

Lincoln Christian University  
Masters of Arts in Counseling  
Student Handbook  
2022-2023



### **Mission of the Seminary**

Lincoln Christian University is a Christian higher education community whose mission is to nurture and equip Christians with a Biblical worldview to serve and lead in the church and the world. The principal means we use to accomplish this mission are teaching, learning, leading, and serving through undergraduate and graduate programs offered in one university with four schools: School of Bible and Theology, School of Ministry, School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Professional Studies. The Master of Arts in Counseling is under the School of Professional Studies.

### **MAC Mission Statement [1.N. (1)]**

The Master of Arts in Counseling program seeks to help students integrate a Biblical worldview with current and historical psychological theories, and evidence-based, developmentally sound counseling methods in order to assist students to grow in counseling competencies, spiritual well-being, interpersonal relationships, and personal awareness.

The following are student learning objectives in the Master of Arts in Counseling degree program (MAC):

LCU 1

Demonstrate effective integration of biblical and theological concerns with current counseling and psychological perspectives.

LCU 2

Effectively conduct and communicate graduate-level research in areas related to counseling

LCU 3

Demonstrate the development of a counselor identity in an increasingly diverse world by:

- 1) Demonstrating appropriate clinical counseling knowledge and/or skills;
- 2) Exhibiting personal self-awareness and wholeness;
- 3) Integrating counselor identity into individual identity domains
- 4) Demonstrating involvement in the broader professional counseling community

### **Matriculation Requirements [1.N. (3)]**

In order to enter into the program a student must make application, have a bachelor's degree from an accredited school\*, enter with at least a 2.5 GPA, provide two references, write a statement of why one is seeking this program and do an interview with a faculty member of the MAC program. Once completed the information is reviewed by an admissions committee. Their decision is final and may include acceptance, acceptance with stipulation, or non-acceptance.

- some students may be admitted following the Seminary's Non-Bachelors provision. See catalog for criteria.

### **Nature of Counseling Education and Training**

Due to the nature of the counseling field, MAC students will encounter both sharing and hearing personal information within the class setting. This information is to be treated confidentially. This allows for opportunities of personal growth and empathy among the student body. The level of self-disclosure in a class setting may be a source of personal and emotional disturbance. Students are encouraged to process these emotions with an appropriate source. Professional counseling resources are available and listed on the MAC Group in Canvas.

As students enter their course of study in the MAC program, many find that the journey is one that can offer exciting and meaningful opportunities for personal and professional growth, increased insight, and the ability to make a positive difference in the lives of other people. Nevertheless, students should also be aware that the material covered in any particular course, various experiential exercises, assignments, or clinical experiences, may bring them into a heightened awareness of past or present emotionally charged issues. This dynamic may occasionally produce strong, negative, and even potentially overwhelming responses. If an instructor or staff member observes evidence of this process at any time, he or she will bring it to the student's attention for immediate discussion and consultation. Students are also encouraged to make faculty and staff members aware of strong personal reactions that are related to course materials, assignments, and experiences. If the faculty advisor assesses that these reactions may indicate impairment in the student's ability to competently counsel, she or he will recommend one of several options to the student, including but not limited to the following:

1. to engage in therapy while remaining in the program, with the student reporting overall treatment progress to the Faculty Advisor;
2. to take a leave of absence from the program, with conditions specified by the Dean or Program Director;
3. to withdraw from the program.

The desired result is that all pertinent issues are sufficiently addressed and resolved and a determination made that it is appropriate for the student to continue in a program of study that prepares students to work with people in the capacity of a mental health care provider. Final determinations will be at the sole discretion of the Dean or a designee of the Dean, will be made with the utmost care, and will be made with the student's best interests in mind. Students always have the right to appeal a decision under the Seminary Student Handbook procedures.

Another feature to understand is that as counselors-in-training, a student needs to confine "counseling" to their work either at their clinical training site or under licensed supervision. "Professional counseling" means the provision of services to individuals, couples, groups, families, and organizations in any one or more of the fields of professional counseling. "Professional counseling" includes the therapeutic process of: (i) conducting assessments and diagnosing for the purpose of establishing treatment goals and objectives and (ii) planning,

implementing, and evaluating treatment plans using treatment interventions to facilitate human development and to identify and remediate mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders and associated distresses that interfere with mental health. (IL225ILCS 107-10) This does not preclude a student from a mentoring relationship. Each student is expected to follow ethical guidelines in this regard.

### **Counselor Education Program Faculty**

A full time faculty member's job consists of three parts: teaching, research and scholarly activity, and service to the university and community. Additionally, faculty members serve on committees appointed by the dean, assist the Admissions Department with recruitment, provide supervision and may function as readers on extended research papers.

<b><u>Name, Degree, Licensure</u></b>	<b><u>Position</u></b>	<b><u>Source of Doctoral Degree</u></b>
C. Nolan Thomas, Ph.D, DMin, LCPC	Program Director, Associate Professor of Clinical Mental Health Counseling	Liberty University Philips Graduate Seminary
Kim Baldwin, Psy.D. LCP, LMFT	Clinical Training Coordinator Faculty Coordinator of LCU Counseling and Consultation Center Associate Professor of Clinical Mental Health Counseling	Wheaton College
Denise Houser (PhD Candidate) LCPC, NCC	Assistant Professor of Clinical Mental Health Counseling	Regent University



## Area of Study in Counselor Education Program

### Clinical Mental Health Counseling (Master of Arts – M.A.)

The 60-semester hour CACREP Accredited Clinical Mental Health Counseling program prepares students for counseling positions in various community agencies, such as mental health centers, private counseling agencies, drug abuse centers, centers for counseling the elderly, child protective services, child counseling clinics, family counseling centers, pastoral counseling settings, business, and industry. The degree program provides the opportunity to counsel a broad range of clientele. This degree program meets Illinois course work specifications for state licensure as a professional clinical counselor, as well as licensure standards for many other states. Students planning to pursue licensure outside of Illinois should familiarize themselves with the requirements for that state. Please go to the following links to learn about specific licensure requirements for each state:

#### **Illinois:**

<https://www.idfpr.com/profs/ProfCounselor.asp>

All states:

<https://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/licensure-requirements/state-professional-counselor-licensure-boards>

Although faculty make every attempt to assist students in preparing to meet state licensure requirements, the ultimate responsibility remains with the student. Students planning to seek licensure outside of Illinois should consult with their academic advisor for input on their course schedule

### **Orientation (Section 1. M)**

Each August and January all incoming students into the program will be provided an orientation meeting during which this handbook will be discussed. This will include discussion about the student's ethical and professional obligations and personal growth expectations as those who are in training to be counselors. Requirements for eligibility for licensure will be reviewed. The meeting will also include information on clinical training expectations and self-care.

### **MAC Ethical Guide (1.M) [1.N. (4)]**

The Counseling faculty subscribe to the American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice as the ethical codes governing the professional behavior of students and faculty members. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with these principles and demonstrate them throughout their academic and experiential work. **Failure to do**

**so may result in expulsion from the program.** On the last page you will need to sign that you have read the ACA Code of Ethics and agree to follow them as a student and graduate.

## **Progression and Retention Policies**

### **Progression Requirements (1.M) [1.N. (4) (7)]**

A grade of at least “B” must be maintained for all counseling courses. Students whose grades are below “B” in those classes will be required to repeat the class. By Seminary standards, academic probation occurs when a student in a degree program fails to achieve a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5 (on a 4.0 scale) at the end of any given semester. When that occurs, the Registrar’s Office notifies the student in writing and warns the student that he or she has one semester to improve his or her cumulative grade point average to at least 2.5. If the student does not do so within a semester, he or she is subject to dismissal at the end of the semester. **NO STUDENT WILL BE ALLOWED TO ENROLL FOR CLINICAL INSTRUCTION WHILE ON PROBATION.** Any class failed must be repeated.

Students will be advised by faculty as to their options to successfully progress in their program of study. A counseling course (COUN) may be repeated only once, and only two counseling courses (COUN) may be repeated and the student remain in the program. Only the repeat grade is used in GPA determination. In addition, a grade of (I) or incomplete may prevent you from progressing further in the program.

Progression is also measured by results gained from students taking the Counselor Education Comprehensive Exam. The test will initially be taken within the first semester of entrance into the program and then in the final month of their participation in the program prior to graduation. This evaluation is a requirement of the program but is also helpful to graduates in knowing how to prepare for the National Counselor Exam.

### **Remediation**

#### **Academic and Clinical Setting: (1.M.)**

The counseling faculty is dedicated to producing legal, ethical, and professional counselors. Counseling students who in some way do not meet the expectation for legal, ethical and/or professional practice will be remediated using a Student Progress Form (SPF). The counseling faculty implementing the SPF will address such areas as knowledge, workmanship, communication/expression, applications, self-control/maturity, relationships, ethical practice and clinical practice. Students may generate a letter of response. Remediation may include (a) expectations of the student, (b) specific behaviors required of the student, both on campus and/or at practicum/internship sites, (c) remediation tasks that faculty will implement to support the

student's success, (d) consequences the student faces for not successfully addressing the expected tasks and engaging in the required behaviors.. The remediation process can be detailed in the following steps: (a) A faculty member identifies areas of concern regarding a student's professional disposition, academic or clinical work. These concerns will be separate from "normal" developmental progression of students. In fact, the faculty member will identify specific behavior(s) which are problematic and connect those behaviors to competencies expected by the faculty of students. (b) Faculty will then list specific remediation activities related to each task or behavior of concern. (c) Students will be an active participant in this process and will receive formative feedback from a specific faculty member to integrate into their behavior to remedy the areas of concern. (d) The student has an opportunity to review the SPF, clarify issues, ask questions, and bring concerns to the faculty prior to signing the document agreeing to the SPF. (Steps a-d will be completed in coordination with the student's site supervisor as necessary) (e) . Failure to follow a SPF may impact advancement within the program. However, certain violations (ethical violations specifically) may be grounds for immediate dismissal from the program, and the remediation process and SPFs are superseded in these cases.

### **Program Curriculum (1.M.)**

All MAC students are required to complete the Theology/Ministry Core classes, Pre- Practicum Core Classes-STEP ONE, Internship Core Classes-STEP TWO, remaining Core Classes, Elective Coursework, and Clinical Instruction to ensure that they develop a professional counselor identity and master the knowledge and skills to practice effectively. Students are advised to follow their prescribed course of study and check with their advisor before taking classes not listed on their appropriate course of study.

### **Transition Points (1.M.) [1.N. (4)]**

Transition Points (TP) are used as gate-keeping points by the counseling faculty. The faculty takes seriously their responsibility to produce ethical and professional counselors who can work with a myriad of populations. The transition points at which students are formally assessed include (a) prior to entry to the program (TP I), (b) prior to admission to practicum (TP II), prior to admission to internship (TP III), and (d) prior to program completion (TP IV). The assessment strategies used within each transition point are detailed below.

	<b><u>Counselor Education Program</u></b>
<b>TP I –</b>	<b><u>Knowledgeable Scholar</u></b> Official transcripts (undergraduate & graduate work) Undergrad. GPA (min 2.50)



<p><b>Admission to Program</b></p>	<p><b><u>Collaborative Scholar</u></b> Faculty Interview <b><u>Required once admitted</u></b> CECE Entrance Exam</p>
<p><b>TP II – Admission to Practicum</b></p>	<p><b><u>Knowledgeable Scholar</u></b> Successful completion of COUN 663, 602, 810, 662 and Pre-Practicum Comprehensive Exam Criminal Background Check</p> <p><b><u>Skilled and Collaborative Scholar</u></b> OAS score of 3 or better for COUN 602 (Minimum Competency Evaluation)</p>
<p><b>TP III – Admission to Internship</b></p>	<p><b><u>Knowledgeable Scholar</u></b> Successful completion of COUN 668, 666, 760, 807, and 804. Recommend GPA of 3.0 inclusive of Theology/Ministry core and within 6-9 hours of completion</p> <p><b><u>Skilled Scholar</u></b> Successful completion of COUN 892</p>
<p><b>TP IV – Program Completion</b></p>	<p><b><u>Knowledgeable Scholar</u></b> Recommend GPA of 3.0 Exit Exam-CECE</p>

	<p><b><u>Skilled Scholar</u></b>          Successful completion of          COUN 890</p>
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### **Professional Development**

In order to meet the CACREP professional development standard (4G) each student will be reviewed quarterly by MAC Faculty and scored as met or unmet on the following key professional dispositions: Psychological Fitness, Cultural Sensitivity, Ethical Soundness, Dependability, and Flexibility.

Should there be an area scored as unmet, the student will first be contacted by their advisor for clarification and available options at that time. Subsequent scores that do not meet standards may require further remediation up to and including dismissal. See Faculty Review of Student Progression below

### **Statute of Limitations**

The program suggests that students complete the program within a five year period however there is no time limit when one must complete the program. Students need to be aware should they step out of the program for extended times that there is the possibility of standards changing and earlier course work not being accepted as they do not meet the newer standards.

### **Ongoing Assessment (1.M)**

In addition to the transition points detailed above, students submit work from various courses as they progress through the program, illustrating their knowledge of counseling professional identity issues, professional practice issues, and program area standards. Rubrics are provided on the Canvas platform for each class. As part of the continuous assessment process, the student's advisor reviews submissions to assess if the submission has (1) unmet (2) met or (3) exceeds in the quality of writing, knowledge and understanding of concepts and application of concepts areas of the assignment. Advisors will send email to the student regarding any issue with their OAS to suggest further area of study, review or any suggestions to improve. Prior to enrolling in COUN 890 or COUN 892, ongoing assessments must be up-to-date and each of the assessment rubrics must reflect that the student has met the requirement for submissions up to that point or has met the recommended remediation process. The following table displays the ongoing assessment schedule of assignments. Please contact your instructor for additional clarification.

<u>Course</u>	<u>Ongoing Assessment Submission*</u>
COUN 807	Diagnosis and the Change Model

COUN 804	Final Exam
COUN 810	Application of Ethical Decision-Making Model to Case Study
COUN 760	Multicultural Research and Project Plan
COUN 666	Grow Your Own Human Project
COUN 668	Project: Group Therapy Research and Plan for a Specific Population
COUN 751	Integrated Career Case Study
COUN 602	Videotape Demonstration of Basic Listening and Attending Skills
COUN 663	Integrated Counseling Theory
COUN 667	Test Battery for Fictitious Client
COUN 662	Case Scenario- Diagnostic Application
COUN 892	Final Evaluations- Professional Identity Paper
COUN 890	Final Evaluations- Verbatim or Case Presentation
COUN 601	Poster Presentation

\*Exact titles for OAS may vary from published handbook

The faculty uses the data from ongoing assessment, as well as data collected from practicum and internship sites, graduates of the program, and other stakeholders of the program to evaluate major aspects of the counseling programs and to inform program modifications. The results of these systemic program evaluations, including details of any program modifications, are made public.

### **Faculty Review of Student Progression (1.M.)**

In addition to the Transition Points, and as part of the ongoing assessment, the faculty meets quarterly to review every student in the program's progression. The faculty considers this meeting an important aspect of gate-keeping and professional development. Along with the review of OAS material the faculty will also be assessing students Professional Disposition. The following chart enumerates those areas being reviewed and the policy regarding its use.

#### **Professional Disposition Policy**

The purpose of the professional disposition process is to both assist future counselors in developing characteristics that will enhance their practice in the profession and provide the program with a gatekeeping measure to ensure that students who graduate from the program have developed along professional lines.

The MAC Faculty will use the following metric to review students on a quarterly basis.

Disposition	Definition	Met	Unmet
Psychological Fitness	Demonstrates appropriate level of self-awareness, engages in self-care, demonstrates empathy, aware of own motives and values, aware of unfinished		

	emotional business and or mental health concerns and works toward resolving them		
Cultural Sensitivity	Embraces diversity, honors others as worthy of respect, values service to oppressed and disenfranchised.		
Ethical Soundness	Demonstrates honesty and genuineness		
Dependability	Is reliable, and is timely with assignments and faculty communication		
Flexibility	Demonstrates openness to feedback by listening and incorporating feedback into future work, able to tolerate ambiguity, able to adjust to changes		

A copy of this metric will be included in the MAC Student Handbook which will be available for review as follows:

- a. The MAC Student Handbook will be on the website for individuals interested in the program.
- b. It will be emailed to admitted students for review.
- c. It will be reviewed as a part of the orientation meetings.
- d. The program will receive the signature pages from the handbook stating that the Professional Disposition and other areas in the handbook have been read and agreed to by the student.
- e. A copy will be kept in the MAC Group on Canvas which is available to all current students and updated at least yearly.

Procedurally the MAC faculty will meet quarterly to review each student in the program using the Professional Disposition metric. The outcome is dependent upon the number of areas unmet at any particular review and the severity of the issues involved.

1. Students who meet all areas will be sent a note at the end of the school year acknowledging their continued growth.
2. Students who have an “unmet” score will meet with their advisor after the quarterly review to discuss the score and allow the student to provide a response. After the conclusion of the discussion the advisor will send an email review of the discussion to the student and copy the Program Director who will make a copy and place it in the students file.
3. If there is a second “unmet” score, the student will meet with their advisor and a Professional Disposition Form (PDF) will be completed. A copy of that form is provided to the student, advisor, and Program Director who will keep a copy in the student’s file.
4. If there is a third “unmet” score, the student will meet with the advisor, review the previous PDF and either affirm or rewrite a new PDF. A copy is provided to the student, advisor, and Program Director and is filed in the student’s file.
5. If there is a fourth ”unmet” core, the MAC Faculty will jointly consider the following possible options and the student will be informed by their advisor of the option chosen:
  - a. Consider another PDF

- b. Require a break from the program for at least one semester to allow student to evaluate continuance in the program. Return to the program will depend on a written self-analysis and actions taken to address the issue noted and the student will enter with an eight week probationary status. Should the student gain another “unmet” in the initial eight week period following return, the student may be dismissed from the program
- c. Require ongoing counseling and remain in the program with no “unmet” scores within the next two scoring cycles. Students will also need to provide evidence from their counselor of the number of sessions attended within each eight week cycle. Should the student gain another “unmet” score in the two following cycles, the student may be dismissed from the program
- d. Require a semester break from the program while involved in counseling. Students will also need to provide evidence from their counselor of the number of sessions attended during the semester break. Students will re-enter with an eight week probationary status. Should the student gain another “unmet” in the initial eight week period following return, the student may be dismissed from the program
- e. Discuss the possibility of changing programs within the seminary. Responsibility for program change lies with the student and will require acceptance by the new program
- f. Dismiss the student from the program

If a student disagrees with the MAC Faculty’s decision, they may appeal to the Dean of the Seminary and follow the appeal guidelines as noted in the published catalog for that year. See also Academic Appeals Policy on page 16 of this handbook.

Students will be contacted by their faculty advisor should there be a concern in any either the OAS or disposition areas.

### **Incompletes**

According to Seminary standards students need to submit to the instructor all work necessary for completion of an Incomplete (I) grade not later than 30 days following the close of the class unless otherwise approved. Please review the Seminary catalog for specific information covering when to request an incomplete, proper forms and fees. Do note that if work is not completed with the 30 days, the grade automatically becomes an F.

### **AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION PUBLICATION STYLE**

The counselor education program faculty requires that all papers written for counseling courses conform to American Psychological Association (APA) publication style (<http://apastyle.apa.org>). The current edition of the Publication Manual of the American

Psychological Association is a required text for the MAC program. During the duration of the program instructors assist students in becoming fluent in the use of APA style. Students are encouraged to retain a copy of the Publication Manual as a reference throughout their coursework in the program. Instructors may allot a portion of grades on assigned papers to conformity to APA format. All papers presented for grading must be in Word.doc and be written in 12 point Times New Roman font unless otherwise specified by the professor of the class. One exception to the rule for following the current APA writing manual is that the program does not allow the use of footnotes on student papers.

### **ADVISOR ASSIGNMENT (1.P)**

A faculty adviser is assigned to each degree-seeking student upon admission to the program and before enrollment in the first counseling (prefix COUN) course. The student is expected to consult with the adviser immediately after entering the program and as needed during progression through the program. Advisers will also serve as mentors to students. Consultation with an adviser is required for addressing questions and concerns about the program that are not addressed in this Master of Arts in Counseling Student's Handbook, the Graduate Catalog, or the Schedule of Classes. Consultation with the student's academic advisor is also required prior to registration for classes each semester. Other occasions may arise when adviser consultation is required or desired. When in doubt about any issues or concerns about your program of study or progress in the program that cannot be answered by program or university print resources, consult your adviser.

### **Exclusion to Services**

Due to the fact that MAC faculty staff and supervise the LCU Counseling and Consultation Center, students who are currently enrolled in the MAC program, or any Seminary student with a Pastoral Care and Counseling specialization, or students who have been provisionally admitted to the program from the undergraduate school for the purpose of taking MAC courses will be unable to utilize the on campus counseling services for therapy services. Students in these programs may seek an initial assessment in the counseling center but will be referred to local mental health providers in compliance with the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics

### **Counseling Services (Section 1.H.)**

Should a student be in need of counseling services they may consider one of the following.

1. They may feel free to contact and work with a previous counselor from their home area if available.
2. They may go for one evaluation and referral session with a counselor in training at the student counseling center on campus.

3. They can search for an available counselor in the region by using this web site:  
[http://therapists.psychologytoday.com/rms/?utm\\_source=www&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_campaign=right\\_find\\_therapist](http://therapists.psychologytoday.com/rms/?utm_source=www&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=right_find_therapist)
4. They may contact any of the following. These are also listed in the MAC Group folder for future reference.

Lincoln Pastoral Counseling Services  
 1700 North Jefferson Street  
 Lincoln, IL 62656  
 (217) 732-6225

Heartland Christian Counseling  
 1520 E College Avenue #M  
 Normal, IL 61761  
 (309) 261-6831

Living Hope Counseling Center  
 3000 Lenhart Road  
 Springfield, IL 62711-9203  
 (217) 698-7150

Christian Psychological Associates  
 3716 West Brighton Avenue  
 Peoria, IL 61615-2938  
 (309) 692-7755

Decatur Psychological Associates  
 3040 N University Ave #2  
 Decatur, IL 62526-1393  
 (217) 872-1700

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY [1.N. (4)]**

As a Christian university that places a high priority on honesty, integrity, and a Biblical commitment to truth, Lincoln Christian University will treat incidents of cheating, plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty very seriously. Penalties may include the failure of the assignments involved, requirement of additional work, failure of the course, academic probation (with special conditions imposed), suspension from school, or dismissal from school. The first three penalties may be imposed by the course instructor. The last three may be imposed only by the Academic Dean.

A student's first violation of this policy may receive no penalty beyond that imposed by the course instructor. A second violation will result in the student being placed on academic probation under conditions to be specified by the Academic Dean in addition to any penalties imposed by the course instructor. A third violation will result in immediate dismissal from the University.

Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to submitting someone else's work as one's own, failing to document appropriately quoted material or others' unique ideas, using sources not permitted to complete a test or assignment, lying, or other types of unethical behavior in fulfilling academic requirements. Students with any question about what is appropriate should consult with their instructors.

The following provides the MAC program specific guidelines regarding plagiarism.

1. As per the university policy, the Dean of the seminary will be informed of the act of plagiarism and a copy of the student's work will accompany the report.
2. Per the Student Guidelines for Practicing Academic Integrity, the following definition is provided for plagiarism:
  - using the exact language of someone else without the use of quotation marks and without giving proper credit to the author
  - presenting the sequence of ideas or arranging the material of someone else even though such is expressed in one's own words [paraphrased or summarized], without giving appropriate acknowledgement
  - submitting a document [in part or in whole] written by someone else but representing it as one's own

Within the MAC program we further define plagiarism as using three or more words from a source without citation.

### **ACADEMIC APPEALS POLICY [1.N. (5)]**

Students may appeal an academic decision to the respective professor, and if not acceptable may appeal to the Dean of the Seminary. Such appeals over academic decisions may include disputes over assigned grades, other individual faculty decisions and requirements, or institutional requirements and decisions. When the matter involves the decision of a faculty member, the student is encouraged to discuss the matter first with that faculty member, whenever possible, before making any appeal. These processes should be followed as usual with the exception that any appeal that contains information about any other student must have that information adequately redacted to prevent identification. It is recommended that the student submitting the grievance should consult with one of the MAC professors in the redaction process to ensure appropriate level of confidentiality.



## ENDORSEMENT POLICY [1.N. (6)]

At various times students require an endorsement (verbal or written recommendation) from their program in order to gain employment or credentials. A graduate will be endorsed by counseling faculty only for a position or credential for which the graduate has been prepared. Practicum/ Internship site supervisors also are urged to follow this policy. FERPA offers the following guidelines:

Writing a letter of recommendation may require express, written permission from the student to allow the faculty member

- 1) to access the student's educational records and
- 2) to disclose confidential information about the student to a third party.

A faculty or staff member may access a student's educational records without the student's express written permission only if specific job duties, such as the duties of an academic advisor, require access to those records. However, a faculty member, or any other appropriate University official, may not disclose confidential information from a student's educational records to a third party without express, written permission from the student. It is recommended that before writing a letter of recommendation that contains confidential information i.e. (grades, GPA, class rank, etc.) that the faculty member is provided the student's written permission to specifically release this information to a third party.

Students should be aware of this policy and seek endorsement only for employment and credentials for which the relevant program has been completed. If the student chooses to complete the requirements for additional programs, she/he will be endorsed for those programs as well.

Faculty will not complete a recommendation letter without a signed copy of the "Request for Faculty Reference" on file. Document can be found on the LCU home web page under Student Resources.

## PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING ORGANIZATIONS [1.N.(2)]

MAC Counseling students **are required** to be members in the American Counseling Association (ACA). Students are encouraged to join Chi Sigma Iota (the counseling honorary society) at large and other professional organizations. LCU offers an ACA student chapter that meets on campus periodically during the fall and spring semesters. Faculty encourages participation in professional associations by helping arrange transportation to conferences, encouraging student presentations at these meetings, and providing mentoring. There are also many seminars in the area that Faculty encourages participation in. There are many benefits to be derived from membership in professional organizations including:

- receiving professional publications.
- being entitled to reduced membership rates and reduced registration rates for professional meetings.
- becoming eligible for member services such as professional liability insurance, legal defense fund, library resource use, and so forth.
- having a method of involvement with activities and issues directly or indirectly pertinent to their profession.
- becoming affiliated with other professionals having interests and areas of expertise similar to the students.
- maintaining currency in the knowledge, practice, and research findings in the field.

Students are also invited to join the Illinois Counseling Association (<https://www.ilcounseling.org/default.aspx>)

**Special Note: On the next pages you will be signing a statement of understanding and acknowledgment. You are also now provided electronic access to this document which is found on Canvas once you sign in and can be found under Community Groups: Master of Arts in Counseling.**

**Your signature also documents that you acknowledge that you are subject to the changes in the document and are responsible for keeping current with most recent form of the handbook as posted on Canvas in MAC Group.**

**Lincoln Christian University**  
**COUNSELOR EDUCATION PROGRAM**  
**Understanding and Acknowledgment (1.N.)**

(This form must be signed for placement in each counseling program student's file.)

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (student name), have received or downloaded and read the Masters of Arts in Counseling Student Handbook from Lincoln Christian University and understand that I am responsible for the information presented therein and updated versions of this handbook as they appear.

I understand the policies and procedures as stated in the Handbook. I agree to fulfill the requirements as stated and to abide by the policies set forth herein.

I understand that it is solely my responsibility to meet the requirements of the Master of Arts in Counseling as outlined in the LCU Seminary Catalog.

I further understand that the faculty of the Lincoln Christian University Counselor Education Program has the right and responsibility to monitor my academic progress, my professional ethical behavior, and my personal characteristics and, based on that monitoring, to make decisions about my standing in the counseling program—whether I will continue without restriction, will continue with restriction and/or remediation, or will withdraw from the program. I understand that remediation can include the requirement of personal counseling that I undertake at my own expense.

I understand that success in the sequence of clinical courses, including but not limited to COUN 602, 668, 892, 890, and 894 requires some skills different from those required for success in didactic courses; thus, success in didactic courses does not guarantee success in clinical courses. I also understand that the sequence of clinical courses involves the demonstration of increasingly complex counseling competencies and, consequently, that success in earlier course(s) in the sequence does not necessarily indicate success in later course(s) in the sequence.

I understand and acknowledge that neither the Lincoln Christian University nor the Counselor Education Program will provide or pay for my legal counsel in the event I am sued for malpractice (Initial: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_) while doing my counseling practicum, internship, or other related laboratory experiences, nor will the University pay damages or other costs incurred by me in the event I am found liable (Exceptions may apply). I hereby agree to provide proof of malpractice insurance throughout my clinical training in counselor education and notification of any changes in my insurance coverage. I will hold the Lincoln Christian University harmless in the event I am sued and found liable. I further understand that if I am in a clinical site and need

to continue outside of the normal semester time line that I will need to change my insurance coverage from student to professional for that time period.

I understand and agree to the conditions of this document. Any breach of this agreement constitutes grounds for being removed from the counseling program. I also understand the program's retention policy and am clear that there are certain behaviors that, if violated, will supersede this agreement and may result in immediate removal from the program (e.g., ethics violations).

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print name \_\_\_\_\_

### **Potential Risk Statement**

Due to the nature of their positions, it is possible that the faculty of the MAC program may have interacted with a MAC student in a clinical setting either as the student's therapist or as a supervisor of the student's therapist. Any information obtained during these clinical situations will remain in confidence with that particular faculty member. However, information and interactions that occur during the course of the student attending the MAC program will be considered covered under FERPA guidelines but not under clinical confidentiality restrictions. Students in this situation are advised that the faculty members will have evaluative roles as MAC faculty and there is a small, though real, risk of interactions with faculty having a negative impact on previous therapy. If you have concerns about your particular situation, please contact the faculty member with whom you have interacted clinically prior to beginning your coursework in the MAC program. We look forward to your participation with us and endeavor to provide a safe and ethical environment for your personal and professional growth. By signing this statement, I acknowledge that I understand the potential risk to any previous therapy I may have had with the LCU MAC Faculty prior to attending the LCU MAC program.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Signed form will be filed in student record)*

*(Revised 4-12-2018)*

I have read and agree to follow the current ACA Code of Ethics.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_