



# PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING HANDBOOK

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*PREPARING STUDENTS TO BECOME LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS*

*\* All policies & procedures contained in this handbook are subject to change at any time and without prior notice. Last modified: May 29, 2018.*

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**Introduction**

Amberton University is designed exclusively for the mature, working adult who seeks to benefit from the richness of a relevant, educational experience. The adult who attends Amberton University will find the atmosphere similar to that of professional schools of law, medicine, and engineering. At Amberton University, the student is exposed to a diverse group of working adults who share interests and ideas. Amberton University's desire is to equip its students with the practical knowledge, tools, and character necessary to cope effectively in the situations and challenges that lie ahead. In short, Amberton University educates for lifelong learning.

**Professional Counseling Program Description**

The Master of Arts in Professional Counseling is designed for persons interested in becoming Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in the State of Texas. The degree prepares graduates to work with individuals, couples, families, and groups in community, social service, religious, and private practice settings. The curriculum is comprised of sixty (60) graduate hours and includes a minimum of 300 practicum hours. ***No student may enroll in a practicum course without completing all other degree requirements.***\*\* Students who complete the program meet the academic requirements for becoming Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC) in the State of Texas.\* ***The PROGRAM is offered in the campus-based, classroom, lecture mode only; however, some classes are offered via distance learning.***

**The minimum requirements for a Master of Arts in Professional Counseling are:**

- 24 semester hours applicable to the degree must be completed at Amberton University.
- 60 semester hours for a degree.\*\*\*
- A minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 is required.

\* **PLEASE NOTE:** *Students who complete the Amberton University Master of Arts in Professional Counseling meet the academic requirements for becoming Licensed Professional Counselors in the State of Texas. However, according to the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors, a graduate degree and*

***graduate coursework that was awarded or earned more than 10 years prior to applying for licensure may not be used to fulfill the requirements. Students should carefully review the current state requirements for changes and updates. The Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors provides clear guidelines and requirements to apply for a new licensure. Questions regarding licensure should be directed to the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors. [http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/counselor/lpc\\_apply.shtm](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/counselor/lpc_apply.shtm).***

- \*\* In preparation for student selection of a practicum site for the practicum field experience, counseling faculty recommends that students begin familiarizing themselves with counseling opportunities available in the mental health community early in the program. Volunteering at a community agency that provides mental health services is an excellent way to learn about services that are offered and sometimes leads to a practicum site later when the student is ready to make a selection.
- \*\*\* As of August 1, 2017, the LPC Board and the state of Texas has increased the semester hours required for new Licensed Professional Counselors in the state of Texas to 60 semester hours. Amberton University has increased the hours for the MA in Professional Counseling to 60 hours so that graduates will meet State of Texas guidelines concerning the academic requirements for LPC licensure.

**M.A. PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING DEGREE PLAN**

**I. Required Graduate Studies: 3 hours**

RGS6035 Theory & Application of Research Methods..... 3 hours

**II. Major Requirements: 54 hours**

CSL6740 Counseling Ethics ..... 3 hours  
 CSL6780 Professional Counseling..... 3 hours  
 CSL6782 Theories & Methods in Counseling..... 3 hours  
 CSL6765 Crisis Counseling ..... 3 hours  
 CSL6801 Life Span Development..... 3 hours  
 CSL6796 Adult & Geriatric Psychopathology & Treatment ..... 3 hours  
 CSL6803 Career Counseling & Guidance ..... 3 hours  
 CSL6800 Counseling Assessment..... 3 hours  
 CSL6798 Child & Adolescent Psychopathology & Treatment ..... 3 hours  
 CSL6805 Group Counseling & Therapy..... 3 hours  
 CSL6825 Marriage & Family Therapy..... 3 hours  
 CSL6770 Advanced Counseling Ethics ..... 3 hours  
 CSL6832 Multicultural Counseling ..... 3 hours  
 CSL6760 Addiction Counseling ..... 3 hours  
 CSL6830 Advanced Counseling Skills & Techniques ..... 3 hours  
 CSL6839 Pre-Practicum Professional Counseling ..... 3 hours  
 CSL6840 Practicum I..... 3 hours  
 CSL6845 Practicum II..... 3 hours

**III. Counseling Elective: 3 hours**

**Totals: 60 hours**

**Course Schedule Recommendations**

Students may take courses in any order with the exception of CSL6839, CSL6840, and CSL6845. The counseling faculty of Amberton University recommends the following progression of courses.

Course	Lecture Course	DL Course
<b>TIER ONE</b>		
RGS6035 Research Methods	✓	✓
CSL6740 Counseling Ethics	✓	✓
CSL6780 Professional Counseling	✓	✓
CSL6765 Crisis Counseling	✓	✓
<b>TIER TWO</b>		
CSL6782 Theories & Methods of Counseling	✓	✓

CSL6803 Career Counseling & Guidance	✓	✓
CSL6825 Marriage & Family Therapy	✓	
CSL6832 Multicultural Counseling	✓	✓
CSL6805 Group Counseling & Therapy	✓	
CSL6801 Life Span Development	✓	✓

<b>TIER THREE</b>		
CSL6800 Counseling Assessment	✓	✓
CSL6796 Adult/Geriatric Psychopathology & Treatment	✓	
CSL6798 Child/Adol. Psychopathology & Treatment	✓	
CSL6830 Advanced Counseling Skills & Techniques	✓	
CSL6760 Addiction Counseling	✓	✓

<b>TIER FOUR (all courses must be taken sequentially in TIER FOUR)</b>		
CSL6839 Pre-Practicum	✓	
CSL6840 Practicum I	✓	
CSL6845 Practicum II	✓	

<b>CSL Elective List (will be updated as new courses are developed)</b>		
CSL6720 Christian Counseling		✓
CSL6730 Family Life Ministry		✓
CSL6779 Counseling in Schools	✓	✓
CSL6833 Counseling Children and Adolescents	✓	✓
CSL 6835 Play Therapy	✓	

### Course Descriptions

Current course descriptions are available in the University's Catalog. The catalog is available on the University's website:

<https://www.amberton.edu/current-students/forms/index.html>

### CSLInfo on the Amberton FTP Site

The counseling faculty of Amberton University has provided study guides for the majority of the counseling courses required for a degree in Professional Counseling on the FTP Site. Students may access the site online through the Student Portal or by going to <ftp://ftp.amberton.edu>.

## Professional Counseling Portfolio

Students will also find documentation regarding the Counseling Portfolio. The necessary paperwork for Practicum I and II can also be found in the cslinfo folder on the FTP Site. If any student has difficulty locating or accessing the folder, please contact a member of the Counseling Faculty, Student Services, or Tech Services for assistance.

This course provides an assessment of one's learning in the field of professional counseling. Students complete homework, lead classroom discussions and examine topics designed to prepare them for entrance into the Practicum stage of their preparation. Students prepare for Practicum I and II by completing activities such as making application for Practicum, completing a simulated interview, and developing a thorough case study.

Note: The course will be comprised of both professional counseling and marriage and family therapy degree seeking students. Therefore, learning opportunities and primary issues pertaining to family and couples therapy will also be addressed.

## Selecting a Practicum Site

Professional Counseling Students are responsible for obtaining their own practicum site(s). The Counseling Faculty recommends students begin looking for possible practicum opportunities no later than during their Tier Three courses (listed on page 3 of this handbook). It is suggested that the practicum site be obtained by the end of CSL6839 Pre-Practicum; it is mandatory that the practicum site be finalized by the first meeting of Practicum I. The practicum site must provide a "professional counseling" opportunity, and therefore, counseling in elementary, junior high (middle), and high schools will not count towards Professional Counseling Practicum hours unless pre-approved by the counseling faculty. Often students obtain practicum sites by volunteering in organizations that employ mental health professionals prior to the practicum experience. A mental health professional licensed in the state of Texas must be available to supervise the student on the selected practicum site. **Students may not meet existing or potential counseling clients on the premises of Amberton University for any reason.**

Students who desire for their practicum experience to occur in a hospital setting should have the hospital submit contract materials to the Amberton University Business Office for review to determine if arrangements can be made between the facility and Amberton University no later than the beginning of the session in which they enroll in CSL6839 Pre-Practicum.

The list below is a sample of previous practicum sites used by Amberton Professional Counseling students. This list is not inclusive of all practicum sites used by Amberton students and should not be considered a guarantee of a practicum site by the agencies listed below. Applications, vitas, and interviews are generally required when applying for a practicum site.

Allen Counseling Associates  
Allen, TX

Sigma Counseling  
Carrollton, TX

Regenesis Counseling Center  
Cleburne, TX

Christian Works for Children  
Dallas, TX

The Gaston House  
Dallas, TX

Salvation Army Domestic Violence  
Dallas, TX

Suicide Crisis Center  
Dallas, TX

Soul Care  
Fort Worth, TX

Frisco Counseling and Wellness  
Frisco, TX

New Beginning Center  
Garland, TX

Children's First Counseling  
Grand Prairie, TX

Hope Strategies  
Lewisville, TX

Hope's Door  
Plano, TX

Paris Counseling Center  
Paris, TX

Family Connections Counseling  
Colleyville, TX

Contact Crisis Line  
Dallas, TX

Metrocare Services  
Dallas, TX

Southwest Behavioral Systems, Inc.  
Dallas, TX

Timberlawn Mental Hospital  
Dallas, TX

Sundance Behavioral Healthcare  
Fort Worth, Arlington, Garland TX

Galaxy Counseling  
Garland, TX

Zoom Counseling  
Garland, TX

Grace Counseling  
Lewisville, TX

Hope and a Future  
Midlothian, TX

ROCA Counseling  
Richardson, TX

## Lab Fee for Practicum I/II

There is a lab fee for enrollment in Practicum I and Practicum II. The fee associated with each course can be found in the current edition of the Amberton University Schedule of Classes.

## Calculating Practicum Hours

During Practicum I and II, all students are required to maintain a log of practicum hours accrued. The hours are divided into three areas: Client Contact, Supervision, and Administrative. Client Contact is the time spent with clients either as the therapist or as a participant/observer of a therapy session and must total a minimum of 100 hours for both Practicums I and II. While Client Contact hours can be obtained via telephone or web-cam, at least half of the required hours **must** be face-to-face. Supervision is the time spent with the Supervisor of the practicum experience. Typically, Supervision involves discussing client issues and assisting the practicum student with any questions regarding counseling techniques or problems. Administrative hours involve the completion of paperwork, attendance of counseling CEU courses or lectures, counseling conferences, and Amberton University class time. Hours can only be accrued during the enrollment periods of the session and between sessions if Practicums I and II are taken without a break between



session enrollments and if the practicum site approves the hours. (i.e.: If a student were enrolled in Practicum I during the spring session, took the summer session off, and enrolled in Practicum II during the fall session, practicum hours would **not** count between the end of the spring session and the beginning of the fall session. However, if a student enrolls in Practicum I for the summer session and Practicum II for the fall, hours acquired between the sessions would count toward practicum hours as long as the practicum site allows such hours.) **Students may not meet existing or potential counseling clients on the premises of Amberton University for any reason.**

Per state licensing requirements, a minimum of 300 total hours must be completed by the end of Practicum II. Below is the recommended breakdown for the minimum amount of hours:

**Practicum I**

30-40 Client Contact Hours (or more, if possible)  
10 Supervision Hours  
60-70 Administrative Hours  
+ 40 Administrative Hours (Amberton Class Time)  
150 Total Hours

**Practicum II**

60-70 Client Contact Hours  
10 Supervision Hours  
30-40 Administrative Hours  
+ 40 Administrative Hours (Amberton Class Time)  
150 Total Hours

**Graduation**

The fee and Application for Graduation must be submitted no later than the second Saturday of the session in which the student anticipates graduation to occur. The application can be located on the Amberton University website ([www.Amberton.edu](http://www.Amberton.edu)) or picked up at Student Services. The Graduation Fee can be found in the current Schedule of Classes.

Students who have applied for graduation during the fall and spring sessions should receive a letter by week five of the session in which the application for graduation has been submitted regarding the purchasing of regalia and other key dates to note for the graduation ceremony to be held at the end of those sessions.

## **Obtaining a Second Degree**

Upon completion of your initial degree, students who wish to obtain an additional degree at Amberton must complete and submit the “Request for Second Degree” form found on the Amberton University website and consult the current Academic Catalog for complete details.

## **Beyond Graduation**

*If the NCE WAS taken and passed prior to graduation*, graduates must submit a completed Score Verification Request and an official sealed transcript showing conferral of degree to the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC). (The request form is available at [www.nbcc.org/Exams/ScoreVerification](http://www.nbcc.org/Exams/ScoreVerification).)

Upon successful verification of the NCE, graduates will be able to submit an application for temporary licensure. Included with the application, graduates must also submit, the practicum documentation form (provided the last class of Practicum II), proof of passing the NCE, proof of passing the Jurisprudence Exam, the supervisory agreement form, official sealed graduate transcripts from all universities attended, and the application processing fee.

*If the NCE was NOT taken prior to graduation*, graduates must submit a completed TEXAS Licensure Examination Registration form, an official sealed transcript showing conferral of degree, and the exam fee to the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC). Processing of the registration form takes approximately four weeks from the time the exam fee has been processed. After notice is received that registration is complete, graduates will then be able to schedule the NCE by following the directions given by the NBCC and AMP (the testing service).

Upon successful completion of the NCE, graduates will be able to submit an application for temporary licensure. Included with the application, graduates must also submit, the practicum documentation form (provided the last class of Practicum II), proof of passing the NCE, proof of passing the Jurisprudence Exam, the supervisory agreement form, official sealed graduate transcripts from all universities attended, and the application processing fee.

Note: Official transcripts with conferral of degree are typically available 2-3 weeks after the last day of the session in which the degree was completed.

## **Professional Counseling Portfolio**

For Sample Professional Counseling Portfolio please see the current Portfolio Information folder on the ftp found at <ftp://ftp.amberton.edu/csinfo>

## **Professional Counseling Forms**

For Professional Counseling Forms please see the current Professional Counseling Forms folder on the ftp found at <ftp://ftp.amberton.edu/csinfo>

## References

- National Board for Certified Counselors, P.O. Box 77699, Greensboro, NC 27417-7699, 336-547-0607, [www.nbcc.org](http://www.nbcc.org)
- Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors, Texas Department of State Health Services, Mail Code 1982, P.O. Box 149347, Austin, TX 78714-9347, 512-834-6658, [www.dshs.state.tx.us/counselor/](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/counselor/)
- Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists, Texas Department of State Health Services, Mail Code 1982, P.O. Box 149347, Austin, TX 78714-9347, 512-834-6657, [www.dshs.state.tx.us/mft/](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mft/)