Field Experience Manual

School of Counseling

Counseling Masters’ Programs

MS in Addiction Counseling
MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling
MS in Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling
MS in School Counseling
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# Contents

Section 1. Introduction .................................................................................................................... 1  
Using this Manual ....................................................................................................................... 1  
School of Counseling .................................................................................................................. 1  
What Is Field Experience? .......................................................................................................... 3  
School of Counseling Office of Field Experience ....................................................................... 4  

Section 2. Securing Field Experiences............................................................................................ 6  
Site Search Resources ................................................................................................................. 6  
International Students .................................................................................................................. 7  
Field Experience at Place of Employment .................................................................................. 8  
Field Experience at Multiple Sites .............................................................................................. 9  
Home-Based Counseling ............................................................................................................ 9  
Off-Site Counseling ................................................................................................................... 10  
On-Site Supervision .................................................................................................................. 10  
Applying for Field Experiences ................................................................................................ 13  
Approval of Field Experience ................................................................................................... 17  

Section 3. Requirements of Field Experience ............................................................................... 18  
Field Experience Readiness ....................................................................................................... 18  
Field Experience Requirements ................................................................................................. 19  
Practicum Requirements ........................................................................................................... 20  
Internship Requirements ........................................................................................................... 23  
Supervision Requirements ......................................................................................................... 26  
Recording and Alternative Assignment Policy ......................................................................... 27  
Documentation of Field Experience .......................................................................................... 28  
Unfinished Field Experiences .................................................................................................... 29  
Continuing Field Experience Between Quarters ....................................................................... 31  
Time Off During Field Experience ........................................................................................... 31  
State Licensure Requirements ................................................................................................... 32  

Section 4. Additional Policies ....................................................................................................... 34  
Evaluating Student Competency ............................................................................................... 34  
Social Media .............................................................................................................................. 34  
State Licensure and Accreditation ............................................................................................. 34  
Verification of Field Experience Hours for Licensure .............................................................. 37  
Sharing of Sensitive Information .............................................................................................. 37  
Conflicts During Field Experience ............................................................................................ 38  
Exceptions to Field Experience Policies ................................................................................... 39  
Walden University Student Handbook ...................................................................................... 40  

Appendix A. Field Experience Terms .......................................................................................... 41  
Appendix B. Skills and Student Development FAQs ................................................................. 43
Section 1. Introduction

Using this Manual

This manual is designed to help students understand the requirements and policies for their required field experiences. Section 1 contains an introduction to field experiences within the counseling masters’ programs¹ at Walden University, Section 2 provides information about securing appropriate field experience sites, Section 3 contains detailed information about the practicum and internship requirements, and Section 4 describes important additional policies related to field experiences.

All students are expected to read this manual in detail and adhere to the policies included within. All students must acknowledge that they have read and understand all the policies in this manual prior to applying for a field experience. This confirmation occurs in the New Student Orientation as well as at pre-practica, and in the field experience application process. Failure to comply with the policies within this manual is considered a violation of Walden University’s Code of Conduct and Student Professional Conduct Policy and may result in formal sanctions, including, but not limited to, award of a failing course grade, Code of Conduct inquiry, and dismissal from the university. See the Walden University Student Handbook for details.

Information about all field experience procedures, including forms and manuals, is published on the School of Counseling Office of Field Experience (SOC-OFE) website. The Field Experience Manual and the SOC-OFE website are designed to work as companions—the Field Experience Manual outlines field experience policies, and the manual provides detailed information about procedures. Students need to be familiar with information provided in both places.

School of Counseling

Mission

The School of Counseling prepares competent and confident master’s level professional counselors and doctoral-level counselor educators and supervisors to address current counseling and educational needs of diverse and multicultural populations across environments and to provide prevention and intervention strategies for maintaining current and future mental health and wellness. Faculty and administrators are committed to preparing adult learners to be scholar-practitioners, advocates, and leaders who promote positive social change worldwide on both the individual and systemic level. Students are mentored in a technologically advanced milieu by a global faculty community of doctoral-level scholars with a breadth of personal and professional experiences and expertise. Graduates will be equipped with knowledge of contextually and

¹ Walden University’s MS in Addictions Counseling; MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling; MS in Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling; and MS in School Counseling will be collectively referred to as the “counseling masters’ programs” throughout this manual.
culturally relevant applications and skills that enhance their abilities to ethically practice in a myriad of settings.

**Vision**

The School of Counseling uses technology and innovation to give people who aspire to change the world access to a quality counselor education. The School of Counseling has adopted a conceptual framework to represent the anticipated outcomes related to student learning and skills.

Figure 1 identifies that the school is working to develop confident and competent counseling professionals who will be self-aware individuals, agents of social change, scholar-practitioners, and professional ambassadors. Students and graduates will be able to demonstrate their ability to be lifelong learners in the field as well as to be culturally adaptive and ethical in their practice.
What Is Field Experience?

According to the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), field experience (or professional practice) provides for the application of theory and the development of counseling skills and professional identity under direct supervision. These experiences provide opportunities for students to counsel clients who represent the cultural and contextual diversity of their community. Field experience consists of a practicum (one term) and a consecutive internship (two terms) experience.

Practicum

The practicum is the first experiential training component of field experience. Practicum is defined by CACREP as a “distinctly defined, supervised clinical experience in which the student develops basic counseling skills and integrates professional knowledge.” The intention of practicum is to provide an opportunity for students to orient themselves to professional practice and begin working directly with clients while under the supervision of a licensed practitioner.

Internship

The internship field experience is completed after the student has fulfilled the practicum requirements. According to CACREP, internship is “a distinctly defined, post-practicum, supervised ‘capstone’ clinical experience in which the student refines and enhances basic counseling or student development knowledge and skills, and integrates and authenticates professional knowledge and skills appropriate to his or her program and initial postgraduate professional placement.” The intention of internship is to build on the foundational experience of the practicum and synthesize knowledge, skills, and dispositions as a competent and confident counseling professional.

Supervision

Supervision is a tutorial and mentoring form of instruction in which a supervisor monitors students’ activities during practicum and internship and facilitates the learning and skill development experiences associated with them. The supervisor monitors and evaluates the clinical work of students while monitoring the quality of services offered to clients. The types of required supervision are as follows:

- **Individual Supervision**—a tutorial and mentoring relationship between a member of the counseling profession (supervisor) and a counseling student.
- **Triadic Supervision**—a tutorial and mentoring relationship between a member of the counseling profession (supervisor) and two counseling students.
- **Group Supervision**—a tutorial and mentoring relationship between a member of the counseling profession (supervisor) and more than two counseling students.

To learn more terms used to describe field experiences, see Appendix A.
School of Counseling Office of Field Experience

Mission
In alignment with the missions of Walden University, the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, and the Center for Global, Professional, and Applied Learning, the School of Counseling Office of Field Experience (SOC-OFE) serves all counseling programs by working with adult learners to apply their developing skills as scholar-practitioners in culturally and contextually diverse opportunities. The SOC-OFE additionally supports adult learners in the development of their identities as agents of social change and as competent and confident counseling professionals.

Vision
In alignment with the visions of Walden University, the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, and the Center for Global, Professional, and Applied Learning, the SOC-OFE directs diverse opportunities for adult learners to demonstrate their skills of inquiry, discovery, and professional practice. The SOC-OFE is motivated to assure peak educational quality, integrity, and customer service as well as leading the capstone processes. The SOC-OFE envisions a global scope of practice resulting in competent and confident counseling professionals being agents of social change upon graduation.

Personnel
The SOC-OFE consists of an academic team (field experience academic coordinators) as well as an operations team (field experience operations director and coordinators, based in Walden’s Minneapolis office—often referred to collectively as “the field office”). The director of field experience oversees both SOC-OFE teams.

Director of Field Experience
The director of field experience is a full-time administrator for the School of Counseling. This individual is responsible for all field experience curriculum development (i.e., practicum and internship courses) and all the administrative duties of the SOC-OFE for the counseling programs. The director of field experience is responsible for overseeing all policy and procedural changes in the SOC-OFE; supervising the field experience operations director, field experience operations coordinators, and field experience academic coordinators; scheduling site supervisor and student orientations; and facilitating the remediation process for field experience issues. The director of field experience also collaborates with program, school, college, and university leadership for all counseling programs and interfaces with Walden’s Center for Global, Professional, and Applied Learning, which includes providing routine reporting and data collection.

Field Experience Academic Coordinators
Field experience academic coordinators are Walden faculty members who support the faculty supervisors and student application processes for the counseling programs. Field experience academic coordinators work with the director of field experience to develop and implement field experience policies and procedures for the counseling programs, are responsible for approving
students’ field experience site and site supervisor selections, and serve as the primary course leads for the practicum and internship courses.

**Field Experience Operations Director**

The field experience operations director, working closely with the director of field experience, is responsible for the operations of the SOC-OFE in Minneapolis. This individual provides guidance and supervision to the field experience operations coordinators, implementing and assuring compliance with policy and procedural changes in the SOC-OFE, and maintaining Web-based and written materials. The field experience operations director collaborates with departments across the university, including academic advising, the Registrar’s Office, and Walden’s Center for Global, Professional, and Applied Learning, ensuring the SOC-OFE complies with university policies and procedures, and providing routine reporting and data collection.

**Field Experience Operations Coordinators**

Field experience operations coordinators are Walden staff members who act as the main point of contact for students on matters related to the field experience. The field experience operations coordinators work with the director of field experience, field experience operations director, and field experience academic coordinators to assist students in the field experience process.

**Communicating With the SOC-OFE**

The field experience operations coordinators handle the first line of communication for the SOC-OFE. Field experience operations coordinators are available via e-mail, live chat, or by telephone appointment. Current contact information for the field experience operations coordinators is available on the SOC-OFE website. Communication is responded to in the order in which it is received; students should expect to receive a response to e-mail and voicemail communication within 2 business days. Students can schedule individual telephone appointments with the field experience operations coordinators on the SOC-OFE website.

Students should be mindful of the Code of Conduct and other conduct policies when communicating with the SOC-OFE, as with all parties within the university. Violation of these policies (i.e., inappropriate or excessive communication, lack of response to communications from the SOC-OFE) may warrant a Code of Conduct inquiry, which can result in sanctions (see “Student Conduct and Responsibilities” in the Walden University Student Handbook for details).

**Meditrek**

Meditrek, a product of HSoft Corporation, is a user-friendly online tool that is used by the SOC-OFE for the documentation of field experiences. Students, faculty, and site supervisors are provided with login credentials and are required to use Meditrek throughout the field experience process. See the SOC-OFE website for detailed information about Meditrek.
Section 2. Securing Field Experiences

All counseling students are required to complete a practicum and an internship consisting of a practice under the supervision of a Walden-approved site supervisor in a setting appropriate for their program of study. Students are encouraged to complete their practicum and internship field experiences at the same site and/or within the same organization whenever possible. Students are expected to begin searching for field experiences at least 12 months before the expected start of the field experience and apply by the application deadline posted on the SOC-OFE website, which is approximately 3 months prior to enrollment in the practicum or internship.

Each of the programs has specific clientele requirements, (e.g., couples/families, addiction, mental health, school, etc.). When selecting a field experience site, it is imperative that students schedule a face-to-face appointment or at least participate in a telephone interview with potential site supervisors to ensure that the site and site supervisor fit the requirements of their program (see Section 3 of this manual for detailed information about requirements). Students should discuss the type of counseling experience they can expect to receive at the site (e.g., client population served, supervision policies and procedures, how clients are assigned) and ensure that the site supervisor will meet the field experience requirements. Students are encouraged to provide a link to the Site Supervisors section of the SOC-OFE website to prospective site supervisors for information about the program and site supervisor requirements.

Important note: There are no field experience requirements specific to program specializations. For example, MS-CMHC students who are in the Military Families and Culture specialization are not required to work with military clients.

Site Search Resources

Walden University uses its best effort to assist students in locating appropriate field experience sites. As students are in the best position to identify an appropriate field experience site that meets their particular learning objectives and location, students are responsible for locating and securing their field placement(s). The SOC-OFE does provide a variety of resources for students on the SOC-OFE website, including:

- Field Experience Student Checklist that includes the actions recommended for students to take throughout the program to ensure success in finding a field site.
- “Marketing Yourself for Counseling Field Experience Opportunities” webinar
- Internet resources to generate ideas for possible field sites
- Useful information to provide to prospective field sites
- Curriculum vita (CV)/resume and portfolio guidance and resources
- Link to Walden’s Career Services Center
• Database of current Walden University affiliation agreements in Meditrek

**Assistance With Securing a Field Experience Site**

In the event students have difficulty in securing an appropriate field site, the SOC-OFE has supports available to assist them. Information about the support process is available on the [SOC-OFE website](#) under “Site Search Resources.”

If students feel they have utilized the resources provided on the [SOC-OFE website](#), and have still not been able to secure a field site, additional targeted support is available. Students who feel they need additional support to secure site may contact the SOC-OFE ([counselingfield@mail.waldenu.edu](mailto:counselingfield@mail.waldenu.edu)) to request additional assistance. Students are required to complete the *Field Experience Site Contact Record* (available on the [SOC-OFE website](#)) to demonstrate their outreach efforts. Students must be able to demonstrate that they have made at least 3 good faith attempts to contact someone at each of at least 10 sites prior to contacting the SOC-OFE to request additional support in securing a field site.

**Important note:** Inability to locate an appropriate site and/or site supervisor will not result in an alteration or extension of any university deadlines.

**International Students**

Students are required to complete their field experience in their country of citizenship or in a country that they are legally permitted to work. Walden University is not authorized by the USCIS to process student visas for non-U.S. citizens to complete field experiences in the United States. Non-U.S. citizens may not enter the United States for purposes of completing a Walden University field experience in any other visa category such as visitor or on business. Non-U.S. citizens currently in the United States on an H, L, or other non-immigrant work visa should consult their immigration attorney to determine whether their visa category permits them to work at an internship site. Hours of work performed in an improper status will not be counted toward the field site hour requirements.

**Important note:** Students are required to complete their field experience in their country of citizenship or in a country in which they are legally permitted to work. Walden University is not authorized by the USCIS to process student visas for non-U.S. citizens to complete field experiences in the United States. Non-U.S. citizens may not enter the United States for purposes of completing a Walden University field experience in any other visa category such as visitor or on business. Non-U.S. citizens currently in the United States on an H, L, or other non-immigrant work visa should consult their immigration attorney to determine whether their visa category permits them to work at an internship site. Hours of work performed in an improper status will not be counted toward the field site hour requirements.
Field Experience at Place of Employment

According to CACREP, students are allowed to complete a field experience (practicum and/or internship) in their current place of employment. There are two distinct means by which students may complete their field experience at their work site:

1. The exact employment position is used to fulfill the field experience requirements. In order to use this option, all of the following must be true:
   a. The employment position must be obtained by the student for the sole purpose of fulfilling field experience requirements for your program at Walden University.
   b. The employment position must be a master's level counseling position.
   c. The student must be employed in the position for a period of no more than 6 months prior to the start date of the field experience.
   d. The agency, as student’s employer, shall be responsible for any actions that may arise out of or in connection with performance of any duties by a student during the field experience.
   e. The student’s work supervisor must also serve as the field experience site supervisor.

2. The employment position is completely separate from the field experience, including:
   a. The field experience duties and tasks must be clearly focused on providing a new learning experience for the student.
   b. The work space for the field experience must be located in a different department/unit from where the student currently works or has previously worked.
   c. The site supervisor must not be the same person who supervises the student in any other situation either currently or in the past.
   d. The field experience and employment positions must occur during completely separate working hours, and the hours must be documented.
   e. The student must work with different clients as an employee from those they work with as a field experience student.
   f. The field experience duties and tasks must be significantly different from current or previous employment activities performed by the student at the site.

The student and the site supervisor are responsible for outlining the role of the student as a practicum student/intern as it differs from the student as an employee of the organization.

For additional details on the procedures for applying for field experiences with the student’s place of employment, see the SOC-OFE website.

Important notes:
- Students who hold leadership positions may not be approved to complete a field experience at the site due to potential conflict between their roles as employee and student.
• Students will be required to submit a current job description if they are using their exact employment position to fulfill field experience requirements.

Field Experience at Multiple Sites

Requests to work with up to two field sites concurrently are subject to approval at the university’s discretion. Students who plan to work with more than one site concurrently for a field experience must include this request as part of their application submission, in compliance with all deadlines and other field experience policies.

Students requesting to work with two field sites will be required to:

• Provide the rationale for working with multiple sites, if requested.
• Describe the specific activities that will take place at each site in the Meditrek application.
• Receive at least 1 hour of continuous weekly supervision by the Walden-approved site supervisor at each site where direct hours are accrued each week. Students must have supervision with at least one site supervisor in any given week.

For additional details on the procedures for applying for field experiences with multiple sites, see the SOC-OFE website.

Home-Based Counseling

Starting in the Spring quarter of 2019, internship students will be permitted to provide counseling services to clients in their homes if all of the following requirements are met:

• The Walden-approved site supervisor or site-approved designee will accompany the student anytime a student is in the home of client. Students are not allowed to enter the home or provide home-based services without the Walden-approved site supervisor or site-approved designee.
• Services are provided in a home with no known history of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, or active substance abuse, and/or where a member of the household has a felony record for a violent crime (murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault).
• The site supervisor or designee assesses each home for safety by identifying an appropriate space for sessions, and establishes ground rules with clients or, in the case of minor clients, guardians prior to the students going into the home.
• The site supervisor ensures the student is provided with safety training and the crisis protocol of the site.
• The student satisfactorily completes the Walden Home-Based and Community-Based Safety Training prior to beginning the field experience.
Important note: At least 120 of the 240 direct hours required for internship must be accrued on-site (i.e. not in clients’ homes).

Off-Site Counseling

Students can be approved to work off-site—at sites that are directly and contractually affiliated with the approved site (e.g., prisons, schools, satellite offices)—as long as the Walden-approved site supervisor or site-approved designee is on site at all times while the student is seeing clients, and the counseling services are provided in a private, confidential setting.

Important notes:
- Students cannot conduct counseling sessions in public settings (e.g., libraries, restaurants).
- Walden University students are prohibited from transporting clients.

On-Site Supervision

Walden-Approved Site Supervisor

All students in all field experiences must identify a site supervisor that meets the Site Supervisor Credentials and Requirements and who will fulfill all of the Site Supervisor Responsibilities listed below. This individual must be listed as the site supervisor on the Meditrek application and be formally approved by the SOC-OFE. Any changes to the Walden-approved site supervisor must be approved in advance by the SOC-OFE.

Site Supervisor Credentials and Requirements

Site supervisors for all counseling masters’ students must possess the following qualifications:

- A minimum of a master’s degree, preferably in counseling or a related profession.
- Relevant certifications and/or licenses for independent practice in the state, district, or province where the student is completing the field experience (see Accepted Licenses).
- A minimum of 2 years of pertinent professional experience post master’s degree in the program area in which the student is enrolled.
- Knowledge of the program’s expectations, requirements, and evaluation procedures for students.
- Relevant training in counseling supervision and, when applicable, holds the required supervisory credentials in the state, district, or province where the student is completing the field experience.2
- Employed by the field site (full-time, part-time, contractor, etc.).

2 The School of Counseling offers a free course in counseling supervision that prospective site supervisors may complete to meet this requirement. See the SOC-OFE website for detailed information.
### Important notes:
- Site supervisors and students cannot have multiple role relationships. See *Multiple Roles in Supervisory Relationships*, below.
- Site supervisors will NOT receive payment for supervision from the student or the university.

### Accepted Licenses
- Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) or Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC) – preferred.
- Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)
- Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT)
- Licensed Clinical or Counseling Psychologist

### Important note: Licensed master’s level mental health professionals not mentioned on the Accepted Licenses list may be approved to supervise counseling students provided that they have the required 2 years of clinical experience.

### Site Supervisor Responsibilities
Site supervisors are responsible for the following:
- Providing a mentoring relationship and an educational opportunity to assist counseling work as well as to orient the student into the profession.
- Providing at least 1 continuous hour of individual or triadic (a maximum of one additional student) supervision each week of the quarter (i.e., Weeks 1–11). Group supervision cannot be substituted for the individual or triadic on-site supervision requirement.
- Reviewing and accepting the student’s field experience application in Meditrek and completing additional documentation in Meditrek as required to complete the application process.
- Completing a site supervisor orientation prior to the start of the student’s field experience.
- Reviewing the required audio or video recordings and associated transcripts or fulfilling an alternative observation method, as determined by the director of field experience.
- Completing evaluations of the student in Meditrek by the designated deadlines and assisting with the completion of other program documentation (e.g., Individual Field Experience Plan and time log).
- Attending a mid-quarter teleconference “site visit.”
- Corresponding with the university instructor in biweekly communication (if applicable) or as needed to coordinate supervision efforts to support the student.
- Remaining on site at all times while the student is seeing clients, for the safety and welfare of the clients and students; or
• Assigning a site-approved designee that meets School of Counseling program requirements to be on site in the event that the Walden-approved site supervisor is not available when the student is seeing clients.

**Site-Approved Designee**

A designee can be approved by the Walden-approved site supervisor for the sole purpose of providing supervision to students seeing clients when the site supervisor is not on site. The Walden-approved site supervisor must fulfill the remaining Site Supervisor Responsibilities listed above.

**Site-Approved Designee Credentials and Requirements**

- A minimum of a master’s degree, preferably in counseling, or a related profession.
- A minimum of 2 years of pertinent professional experience post master’s degree in the program area in which the student is enrolled.
- Employed by the field site (full-time, part-time, contractor, etc.).

**Temporary Site Supervisor**

A temporary site supervisor may need to be identified if the Walden-approved site supervisor is temporarily out of the office. The temporary site supervisor will assume all of the duties of the Walden-approved site supervisor during his or her absence (see Site Supervisor Responsibilities above). Students are permitted to work with a temporary site supervisor for no more than 2 weeks. If the absence is longer than 2 weeks, the student must go through the formal application process to have a new site supervisor approved. There is no formal application process for approving a temporary site supervisor, but the temporary supervisor must meet the Site Supervisor Credentials and Requirements listed above, and the student must provide specific information about the temporary supervisor to the faculty supervisor and the SOC-OFE before seeing clients under the supervision of the temporary site supervisor.

**Examples of situations where temporary site supervisor may be needed:**

- Vacation
- Short-term medical leave
- Bereavement leave

**Multiple Roles in Supervisory Relationships**

Multiple role relationships in supervision occur when a counselor is in a professional role with a supervisor and at the same time is in another role with the same supervisor. It is essential for counselors to refrain from entering into multiple role relationships. The establishment of clear role boundaries between site supervisor and student increases the likelihood of objective and appropriate supervision. The counseling masters’ programs adhere to the American Counseling Association (ACA) standards and best practices regarding multiple role relationships. The current *ACA Code of Ethics* requires that one avoid supervising close relatives, romantic
partners, and friends. Students also cannot be approved to complete field experiences at sites where they hold leadership positions.

**Important note:** Walden School of Counseling faculty will not be approved as site supervisors for Counseling field experiences.

### Applying for Field Experiences

Students must receive approval from the SOC-OFE for enrollment in field experiences. The application process is multi-faceted and includes all of the following:

- Site supervisor qualifications
- Academic quality of field experience
- Site appropriateness for student’s program
- Student eligibility
- Field experience documentation
- Field site affiliation agreement and onboarding requirements

All field experience applications are submitted in Meditrek. A link to the Meditrek website, as well as information about application submission windows, application instructions, and materials are available on the [SOC-OFE website](#). Field experience applications must be submitted in accordance with the policies and procedures described on the website. Students are responsible for reviewing all deadlines and procedures for submitting applications. Failure to comply with policies and procedures may result in rejection of the application, delay of the field experience, postponement of degree conferment, and/or Code of Conduct inquiry.
Application Review Process Overview

- **Secure Field Site**
  - Use Site Search Resources
  - Complete field site's application process

- **Prepare to Submit**
  - Complete/obtain required documentation
  - Secure Professional Liability Insurance
  - Complete Clinical Work Sample (if required)

- **Submit Application**
  - Submit application in Meditrek
  - Submit Clinical Work Sample (if required)

- **SOC-OFE Review**
  - Review for fit with program requirements
  - Secure Affiliation Agreement with Field Site
  - Perform Eligibility Audit
  - Review Clinical Work Sample (if required)
  - Approval decision

Students can view the status of their application at any time throughout the process in Meditrek. Detailed information about the application process, including the application status, is available on the SOC-OFE website.
**Important notes:**

- Students must monitor their Walden e-mail accounts closely during the application review period to ensure that they are able to respond to requests for additional information within the timeframes provided.

- Students are informed of application submission windows at numerous points throughout the program, so unawareness of the field experience application submission window is not a sufficient reason for granting an extension.

- Submitting a petition is not a guarantee of acceptance of an application. It is not uncommon for a petition to be denied based on timing.

- Submission of the application does not guarantee acceptance or approval of the application.

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**Eligibility Audits**

Operations coordinators complete eligibility audits for each student at multiple points during the application process to make sure all field prerequisites have been successfully completed. To be eligible to begin field experience, all of the following must be true:

1. **Clinical Work Sample** is satisfactorily completed (if applicable).
2. Student Support Plan (Student Development, Skills, Academic Integrity) is satisfactorily completed (if applicable).
3. All prerequisite courses and residencies/pre-practica are satisfactorily completed.

If any of the above items are not complete by 2 weeks prior to the start of field experience, the field experience will be delayed to the following quarter. Students can view the status of their application, including the details of their Eligibility Audit any time in Meditrek.

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**Field Site Affiliation Agreements**

The Field Site Affiliation Agreement is an agreement between the university and the field site that addresses the responsibilities of the student, the field site, and the university with regard to a field experience. A fully executed affiliation agreement must be on file with a field site before students will be enrolled to begin a field experience at the site. An affiliation agreement is not and cannot be a replacement for a supervision contract.

If (as in most cases), Walden does not already have an agreement on file for the counseling programs for the student’s chosen field site, the SOC-OFE operations coordinator will contact the site after the student submits the field experience application to establish a new agreement. The student will provide contact information for the appropriate individual at the field site for the purpose of negotiating an affiliation agreement. The appropriate signatory is determined by the site (an individual with authority to bind the field site, such as an agency director, contract administrator, or an individual from the field site’s legal office). It may be appropriate for a site supervisor who is also the agency owner or director to sign the agreement; however, in most cases, the site supervisor will not have the legal authority to sign on behalf of the agency or site.
Students must ensure that the appropriate party is identified on their application to avoid delays in the application process.

Walden has a standard Field Site Affiliation Agreement that most sites are able to sign as-is, eliminating the need for an often lengthy negotiation process. Some sites, however, need to make revisions to Walden’s standard agreement or have their own agreements that they prefer to use instead of signing Walden’s Field Site Affiliation Agreement. In these cases, the operations coordinator will send the document to the Office of Applied Learning Agreements (OALA), which is part of Walden’s Center for Global, Professional, and Applied Learning, for review by Walden’s contract administrators. Agreement negotiations are managed by OALA and the field site’s contracts/legal department. The SOC-OFE operations coordinator will keep the student abreast of updates as they are received.

New affiliation agreements must be submitted to Walden’s Office of Applied Learning Agreements (OALA) no less than 5 weeks prior to the start of the quarter; petitions requiring submission of an agreement beyond this point cannot be approved. If review of the agreement is required by OALA, the field experience may be delayed. The affiliation agreement must be complete and fully-signed by 2 weeks prior to the start of field experience, or the field experience will be delayed.

**Professional Liability Insurance**

CACREP requires all graduate counseling students to obtain professional liability insurance prior to beginning a field experience. Students are required to maintain active professional liability insurance throughout the duration of the field experiences. Walden University requires all field experience students to secure coverage limits of at least $1 million per incident and $3 million aggregate. **Students must obtain their own professional liability insurance policy, even if they are covered by their site’s insurance policy.** For further information, see the [SOC-OFE website](#).

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**Important note:** Students in the M.S. in School Counseling program are encouraged to join the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) for their professional development. The liability insurance included with ASCA student membership does not, however, meet Walden’s requirements for professional liability insurance. Students in this program will need to ensure additional supplemental insurance or find another insurance provider to meet the coverage requirements.

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**Site Onboarding Requirements**

The counseling masters’ programs do not require students to submit a criminal background check or evidence of immunizations. Some organizations where students are seeking to fulfill their field experience hours may have these or other requirements. Students should be prepared to address any onboarding requirements with the field site. All requirements must be complete no less than 2 weeks prior to the start of the field experience.
Approval of Field Experience

Field experience applications shall be approved pending only prerequisite coursework no later than 2 weeks prior to the start of the field experience. Prerequisite coursework should be satisfactorily completed 2 weeks prior to the start of field experience; operations coordinators will complete the final review of students’ records to ensure that they have received passing grades in prerequisite coursework during the week prior to the term start. All other requirements must be complete and approved in Meditrek no less than 2 weeks prior to the start of the field experience, including any student support plans, required skills coaching, application documentation, affiliation agreements, and any onboarding required by the field site. Students must also ensure that they are eligible for registration (in active status with the university with no holds preventing registration) no less than 2 weeks prior to the start of the field experience. Applications submitted, or requirements met less than 2 weeks prior to the start of field experience may not be approved and students may not be permitted to participate in field experience that term.
Section 3. Requirements of Field Experience

Field Experience Readiness

To be eligible to participate in field experience (both practicum and internship), students must:

- Be actively enrolled in the university and in good academic standing.
- Have completed all core coursework, in accordance with the appropriate program of study (students must complete practicum prior to internship).³
- Have satisfactorily completed Pre-practicum 1 and Pre-practicum 2 or Residency 1 and Residency 2.
- Have a formal evaluation of counseling skills completed by program faculty within 2 years of the start of the field experience (see Clinical Work Samples).⁴
- Have satisfactorily completed any student support plan(s), when applicable.⁵
- Receive a formal approval letter from the SOC-OFE for the current field experience.
- Complete the Field Experience Student Orientation.
- Carry individual professional liability insurance for the duration of enrollment in field experience.
- Be able to commit fully to the requirements of the field experience.

To be eligible to participate in field experience, students must not:

- Drop or withdraw from prerequisite coursework immediately prior to enrollment in a field experience course.
- Earn a U or I grade in prerequisite coursework immediately prior to enrollment in a field experience course.
- Plan time off for vacations or other commitments during enrollment in field experience.
- Make any changes to field experience plans (including site and/or site supervisor) without approval of the SOC-OFE.

³ An audit of the student’s record will be completed during the first week of enrollment in the practicum. If all prerequisites are not complete, the student will be dropped from the practicum course.
⁴ Skills are formally evaluated at Academic Residencies, in the Techniques of Counseling course, Field Experience courses, and/or with Clinical Work Samples.
⁵ Faculty members and program leadership reserve the right to postpone practicum clinical instruction to evaluate and establish student competency. Please refer to Section 4, Appendix B, and the Counseling Student Program Guide for more details on the issue of student competency.
Clinical Work Samples

Clinical work samples are required of any student who has not satisfactorily participated in an academic practice experience (residency/pre-practicum or field experience course) for longer than two years. The current *ACA Code of Ethics* mandates that all counselor educators evaluate students’ academic and professional development continuously throughout the program. Please refer to the current *ACA Code of Ethics* for further information. Detailed instructions for submission of clinical work samples are available on the [SOC-OFE website](#).

Field Experience Requirements

The current CACREP standards require that field experiences (both practicum and internship) abide by the following:

- Students are covered by individual professional counseling liability insurance policies while enrolled in practicum and internship (see [Professional Liability Insurance](#)).
- Plan to participate on-site and in the field experience course each week throughout the entire length of the field experience course, regardless of when hourly requirements are complete.
- Supervision of practicum and internship students includes program-appropriate recordings and/or live supervision of students’ interactions with clients (see [Recording and Alternative Assignment Policy](#)).
- Formative and summative evaluations of the student’s counseling performance and ability to integrate and apply knowledge are conducted as part of the student’s practicum and internship.
- Students have the opportunity to become familiar with a variety of professional activities and resources, including technological resources, during their practicum and internship.
- In addition to the development of individual counseling skills, students must lead a counseling or psychoeducational group during the internship (the counseling masters’ programs require at least 10 hours of group counseling during internship).

**Important note:** Students, especially those participating in field experiences in the winter or summer quarters, need to be mindful of site schedules, as there are often periods of time when sites are closed (vacations, holidays, etc.). CACREP requires full participation in every week of enrollment in each field experience. Vacations and “breaks” are not permitted to be scheduled during active enrollment in a field experience. Taking a break during field experience can subject a student to an unsatisfactory grade. Students should consult with faculty for any unavoidable exceptions (e.g., scheduled closings).

Completion of Field Experience Hours

- All direct client contact hours must be completed at the approved site, and the approved site supervisor or designee must be on site at all times that the student is seeing clients.
• Direct client contact hours can include counseling over the phone (e.g., supportive counseling until the client can be seen in person); however, **telephone counseling cannot be the primary source of counseling hours.** Students who are making phone calls to clients for scheduling and other administrative purposes cannot count these hours as direct client contact hours. Telephone counseling needs to take place on-site with the approved site supervisor or designee present. Students should not manage calls of any kind off-site (e.g., crisis hotlines, cell phones, etc.).

• Co-counseling is acceptable so long as the student has a significant level of involvement; students who continue to co-counsel must direct the predominance of those sessions as they advance in internship.

• Case management, strict behavioral modification, and crisis counseling (e.g., crisis hotline, suicide diversion intervention that occurs outside of a traditional counseling session) do not align with the training and curriculum of Walden’s counseling programs and will not count toward direct client hours. Substance abuse counseling will count toward less than half of the direct client hours except for the MS in Addiction Counseling program. Academic advising will not count toward direct client hours for any program other than the MS in School Counseling program.

• Students cannot begin accruing hours toward the field experience prior to the start of the quarter.

• Students must have the State Education Specialization added to their programs if additional term(s) or credits of field experience are required for licensure in their state. Students are responsible for reviewing state board requirements to determine whether additional terms or credits are required.

• Students can continue to work with clients at their sites between quarters as long as they continue to receive weekly on-site supervision from their Walden-approved site supervisor. However, hours completed between practicum and the first internship term and any excess practicum hours accumulated while in the practicum course cannot be counted toward the hourly requirements for internship. All requisite hours must be earned by the end of the academic quarter. Students should inform their instructors about continuing their work at the field site (see **Continuing Field Experience Between Quarters** so arrangements can be made for faculty supervision as needed during this time.

**Practicum Requirements**

**General Practicum Requirements**

The academic term consists of 11 weeks. Participation in practicum must begin during Week 1 and is expected through the full duration of Week 11, regardless of the accumulation of hours or completion of other course requirements. Students must participate weekly at the practicum site throughout the entire term in which they are enrolled. Students may not plan to complete the practicum in less than 11 weeks, and they should not plan time off during the field experience for vacations or other professional or personal obligations. If the bulk of required hours are completed early, students must continue to see at least one client per week throughout the
duration of the term to ensure that they are able to meet coursework and weekly supervision requirements.

In addition to the requirements listed under the Field Experience Requirements, the current CACREP standards require that students completing practicum experiences do the following:

- Complete supervised counseling practicum experiences that total a minimum of 100 hours over a full academic term that is a minimum of 10 weeks
- Complete at least 40 hours of direct service with actual clients that contributes to the development of counseling skills (see Program-Specific Hourly Requirements)
- Complete at least 15 hours of group supervision from their faculty supervisor during each quarter of enrollment in practicum
- Complete at least 11 hours of individual and/or triadic supervision from their Walden-approved site supervisor during each quarter of enrollment in practicum (at least 1 hour of individual or triadic supervision during each week of enrollment)

**Program-Specific Practicum Hourly Requirements**

**MS in Addiction Counseling**
The MS in Addiction Counseling practicum consists of 100 hours of clinical field experience, including at least 40 hours of direct counseling. At least 21 of the direct client contact hours must be devoted to individual addiction counseling. Students may engage in supervised couples, family, and/or group addiction counseling as part of the practicum, as long as the 21 direct individual addiction counseling hours are satisfied. Students must also earn a minimum of 15 hours of group supervision from their faculty supervisor and 11 hours of individual or triadic supervision from their Walden-approved site supervisor for each term of enrollment in practicum.

**MS in Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling**
The MS in Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling practicum consists of 100 hours of clinical field experience, including at least 40 hours of direct counseling. At least 10 of the direct client contact hours must be devoted to marriage, couples, and/or family counseling using a systemic approach. Students may engage in supervised individual and/or group counseling as part of the practicum, as long as the 10 direct marriage, couples, and/or family counseling hours are satisfied. Students must also earn a minimum of 15 hours of group supervision from their faculty supervisor and 11 hours of individual or triadic supervision from their Walden-approved site supervisor for each term of enrollment in practicum.

**MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling**
The MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling practicum consists of 100 hours of clinical field experience, including at least 40 hours of direct counseling. At least 21 of the direct client contact hours must be devoted to individual mental health counseling. Students may engage in supervised couples, family, and/or group mental health counseling as part of the practicum, as long as the 21 direct individual mental health counseling hours are satisfied. Students must also earn a minimum of 15 hours of group supervision from their faculty supervisor and 11 hours of
individual or triadic supervision from their Walden-approved site supervisor for each term of enrollment in practicum.

**MS in School Counseling**

The MS in School Counseling practicum consists of 100 hours of field experience, including 40 hours of direct face-to-face counseling, consultation, and classroom guidance. Students must also earn a minimum of 15 hours of group supervision from their faculty supervisor and 11 hours of individual or triadic supervision from their Walden-approved site supervisor for each term of enrollment in field experience. The school counseling field experience must be completed in a school (pre-K through 12).

**Successful Completion of Practicum**

Successful completion of the practicum includes passing both coursework and fieldwork requirements. The final grades are either Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U). A deficiency in any item listed below may result in a U grade for the course and require the student to repeat the field experience course before moving on in the program. Graduate students may retake a course only one time. Students who fail a required course twice will be dismissed from the university. Practicum is a required course for all of School of Counseling programs. To successfully complete practicum, all requirements, including hourly requirements and final documents must be complete by the end of Week 11; if hourly requirements are not met, then the student will need to request an Incomplete (I) grade or a Practicum Extension.

To complete practicum satisfactorily, students must achieve **ALL** of the following:

1. Successful completion of all course work assignments with a cumulative score of 80% or above.
2. Attendance and active participation in all faculty group supervision videoconferences (minimum of 15 hours for each quarter of field experience).
3. Completion of Mid-Quarter Evaluation and site visit by Walden-approved site supervisor in Week 4, 5, 6, or 7.
4. Completion of all hourly requirements for the field experience (including total and program-specific requirements) as shown on Time Log approved by site and faculty supervisors.
5. Satisfactory *End of Quarter Evaluation of Student* at a minimum of an intermediate level (rating of 2 or above) and endorsement for progression provided by Walden-approved site supervisor.
6. No concerns or reservations regarding a student’s ability to continue with professional practice curriculum expressed by the faculty supervisor/course instructor; satisfactory evaluation at a minimum of an intermediate level (rating of 2 or above) and endorsement for progression provided by faculty supervisor.
7. No concerns expressed by the field experience coordinators or director upon review of the site supervisor and faculty information concerning the training experience.
8. Adherence to all SOC-OFE policies outlined in the Field Experience Manual, as well as site and university policies, the ACA Code of Ethics, and all state regulations for counseling professionals.

**Important note:** All requirements, including completion of hours, must be achieved for a Satisfactory (S) grade for the practicum course, even if the student will be extending the practicum to an additional quarter.

**Internship Requirements**

**General Internship Requirements**

The internship takes place over a minimum of two 11-week quarters. Participation in each section of internship begins in Week 1 and is expected through the full duration of Week 11, regardless of the accumulation of hours or completion of other course requirements. Students must participate weekly at the internship site throughout the entire terms in which they are enrolled. Students may not plan to complete the internship in less than the two 11-week quarters, and they should not plan time off during the field experience for vacations or other professional or personal obligations. If the bulk of required hours are completed early, students must continue to see one or two clients per week throughout the duration of the term to ensure that they are able to meet coursework and weekly supervision requirements.

In addition to the requirements listed under the General Field Experience Requirements, Walden meets current CACREP standards by requiring that students completing internship experiences do the following:

- After **successful completion of practicum**, complete 600 hours of supervised counseling internship in roles and settings with clients relevant to their specialty area.
- Complete at least 240 hours of direct service (see Program-Specific Internship Hourly Requirements).
- Complete at least 15 hours of group supervision from their faculty supervisor during each quarter of enrollment in internship
- Complete at least 11 hours of individual or triadic supervision from their Walden-approved site supervisor during each quarter of enrollment in internship (at least 1 continuous hour of individual or triadic supervision during each week of enrollment).
  - If a student has multiple sites, they must have 1 continuous hour of supervision at each site for each week of enrollment.
**Important note:** Students are prohibited from “banking” extra practicum hours for internship. CACREP standards do not allow for excess hours accumulated during the practicum to be counted toward the 600-hour internship. CACREP states, “The duration of a student’s supervised practicum experience is to extend across a full academic term to allow for the development of basic counseling skills and the integration of knowledge. Practicum is completed prior to internship.”

**Program-Specific Internship Hourly Requirements**

**MS in Addiction Counseling**
The MS in Addiction Counseling internship consists of 600 hours of clinical field experience, including 240 hours of direct counseling. At least 10 of these direct hours must be accumulated in facilitation or co-facilitation of group addiction counseling. At least 121 direct client contact hours must be devoted to **individual** addiction counseling. Students may engage in supervised couples and/or family counseling, as well as group counseling beyond the required 10 hours, as long as the requisite 121 of program-specific hours are met. Students must also earn a minimum of 30 hours of group supervision from their faculty supervisor (or 15 hours for each term of enrollment) and 22 hours of individual or triadic supervision from their Walden-approved site supervisor (or 11 hours for each term of enrollment).

**MS in Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling**
The MS in Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling internship consists of 600 hours of clinical field experience, including 240 hours of direct counseling. At least 10 of these direct hours must be accumulated in facilitation or co-facilitation of group marriage, couple, and/or family counseling. At least 60 direct client contact hours must be devoted to (non-group) marriage, couples, and/or family counseling. Students may engage in supervised individual counseling, as well as group counseling beyond the required 10 hours, as long as the requisite 60 direct marriage, couples, and family counseling hours are met. Students must also earn a minimum of 30 hours of group supervision from their faculty supervisor (or 15 hours for each term of enrollment) and 22 hours of individual or triadic supervision from their Walden-approved site supervisor (or 11 hours for each term of enrollment).

**MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling**
The MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling internship consists of 600 hours of clinical field experience, including 240 hours of direct counseling. At least 10 of these direct hours must be accumulated in facilitation or co-facilitation of group mental health counseling. At least 121 direct client contact hours must be devoted to **individual** mental health counseling. Students may engage in supervised couples and/or family counseling, as well as in group counseling beyond the required 10 hours, as long as the requisite 121 direct individual mental health counseling hours are met. Students must also earn a minimum of 30 hours of group supervision from their faculty supervisor (or 15 hours for each term of enrollment) and 22 hours of individual or triadic supervision from their Walden-approved site supervisor (or 11 hours for each term of enrollment).
MS in School Counseling

The MS in School Counseling internship consists of 600 hours of clinical field experience, including 240 hours of direct face-to-face counseling, consultation, and classroom guidance. At least 10 of these direct hours must be accumulated in facilitation or co-facilitation of group counseling. Students may engage in additional supervised group counseling beyond the required 10 hours, but these hours cannot be the majority of client contact hours. Students must also earn a minimum of 30 hours of group supervision from their faculty supervisor (or 15 hours for each term of enrollment) and 22 hours of individual or triadic supervision from their Walden-approved site supervisor (or 11 hours for each term of enrollment). The school counseling field experience must be completed in a school (pre-K through 12).

Successful Completion of Internship

Successful completion of the internship includes passing both coursework and fieldwork requirements. The final grades are either Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U). A deficiency in any item listed below will result in a U grade for the course and require the student to repeat the field experience course before moving on in the program. Students who receive two U grades in internship will be academically dismissed from the university. To successfully complete internship, all requirements, including hourly requirements and final documents must be complete by the end of week 11; if hourly requirements are not met, then the student will need to request an Incomplete (I) grade or an Internship Extension.

To complete each internship course satisfactorily, students must achieve ALL of the following:

1. Successful completion of all course work assignments with a cumulative score of 80% or above.
2. Attendance and active participation in all faculty group supervision videoconferences (minimum of 15 hours for each quarter of field experience).
3. Completion of Mid-Quarter Evaluation and site visit by Walden-approved site supervisor in Week 4, 5, 6, or 7.
4. Completion of the hourly requirements for the field experience by the end of Internship II (including total and program-specific requirements) as shown on Time Log approved by site and faculty supervisors (time log to be complete and approved each term).
5. Satisfactory End of Quarter Evaluation of Student at a minimum of an intermediate level (rating of 3 or above) and endorsement for progression provided by site supervisor.
6. No concerns or reservations regarding a student’s ability to continue with professional practice curriculum expressed by the course and/or group supervision faculty member; satisfactory evaluation at a minimum of an intermediate level (rating of 3 or above) and endorsement for progression provided by faculty supervisor(s).
7. No concerns expressed by the field experience coordinators or director upon review of the site supervisor and faculty information concerning the training experience.
8. Adherence to all SOC-OFE policies outlined in the Field Experience Manual, as well as site and university policies, the ACA Code of Ethics, and all state regulations for
counseling professionals.

**Important note:** All requirements, including completion of hours, must be achieved for a Satisfactory (S) grade for the Internship II course, even if the student will be extending the internship to an additional quarter.

## Supervision Requirements

### On-Site Supervision Requirements

Students are required to participate in at least 1 continuous hour of individual or triadic on-site supervision (a maximum of one additional student) each week throughout each field experience. On-site supervision must occur weekly beginning in Week 1 and proceed through Week 11. It is strongly recommended that supervision be scheduled for the same day and time each week.

- A minimum of 11 hours is required for each quarter of enrollment in a field experience course.

The Walden-approved site supervisor must perform the weekly supervision in order for the hours to count toward the required supervision hours. If the student sees clients during the break weeks in between quarters, the student must have weekly supervision from the approved Walden-approved site supervisor in order to count those direct hours.

### Faculty Supervision Requirements

Students are also required to participate in 2 hours of group supervision each week within the field experience courses. Group supervision consists of a scheduled weekly videoconference call with the student’s classmates and faculty supervisor beginning in Week 2 of the term and proceeding through Week 11.

- A minimum of 15 hours of faculty supervision is required for each quarter of enrollment in a field experience course.

Students are required to attend faculty supervision via both telephone and webcam at the designated time. Attendance of all faculty supervision conference calls is mandatory to satisfactorily complete the field experience course. Students are required to adjust their schedules to accommodate the faculty supervision videoconference.

- Students earn weekly discussion board points for attendance and participation on the faculty group supervision call.

**Important notes:**

- Submission of a fully signed Faculty Supervision Contract is required for students to participate in faculty group supervision.
• Like all students in field experiences, international students are required to participate in weekly videoconference group supervision. They will need to plan accordingly for any time zone differences.

Site and/or Supervisor Changes

Students are not able to change sites once the application submission window for the quarter for which the student is applying has closed. Site changes cannot be accommodated after the start of the quarter under any circumstances.

In rare circumstances it may be necessary for students to switch site supervisors or field experience sites after an application deadline. In the event that a site supervisor change is required after the application deadline or during the field experience quarter, the changes must be approved by the director of field experience or designee. Students will be required to submit a rationale for why the site or site supervisor change is warranted, and a determination for approval and timing of the change will be made by the SOC-OFE. The student’s previous site supervisor and new site supervisor, as well as the faculty supervisor, will be informed of the change.

A temporary site supervisor can be approved for up to 2 weeks (see Temporary Supervision Coverage, below).

Important note: Any and all changes to field sites and site supervisor arrangements must be approved by the director of field experience before students can continue with the field experience.

Temporary Supervision Coverage

Students needing short-term supervision coverage (2 weeks or less) at their field site are permitted to identify a replacement supervisor who can meet all the supervision requirements while the Walden-approved site supervisor is absent. The temporary site supervisor must meet all the site supervisor credentials and duties listed in this manual.

Students are required to notify the SOC-OFE (counselingfield@mail.waldenu.edu) as well as their faculty supervisor of the need for the short-term coverage and provide the contact information and credentials for the temporary site supervisor. This notification must occur prior to the start of temporary supervision. Detailed information about procedures surrounding approval of a temporary site supervisor is available on the SOC-OFE website.

If temporary supervision is needed for longer than 2 weeks, a formal site supervisor change will be required.

Recording and Alternative Assignment Policy

Field experience students are required to submit video recordings of two full-length client sessions and complete the appropriate transcription form for each recording at designated points in the quarter. Each recording has specific requirements, and students should refer to the classroom instructions for guidance and associated due dates. Video recordings must occur
during enrollment in the field experience course. Recordings that occurred prior to enrollment (for example, in a previous term if the student is repeating the course) cannot be used to fulfill this requirement.

The client session video recordings and transcription forms should be reviewed in the student’s weekly on-site supervision sessions. This approach allows students to identify areas of progress and areas of needed improvement in a timely manner, as well as receive instruction from their site supervisors to assist with the counseling process. The client session recordings and transcription forms must be submitted in the classroom by the due dates indicated on the syllabus so the course instructor can provide additional feedback.

Students who are at sites where video recording is not possible or where submission of recordings cannot be made to the Walden University classroom are required to submit the site’s recording policy to their field experience faculty supervisor who will provide them with the alternative assignment. Students should be knowledgeable of the recording requirements and inform sites of the recording requirements as part of the interview process.

Informed consent documents for recording purposes must be completed for all session recordings. Students can either use site-based recording informed consent documents or templates provided on the SOC-OFE website at the discretion of the site supervisor.

**Important notes:**

- Students should refrain from showing the client in the frame when recording. The camera can remain on the student at all times.
- Students are required to get a signed parental or custodial consent for anyone under the age of 18 regardless of state and agency requirements.
- Recording informed consent forms are not to be submitted in the field experience classroom. They are for use at the site only and should not be viewed by Walden faculty members.
- Students must delete all recordings from the classroom during week 11 of each term, after grades and feedback from both videos are received.

**Documentation of Field Experience**

**Time Logs**

Students are required to track their field experience hours in Meditrek. Students are encouraged to enter hours daily, and all hours must be entered in Meditrek by Day 7 of each week of the quarter. Students cannot log hours prior to earning hours.

**Final Documents**

To receive final grades and move on to the next phase of field experience or graduation, all final documents (as listed below) must be completed, verified by the necessary parties in Meditrek,
and submitted by the published deadlines of each quarter of enrollment in field experience. All final documents are housed in the Internet-based Meditrek system. More information about using Meditrek is found on the SOC-OFE website.

The final documents include the following forms:

- Time Log
- Student Evaluation of Field Experience
- End of Quarter Evaluation of Student (completed by both Walden-approved site supervisor and faculty supervisor)

See the SOC-OFE website for detailed information about submission of the required forms.

**Important notes:**

- If completed final documents are not submitted by the deadline, students will receive an Unsatisfactory (U) grade for the field experience course and will be halted and delayed from moving on to the next phase of field experience or graduation.
- All evaluations and time logs are available to students in Meditrek and will remain available to students for 1 year following graduation. Students should save and/or print copies of documentation for their personal records.

### Unfinished Field Experiences

#### Field Experience Incompletes

Students who have completed at least 80% of the required hours and all other requirements for a field experience qualify for an Incomplete (I) grade for the field experience (Practicum or Internship II). Incompletes are granted only for completion of hourly requirements. Incompletes are granted for up to 60 days following the end of the term.

Students must complete at least 1 continuous hour of individual or triadic supervision with their approved site supervisor as well as attend a faculty group supervision call each week for the duration of the incomplete. Coursework is not required during an incomplete; students will only complete hours on site and participate in site and faculty supervision. Time logs will be approved when the student successfully completes their hours through the same process as during practicum and internship.

**Important notes:**

- If completed final documents are not submitted by the deadline, students will receive an Unsatisfactory (U) grade for the field experience course and will be halted and delayed from moving on to the next phase of field experience or graduation.
- Both site and faculty supervision must occur during the last week that the student accrues hours, regardless of what day of the week the final counseling session occurs (e.g. A student
who holds final counseling sessions on a Monday will still need to participate in both site and faculty supervision for the week.

Field Experience Extensions – Additional Quarters

Students may require enrollment in a field experience course beyond the initial required one quarter of practicum or two quarters of internship if they are unable to attain at least 80% of the required hours for the field experience in the allotted time period.

To ensure students are making progress through their program, the number of field experience extensions allowed is limited:

- Practicum students are permitted up to two extensions to fulfill the requirement. This provides the student a maximum of three quarters to complete the 100-hour practicum.
- Internship students are permitted up to three extensions to fulfill the requirement. This provides a maximum of five quarters for students to complete the 600-hour internship.

Each extension requires participation in an additional full 11-week field experience course, including all coursework, supervision, and evaluations. Students enrolled in a field experience extension course will be responsible for completing all associated coursework and fieldwork requirements for the entire quarter, regardless of when final hours are achieved, and should communicate this policy to the site supervisor. Students must attempt course assignments and discussion board posts and responses with new perspectives and new case presentations in order to maximize their continued learning experience. Students who are able to complete their extension hours prior to the end of the term must remain active at the field site (maintaining at least a one-client caseload) and remain in weekly supervision through the end of the extension term.

Students who are completing a field experience extension to complete the program’s hourly requirements will be allowed to count all hours endorsed by the site and faculty supervisors at the end of the last term of enrollment in field experience.

Students who are completing an extension to complete the program’s hourly requirements will have an Unsatisfactory (U) grade recorded for their initial attempt at the field experience course. Upon successful completion of the extension, the grade for the initial attempt at the field experience course will be changed to Satisfactory (S).

**Important note:** Submitting any work for course assignments that has already been submitted for prior courses is considered plagiarism and will result in an academic integrity violation.

Nonsatisfactory Completion of Course Requirements: Repeating a Field Experience Course

Students who do not complete a quarter of field experience satisfactorily due to dropping or withdrawing from the course or earning an Unsatisfactory (U) grade will need to repeat the course. Students who fail a required course twice will be dismissed from the university. Hours
accrued during a term in which a student drops, withdraws, or earns an Unsatisfactory (U) grade in a field experience course will be forfeited. Only hours earned during terms of field experience that are successfully completed will be counted toward the total hourly requirements of the program (except only in cases of a field experience extension).

Students must apply in Meditrek for each quarter of enrollment of field experience, including to request to retake a field experience course following a drop, withdrawal, or Unsatisfactory (U) grade. Students can contact the SOC-OFE at counselingfield@mail.waldenu.edu for assistance with this.

**Termination From a Field Experience Site**

Students who are terminated from a field experience site due to poor student performance, lack of counseling skills ability, poor professional behavior, or other reasons identified by the site will automatically earn an Unsatisfactory (U) grade in the course and will be required to participate in a Student Development Plan and/or Skills Plan prior to re-enrolling in field experience. All student development plans will be designed to support the individual student’s needs. The purpose of this policy is to support students’ academic and professional growth.

Students who want to terminate from a field site are required to speak with their faculty supervisor (instructor) and should submit the Field Experience Termination form to the SOC-OFE at counselingfield@mail.waldenu.edu prior to the termination. Students who do not follow this policy may be subjected to earning an unsatisfactory grade in the course.

**Continuing Field Experience Between Quarters**

Students must have supervision while participating in the field experience. Students can remain active at their field experience sites between quarters as long as they continue to have weekly supervision with their Walden-approved site supervisor and contact with their faculty supervisor (instructor) or appropriate university designee.

Students who wish to continue field experience during the break weeks should request supervision from their Walden-approved site supervisor. Students must also communicate with the faculty supervisor (instructor) that they will continue working at their site during the break weeks. Students should request the correct contact information for the academic coordinator from their faculty supervisor. Students are expected to contact the field experience academic coordinator if any concerns arise during those weeks.

Students who are extending their practicum/internship or who are in between quarters of internship can count hours between quarters toward the next quarter of field experience. However, practicum students cannot begin counting internship hours until the start of the internship quarter.

**Time Off During Field Experience**

Students, especially those participating in field experiences in the winter or summer quarters, need to be mindful of site schedules, as there are often periods of time when sites are closed (for
vacations, holidays, etc.). CACREP requires full participation in every week of enrollment in each field experience. Vacations and “breaks” are not permitted to be scheduled during active enrollment in a field experience. This is subject to sanctions up to and including earning an Unsatisfactory (U) grade in the field experience course.

State Licensure Requirements

State Education Specialization

The State Education Specialization allows students to select and add courses to their program that are not included in their general program but may be necessary to meet the educational requirements for licensure in the state in which the student plans to practice.

Enrollment in Additional Term(s) of Field Experience

Students may require enrollment in additional terms of a field experience course to meet state enrollment or hourly requirements for licensure. For example, some states may require more than the 700 hours (100 for practicum and 600 for internship) required by Walden for the completion of the field experience. While students are welcome to complete more than the required hours in one academic term, some students may need additional time to complete hours beyond program requirements that are required by the state licensure board. Alternatively, some states may require enrollment in more than the required number of academic quarters of a field experience course, regardless of the number of hours completed in the quarter. Students should consult their state licensure boards to ensure that they fully understand the licensure requirements.

Students who are enrolling in additional terms of field experience to complete state licensure requirements will be allowed to count all hours endorsed by the site and faculty supervisors at the end of the last term of enrollment in field experience.

Additional courses/terms of field experience must be added to a student’s program of study before a student can be enrolled in those courses. Students can see the State Education Specialization page of the SOC-OFE website for information about adding the State Education Specialization to the program of study.

5-Credit Option

The field experience courses are typically 3 credits each. The School of Counseling offers a 5-credit version for each of the field experience courses for students whose states might require this for licensure. There are two journal assignments required in the 5-credit courses that are not required in the 3-credit version of the courses.

Students should check with their state board to see if additional quarter credit hours of field experience are required, and if so, they can request the 5-credit version of one or more of the field experience courses in the Meditrek application.

The 5-credit version of the field experience courses must be added to a student’s program of study before a student can be enrolled in those courses. Students can see the State Education
Specialization page of the SOC-OFE website for information about adding the State Education Specialization to the program of study.

**Important note:** It is the student’s responsibility to identify those additional courses that may be required for licensure in their state.
Section 4. Additional Policies

Evaluating Student Competency

Students enrolled in field experience courses are regularly assessed for skill and professional development to ensure that they are progressing in a developmentally-appropriate way. The assessment process includes both formal assessments completed by site supervisors (i.e., Mid-Quarter Evaluation and End of Quarter Evaluation of Student) and faculty members (i.e., End of Quarter Evaluation of Student) as well as regular, informal assessment of skills and professionalism (e.g., supervision videoconference calls, recordings, live observations, work samples, classroom engagement).

When it is determined that a field experience student is demonstrating a skill-based need or a comportment concern, a formal skills plan or development plan will be instituted to support the student. Student development plans and skills plans are developed in consultation with the student development coordinator and skills coordinator for the counseling programs, as well as the student’s program director, if warranted.

- Students needing a skills and/or development plan will work directly with the appropriate coordinator(s) to determine the needs and create the formal support plan and to complete the identified plan assignments.
- Progression to future field experience courses or graduation is contingent upon successful completion of the required support plan(s). Students will be halted in their progression of field experience until the support plan(s) are completed.

For additional information regarding the role of the skills development and student development processes in field experience, see Appendix B.

Social Media

Social media (e.g., personal Facebook pages, personal Twitter accounts, LinkedIn) are widely used, appropriate, and efficient for various settings; however, their use between faculty members and students and between student counselors and their clients is prohibited. This policy is designed to promote ethical and fair treatment with clear and sound boundaries among students, clients, and faculty members. The ACA Code of Ethics addresses use of social media that further supports this policy in several codes to include A.5.e., H.6.a., and H.6.d. The use of social media between students and field experience site staff, coworkers, peer counselors, etc., is strongly discouraged as is use of social media to post, discuss, or vent about any aspects related to the field experience site, its staff, and those clients served.

State Licensure and Accreditation

The counseling masters’ programs are all CACREP accredited. The programs may meet or exceed requirements for licensure in most states where licensure or certification is available;
however, not all the counseling programs are license-eligible, and states have varying requirements for licensure and certification for each program.

Students seeking licensure or certification in their state are responsible for ensuring that their program meets the necessary requirements. Additionally, students are responsible for checking with their state licensure board throughout their programs for updates to program and field experience requirements for licensure or certification. If students find that their state requires additional courses or experiences to be academically eligible for licensure, they can request to add the State Education Specialization. More information on the State Education Specialization is found on the SOC-OFE website.

Students needing post-graduate verification of practicum and internship hours on licensure application forms should submit those requests to the field experience operations director (see Verification of Field Experience Hours for Licensure). All other licensure-related inquiries should be submitted to counlicensure@mail.waldenu.edu.

**MS in Addiction Counseling**

Walden University’s MS in Addiction Counseling program is accredited by CACREP, a specialized accrediting body recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), which is a requirement to practice addiction counseling in some states. The MS in Addiction Counseling program is designed to prepare graduates to qualify to sit for national and state addiction counseling certification exams, to sit for counseling licensure exams, and to practice as addiction counselors. Because no program can guarantee licensure or certification upon graduation, we encourage students to consult the appropriate agency to determine specific requirements. However, each state board responsible for regulating the practice of addiction counseling has its own academic, licensure, and certification requirements and issues its own credential for an individual to practice as an addiction counselor in that state.

Walden enrollment advisors can provide information relating to national and state certification exams and guidance relating to the state-by-state requirements for counseling licensure and practice as an addiction counselor; however, it remains the individual’s responsibility to understand, evaluate, and comply with all requirements relating to certification exams and licensing requirements for the state in which he or she intends to practice. Walden makes no representations or guarantee that completion of its coursework or programs will permit an individual to obtain certification or to obtain state licensure, authorization, endorsement, or other state credential.

Students who are pursuing state licensure as a licensed professional counselor (LPC) or a state substance abuse counseling certification must verify individual state laws to determine if this program meets eligibility requirements for licensure and/or certification in the state in which they intend to practice. Designation as a master addictions counselor requires the successful completion of the Examination for Master Counselors (EMAC), in addition to other requirements.
**MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling**

The MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling is accredited by CACREP as a mental health counseling program. CACREP is a specialized accrediting body recognized by CHEA, and CACREP accreditation is a requirement for licensure in many states.

The MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program is designed to prepare graduates to qualify to sit for licensing exams and to meet the academic licensure requirements of many state counseling boards. Walden enrollment advisors can provide guidance on licensure issues; however, it remains the individual’s responsibility to understand and comply with all state licensure requirements. Walden University makes no representations or guarantee that completion of Walden coursework or programs will permit an individual to obtain state licensure.

**MS in Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling**

Walden’s MS in Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling is accredited by the CACREP, a specialized accrediting body recognized by CHEA. CACREP accreditation is a requirement for licensure in many states. The M.S. in Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling program is not accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) and will not lead to licensure as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT).

The MS in Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling program is designed to prepare graduates to qualify to sit for licensing exams and to meet the academic licensure requirements of many state counseling boards. Walden enrollment advisors can provide guidance on licensure issues; however, it remains the individual’s responsibility to understand and comply with all state licensure requirements. Walden makes no representations or guarantee that completion of Walden coursework or programs will permit an individual to obtain state licensure or endorsement.

**MS in School Counseling**

The MS in School Counseling program is offered by Walden University, an institution accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), which is a requirement to practice as a school counselor in some states. The MS in School Counseling program is accredited by CACREP, a specialized accrediting body recognized by CHEA, which may also be a requirement to practice as a school counselor in some states.

The MS in School Counseling program is designed to prepare graduates to qualify to apply for licensure or certification to practice as school counselors. However, each state board responsible for regulating the practice of school counseling has its own academic, licensure, and certification requirements and issues its own credential for an individual to practice as a school counselor in that state. Walden enrollment advisors can provide general information relating to the state-by-state requirements for school counseling licensure or certification; however, it remains the individual’s responsibility to understand, evaluate, and comply with all requirements relating to licensing or certification for the state in which he or she intends to practice. Walden makes no representations or guarantee that completion of its coursework or programs will permit an
individual to obtain certification or to obtain state licensure, authorization, endorsement, or other state credential.

**Verification of Field Experience Hours for Licensure**

Some licensure boards require that Walden faculty or staff members verify field experience hours prior to licensure. Students should send these requests to the field experience operations director. Requests should be submitted as early as possible, as some forms may take considerable time to complete, depending on the information and signatures required.

Some forms will require signatures from multiple parties (e.g., student, site supervisor, director of field experience). Licensure boards often require that all signatures are original (not scanned). If the licensure board requires documents with multiple signatures, the required signatures should be first obtained from parties other than Walden University. Students should get at least two copies of the forms signed so that one original can be mailed to Walden and another can be maintained in their records. These forms should be mailed to the following address:

Walden University  
Attn: Field Experience Operations Director—School of Counseling  
100 Washington Avenue South, Suite 900  
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Students should request copies of final documents signed by faculty members at the end of each quarter of practicum and internship. Students must also keep copies of all forms related to practicum and internship, including time logs, evaluations, and documents sent to the state licensure board.

**Sharing of Sensitive Information**

Site supervisors do not have access to the academic records of field experience students. Site supervisors are encouraged to maintain a copy of all documents completed by students and themselves for their records as well as for the field site. Students are asked to sign a FERPA Release form with their practicum and internship applications in case it is necessary for Walden to share FERPA-protected information with the field site. The sharing of protected information is done on a limited, as-needed basis only.

Field experience students are required to share counseling experiences in the practicum and internship courses. When sharing their experiences with other students, students must not share names or other identifying information about the clients they serve. Students can share some demographic information, such as sex, age, diagnosis, and race/ethnicity.

Site supervisors can discuss issues regarding students’ progress with the faculty supervisor (instructors of the practicum/internship courses). The site supervisor, course instructor, and director of field experience or designee may talk about a student’s work with a specific client (e.g., the site supervisor may converse with the instructor to discuss a student’s skills and/or
Conflicts During Field Experience

Field experience students are required to contact their practicum/internship course instructor as soon as possible if they experience an issue or problem during the field experience. The instructor will document the concern on the Student Dispositional & Skills Concern form and contact the site supervisor to discuss the matter and attempt to resolve the problem. Upon resolution, the instructor will document the problem and the resolution. The instructor will collaboratively develop a plan for resolution with the site supervisor and disseminate the plan via e-mail for the student to review. All parties will be copied on the e-mail (student, site supervisor, SOC-OFE academic coordinator). The student will review the plan and confirm acceptance by responding to the e-mail (“I agree”).

A copy of the plan will also be forwarded to the SOC-OFE. Upon completion of the plan, the instructor will confer with the site supervisor and the student to affirm that the plan has been fulfilled.

If the problem or issue is unable to be resolved in this manner, the course instructor should consult with the field experience academic coordinators and director, for direction on next steps. The SOC-OFE academic coordinator will work directly with the student, instructor, and site supervisor to identify an alternative plan to address the concern. Documentation of meetings, incident reports, and supporting materials will be maintained by all involved parties.

The director of field experience reserves the right to remove a student from a site or otherwise rescind approval of a site or site supervisor if it is determined that the student is unable to meet the program requirements or if personal and/or professional conflicts at the site warrant this action.

For additional information see Student Support and Development in Appendix B.

Conflicts With Code of Ethics

The counseling masters’ programs require students to adhere to the highest professional ethical standards identified by the ACA. If an ethical dilemma should arise at the field experience site, students should contact their practicum/internship course instructor. The instructor will work with the student to determine how to address the dilemma. The instructor, student, and director of field experience or designee will discuss the proposed strategy to address the ethical dilemma and communicate with the site supervisor. Upon resolving the dilemma, the strategy should be documented in writing.

A Strike Situation at the Field Experience Site

In the event a strike situation occurs at a field experience site, students are required to contact their practicum/internship course instructor as soon as possible. If the strike continues for longer than 1 week, students should discuss the course requirements and the attainment of supervised professional development) but not about any details of the client’s name, address, and/or demographic information that may lead to the specific identification of the client.
hours as well as the possible continuation or discontinuation of the field experience with their instructor and/or field experience academic coordinator. The instructor or coordinator will help students determine the best strategy to fulfill the program requirements.

Exceptions to Field Experience Policies

Students who feel they have valid reason outside of their control to request an exception to a field experience policy (e.g., extension to the application deadline, acceptance of hours accrued during a term of field experience not successfully completed) may submit a petition. This policy is in regard to field experience-specific policies only. Students should consult their Walden University Student Handbook and contact their academic advisor regarding exceptions to other program or university policies (e.g., taking courses – including field experience courses and prerequisites – out of sequence, requesting a retroactive withdrawal from courses, including field experience courses, etc.). If a student is not sure if the policy in question is field experience-related or other, they can contact the SOC-OFE and/or their academic advisor.

SOC-OFE Petition Policy

1. All exceptions to field experience policy must be formally petitioned using the Field Experience Petition form except:
   - Grade appeal: For information on petitions for a change of grade, see the student handbook.
   - Transfer of credit: For information on a transfer of credit petition, see the student handbook.
   - Professional liability insurance: A waiver of the professional liability insurance requirement would need to be approved by OALA the SOC-OFE to initiate this request.

2. Petitions should include all relevant documentation, such as e-mail correspondence. It is the student’s responsibility to submit all documentation for the petition.

3. The Director of Operations will make the final decision.

4. Once a decision has been made, the petition will be returned to the student with the decision and signature of the director of field experience (or designee).

The following are considered when reviewing each petition:

- Does the student truly have an unexpected, unavoidable, beyond-control extenuating circumstance, or is the student simply trying to get out of a bind?
- Does approving this petition give this student an unfair advantage over other students?
- Does approving this petition change any primary components of the degree?
- Would approval set a precedent for future petitions? How will this affect policy and procedure? Is the policy worth enforcing?
- Does the petition, and the circumstances leading to it, provide cause to review policies or procedures? If so, which ones?
Students may appeal, or have a Field Experience Petition decision reconsidered if they believe that:

- The original decision made was noncompliant with established university procedure, or
- Reconsideration be granted based on new information pertinent to the original request.

The Field Experience Petition form and information regarding petition procedures is available in the “Policies and Petitions” section of the SOC-OFE website.

**Walden University Student Handbook**

All students should be familiar with the policies in the Walden University Student Handbook. Students should review the handbook for information that may apply specifically to field experience, including:

- Alcohol and Drug Policy
- Disability Policies and Requesting Accommodations
- Nondiscrimination and Non-Harassment Policies
- Student Appeals and Grievances

**Sexual Harassment**

Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 prohibits sexual discrimination in educational settings. Walden’s Sexual Misconduct policy, which includes policies related to sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence may be found in the Walden University Student Handbook and by visiting https://www.waldenu.edu/experience/support-services/student-safety-title-ix.
Appendix A. Field Experience Terms

**Certification**—The process by which an agency or association grants recognition to a person who has met predetermined qualifications specified by that agency or association.

**Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)**—An independent agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) to accredit master’s degree programs in addiction counseling; career counseling; clinical mental health counseling; marriage, couple, and family counseling; school counseling; student affairs and college counseling; and doctoral degree programs in counselor education and supervision. It is the counseling equivalent of the Council on Social Work Education, the American Psychological Association Commission on Accreditation, and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

**Direct Client Contact**—Interaction with clients that includes the application of counseling, consultation, or human development skills. In the context of field experience, the term is used to refer to time spent by practicum or internship students working directly with clients.

**Internship**—A distinctly defined, post-practicum, supervised “capstone” clinical experience in which the student refines and enhances basic counseling or student development knowledge and skills, and integrates and authenticates professional knowledge and skills appropriate to the student’s program and initial post-graduate professional placement.

**Licensure**—The process by which a state agency or government grants permission to an individual to engage in a given profession and to use the designated title of that profession after the applicant has attained the minimal degree of competency necessary to ensure that the public health, safety, and welfare are reasonably well-protected.

**National Certified Counselor (NCC)**—A voluntary professional credential. It is not required for practice, but it attests to an individual’s commitment to the importance of a national credentialing standard developed for counselors by counselors. Currently, more than 80,000 professionals hold the NCC credential. Applying for the NCC credential involves an application process independent of the state credentialing processes. When students apply for national certification, they do not automatically become state-credentialed, and when they become state-credentialed, they are not automatically considered an NCC.

**Practicum**—A distinctly defined, supervised clinical experience in which the student develops basic counseling skills and integrates professional knowledge. The practicum is completed prior to internship.

**Professional Clinical Counselor**—In some states (for instance, Ohio), this license is an independent license. People with this license are able to independently practice therapy, independently diagnose mental conditions, and provide supervision.
**Professional Counselor**—A counselor who has received a master’s degree or higher from an entry-level program in counselor education matching the standards outlined by CACREP. A professional counselor remains active in the counseling profession by participating in professional development and seeking appropriate licensure and certification.

**Site Supervisor**—A qualified individual within a setting who is responsible for supervising a student’s work at that setting.

**Standard**—A minimal criterion that must be met.

**Supervision**—A tutorial and mentoring form of instruction in which a supervisor monitors a student’s activities in practicum and internship and facilitates the associated learning and skill development experiences. The supervisor monitors and evaluates the clinical work of the student while monitoring the quality of services offered to clients.

- **Individual Supervision**—A tutorial and mentoring relationship between a member of the counseling profession and a counseling student.

- **Triadic Supervision**—A tutorial and mentoring relationship between a member of the counseling profession and two counseling students.

- **Group Supervision**—A tutorial and mentoring relationship between a member of the counseling profession and more than two counseling students.
Appendix B. Skills and Student Development FAQs

Skills Support and Development

What is skills development?

Delivery of facilitative communication skills is one of the primary tasks of counselors. As such, the Walden counseling programs embrace the task of making sure students are able to identify, define, and execute foundational and advanced counseling skills. Skills of focus in the curriculum include, but are not limited to, opening and closing counseling sessions, rapport building, feeling identification, case conceptualization, information gathering, and documentation.

What is the role of the skills development office?

The Skills Committee, which is composed of the skills development coordinator and a group of counseling faculty members, works to support students who have specific skill needs that may not have been sufficiently addressed in the online or residency classrooms.

What happens if my field experience course instructor or the director of field experience notifies me that I need to work with the skills coordinator?

If a student is referred to the skills development office, a teleconference meeting will be held with the student, course instructor, director, and skills coordinator. During this meeting, the instructor will address the noted areas of concern, and the student will be provided the opportunity to present additional context and perspective. Based upon the identified needs noted by the student, instructor, and/or site supervisor, the skills coordinator will work with the student to develop a skills plan that targets the specific needs, and a timeline will be established for the completion of the skills plan. Following the meeting, the skills coordinator will submit the formal skills plan and assignment timeline to the student, and the student will work with the skills coordinator or Skills Committee member to complete the skills plan. The skills coordinator will provide the director of field experience regular updates on the student’s progress completing the plan. The student will not be permitted to continue in their field experience until they have satisfactorily completed the skills plan. Upon successful completion of the plan, the student will be eligible to resume field experience coursework and fieldwork. Should additional skills concerns be identified during the skills support process and/or successful completion not be made on the initial skills plan, further support will be required prior to resuming field experience.

What is a skills plan?

A skills plan is an opportunity for students to demonstrate that they have strengthened their overall skills competencies. It typically identifies a few specific skills that need particular attention. Skills plans—whether for residency, field experience, or online classroom support—include several steps, which may include all or some of the following assignments:

1. Review their previously submitted work product.
2. Review counseling video and transcripts available in the Walden Library.
3. Compare/contrast their work with the Walden resources.

4. Produce a video and transcription of a mock counseling session.
   - Within the transcription, students will identify the time at which the required skills (as provided to them via a specific skills rubric) are evidenced in the video and submit all the skills plan work products to a location identified by the Skills Committee member working with the student.

The Skills Committee member assigned to work with the student and the skills coordinator will make themselves available to respond to any questions the student may have.

**How are my skills plan assignments evaluated?**

The skills coordinator and Skills Committee member review and evaluate a student’s work products based on a skills rubric. Results of a skills plan are usually shared with a student within 2 weeks of evaluation.

**Student Support and Development**

*What is student development?*

There are a number of professional skills and characteristics that are important for students who provide services to children, adolescents, and adults, as well as to professional organizations, in a variety of settings. These interpersonal/professional skills include, but are not limited to, adherence to the 2014 American Counseling Association (ACA) *Code of Ethics*, professional deportment, sensitivity to client issues, and appropriate use of supervision. Walden University students and graduates are not expected to be at the pinnacle of expertise but rather are willing and able to demonstrate competent knowledge, skill, and professional dispositions across the curriculum. Accordingly, *student development* is the on-going process of examining one’s beliefs, attitudes, values, skills, and behaviors with the goal of forming a counseling professional identity that consistently demonstrates the professional dispositions of responsibility, fitness, maturity, and integrity.

*What are professional dispositions?*

The commitments, characteristics, values, beliefs, interpersonal functioning, and behaviors that influence the counselor's professional growth and interactions with clients and colleagues characterize professional dispositions (see 2016 CACREP Standards, p. 43). Based upon current counseling ethical guidelines (2014 ACA Code of Ethics), current counseling accreditation criteria (2016 CACREP Standards), and current counseling published literature, the School of Counseling requires all students to consistently demonstrate each of the following professional dispositions:

**RESPONSIBILITY**

1. *Engagement:* Student punctually attends scheduled meetings, actively contributes in required academic settings, and promotes other students’ learning.
2. *Accountability:* Student accepts personal contributions to academic, skills, and comportment deficiencies and acts responsibly to enhance professional effectiveness.
FITNESS

3. **Relationships**: Student interacts with others in a professional manner and effectively navigates interpersonal differences.
4. **Sensitivity**: Student attends to the feelings, experiences, and perceptions of others and consistently honors their autonomy.
5. **Impartiality**: Student displays contextual and cultural competency by valuing the fundamental rights, dignity, and worth of all people – including respect for age, culture, disability, ethnicity, race, religion/spirituality, gender, sexual orientation, marital/partnership status, language preference, socioeconomic status, veteran status, immigration status, or any basis proscribed by law or as defined by potential clients’ experience.

MATURITY

6. **Discipline**: Student exhibits ability to control personal stress, self-disclosure, and excessive emotional reactions that interfere with professional functioning.
7. **Awareness**: Student manifests alertness of how personal beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviors affect others and uses sound judgment to properly assess situations.
8. **Growth**: Student exhibits willingness to engage in self-examination, challenge assumptions, and integrate feedback to reach an acceptable level of competency.

INTEGRITY

9. **Communication**: Student displays respectful tone and uses open, honest, and accurate statements in dealing with others.
10. **Congruence**: Student demonstrates ability to acquire and integrate ethical codes, accreditation standards, and institutional policy into one’s repertoire of professional behavior in all settings.

**What is the Professional Practice Assessment (PPA)?**

Administered during practicum and each internship course, the Professional Practice Assessment (PPA) contains 20 questions focused on the 10 key professional dispositions described in the previous section. These questions have students evaluate their opportunities to demonstrate each disposition during supervised field experiences so they can take steps to improve their professional and interpersonal competencies. In accordance with the 2014 ACA *Code of Ethics*, this self-assessment helps students and supervisees continually 1) monitor their effectiveness and take steps to improve when necessary; 2) monitor client welfare and professional development; and 3) monitor themselves for signs of impairment from their own physical, mental, or emotional problems (see sections F.1.a. Client Welfare and F.5.b. Impairment). School of Counseling students use the following rating scale to describe their actions in each of the 10 key professional dispositions:

- 0 = I have not yet had the opportunity to develop or engage in this professional disposition
- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Agree
- 4 = Strongly Agree
Students and supervisees are reminded that they have a responsibility to understand and follow the ACA Code of Ethics and that they have the same obligation to clients as those required of professional counselors (see 2014 ACA Code of Ethics, Section F.5.a. Ethical Responsibilities). Therefore, students are expected to discuss their PPA responses with their faculty supervisor and their site supervisor so as to facilitate completion of their required academic and program training and to qualify for post-graduate professional endorsement.

**What is the role of the Student Development Coordinator?**

Counseling students who exhibit behaviors that are outside of these ethical codes that violate university Code of Conduct, that reflect diminished capacity to perform professional functions, or that risk harm to a client or others will be referred to the School of Counseling’s Student Development Coordinator. The goal of this referral is to help students address personal concerns that have the potential to affect professional competency by offering remediation, feedback, and further training and supervision. The Student Development Coordinator discusses the identified behaviors with the student and then seeks professional consultation with leading counselor education faculty to ensure the student receives timely and personalized support, or to assist the student in securing remedial assistance when needed – such as through a Student Development Plan (SDP). Examples of behaviors that require completion of a SDP to resume field experience include, but are not limited to, problematic interdisciplinary team work; imposing values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors onto others; inaccurate or dishonest advertising; behavior that compromises the training experience or grades assigned; inaccurate representation of credentials or educational degrees; improper use of public social media; deficient ethical decision making; improper client referral/termination; unapproved use of developing or innovative techniques/procedures/modalities; inappropriate diagnosis; practicing outside boundaries of competence; neglected professional disclosure; insufficient informed consent; or inadequate records and documentation.

**What is a student development plan (SDP)?**

The SDP is a collaborative process between the student and the School of Counseling’s Student Development Committee, academic leadership, and university offices. The purpose of the SDP is student retention and remediation by facilitating student self-growth (self-examination and challenging of assumptions to enhance professional effectiveness) and development of key professional dispositions—especially engagement, accountability, relationships, sensitivity, impartiality, discipline, awareness, growth, communication, and congruence. Please read Section 3: Expectation of Students (pages 13-29) in the current School of Counseling Student Program Guide (http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/soc/masters/programresources/studentguide) for a complete description of the student development process, including SDP Levels and Dynamics, SDP Consultation and Creation, SDP Implementation and Procedures, SDP Completion and Outcomes, and Transition and Dismissal of Students.

**How do I contact the Student Development Coordinator?**

Please email socstudentdevelopment@mail.waldenu.edu