Suite 200.

Graduation

Students completing all university and program requirements in the Mental Health Counseling program may apply for graduation and participate in the campus-wide graduation ceremony held December and May each year. It is the student's responsibility to file graduation forms and pay fees by university designated deadlines. Information regarding graduation is available from the registrar's office and our school. Failure to complete the appropriate requirement or forms within the specified deadlines will result in the student being unable to graduate during that semester.

Personal Counseling Services

Counseling is available to all mental health counseling students. Students may schedule an appointment through their Health Portal on MyBelmont or call 615-460-6856. Walk in emergency services are 8:30 A.M. to 4 P.M. in Gabhart 218.

Credentialing and Employment Recommendations

Occasionally students ask professors to serve as references for future employment and credentialing. These requests must be in writing to avoid FERPA violations. Faculty only recommend candidates for licensure if they meet or exceed all state or credentialing agency requirements.

Master's Comprehensive Examination And Assessment Procedures

Key Performance Indicators

The program requires students to take assessments as part of a comprehensive assessment plan. Program objectives lead to Key Performance Indicators that are assessed through a variety of assessments. Each syllabus will indicate specific core assessments. Know these must be passed in order to matriculate in the program.

Professional Dispositions

Students are graded on professional dispositions as described in the rubric below. Students failing dispositions must follow the remediation plans discussed previously in this Handbook.

Student Disposition/Professionalism Rubric

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Subskill	Unacceptable 1	Poor 2	Adequate 3	Good 4	Excellent 5	Score
<i>Attendance and Punctuality</i>	Often misses class and/or is late to over half of classes	Occasionally misses and/or is late to class 25%-50% of time	Attends almost all classes and/or is late under 25% of time	Rarely misses or is late to class 5% of time or less	Never misses or late to class	
<i>Multicultural Sensitivity</i>	Makes racial, ethnic, religious, or sexual jokes or comments; displays inappropriate prejudice even after correction.	Shows lack of acceptance of others even after correction.	Aware of biases and diligently working on skills to overcome them.	Aware of biases, is implementing skills to overcome biases, and learning about social justice.	Working to help others in society through appropriate social justice advocacy.	
<i>Professional Attentiveness</i>	Usually ignores or disrupts instructor, other professionals, and clients; distracted by outside entities	Often ignores or disrupts instructor, other professionals, and clients; often distracted by outside entities	Usually listens to instructor, other professionals and clients; usually free from outside distractions	Almost always listens responsively to instructor, other professionals, and clients and free of distractions	Always listens very responsively to instructor, other professionals, and clients and free from distractions	
<i>Cooperation</i>	Does not contribute or sabotages team efforts.	Contributes little to team efforts.	Contributes adequately to team efforts.	Contributes to a high degree to team efforts.	Contributions to team efforts are beyond what is expected.	
<i>Respect of others/ Environment</i>	Usually creates negative morale by being negative and may even spread rumors about others or use negative communication or gestures	Often creates negative morale by being negative; gossips about others; negative communication or gestures	Usually achieves a balance of being cooperative; demonstrates the courage of one's convictions	Almost always achieves a balance of being cooperative in ways that enhance the class	Always conveys cooperation and leadership that enhances the class; promotes the well-being of others	
<i>Professional Dress</i>	More often than not, dress is unprofessional considering the setting.	Often the dress is unprofessional considering the setting.	On most occasions, dress is professional considering the setting.	Dress is typically professional considering the setting.	Dress is well-thought out considering the context or setting and always appropriate.	
<i>Ability to Handle Stress</i>	Stress affects levels of professionalism and/or emotional intelligence	Often stress affects levels of professionalism and/or emotional intelligence	Usually handles stress in a professional and emotionally intelligent manner	Typically handles stress in a professional and emotionally intelligent manner	Always handles stress in a professional and emotionally intelligent manner	
<i>Wellness</i>	Unable to manage personal care leading to unethical or unprofessional behaviors	Lack of self-care often affects professionalism and/or emotional intelligence	Usually incorporates wellness such that professionalism and emotional intelligence are present	Typically incorporates wellness such that professionalism and emotional intelligence are present	Always incorporates wellness such that professionalism and emotional intelligence are present	

<i>Ability to Receive Constructive Feedback</i>	Constructive feedback affects levels of professionalism and/or emotional intelligence.	Constructive feedback often affects levels of professionalism and/or emotional intelligence.	Constructive feedback is usually handled with appropriate levels of professionalism and/or emotional intelligence.	Constructive feedback is typically handled with appropriate levels of professionalism and/or emotional intelligence.	Always handles constructive feedback in a professional and emotionally intelligent manner.	
<i>Demonstrates Appropriate Boundaries</i>	Student takes over and tries to solve issues that should be handled by faculty or site supervisors.	Student becomes involved in issues outside the scope of the student role and tries to manage other students or their concerns. The student does not make appointments when needed or does not show up for scheduled appointments or cancel them when needed.	The student reports issues that are appropriate but does not try to solve problems for other students or take on a faculty or site supervisor role. Ethical codes are followed. Appointments are made, attended, or rescheduled/canceled if needed.	The student acts professionally, consults ethical codes, and resolves issues with faculty and site supervisors. Other student's issues are not taken on.	The student acts professionally, consults ethical codes, and resolves issues with faculty and site supervisors. Other student's issues are not taken on. Students make appointments and adhere to them or notify others if they cannot report as scheduled.	
Mean Score						

Instructor: _____

Course: _____

Student Signature: _____

Instructor Signature: _____

Signature Page

I _____ hereby certify that I have read
(Print name)

and that I understand the information presented in this *Student Handbook for Clinical Mental Health Counseling*.

(Signature)

(Date)