

PITTSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY AND COUNSELING
GRADUATE PROGRAMS
GENERAL INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

Residency

One semester (7 semester hours) or one summer session term (5 semester hours) must be completed by the candidate for a graduate degree as a regularly enrolled full-time student. This must be done at sometime during the candidacy.

Time Requirement

Coursework for the graduate degree must be completed within a six year period from the date of first enrollment. Courses which are taken at another institution and accepted for transfer to apply toward the degree must fall within the six year period.

Transfer Credit

Not more than nine semester hours of transfer credit may be used toward the degree. Transfer credit must be from a regionally accredited institution and taught by regular members of the graduate faculty for graduate credit. A grade of "B" or higher must have been earned in all transferred credit. Transfer credit must be approved by the department and the Dean of the Graduate School.

Credit Hour Load

The normal full-time load for a graduate student is nine (9) to fifteen (15) semester hours per semester of the academic year. The normal summer load is one semester hour of credit per week of enrollment. In either case, outstanding students may make a request for an overload.

Graduate Credit as an Undergraduate

Graduate credit may be earned by college seniors at PSU or other accredited four year institutions. This is to be earned during the term in which the undergraduate degree is received providing the coursework is not needed for undergraduate degree requirements. No coursework applied to an undergraduate degree can be applied to a graduate degree at PSU.

Credit as a Graduate Special Student

Students may take up to 12 hours of graduate coursework prior to program admission as graduate special students. No more than 12 hours taken under special student status may be applied to a graduate degree, and graduate special students are not normally eligible for financial aid.

Departmental Student Retention Policy (see PSU Catalog)

The Department of Psychology and Counseling believes that students and faculty share an ethical responsibility to assure that individuals preparing for careers in mental health services possess both the academic qualifications and level of personal adjustment necessary to function effectively as professional mental health service providers.

All students in the department are expected to maintain satisfactory ethical standards and adequate self-understanding. Student performance is monitored by the department by means of semester grades and behavioral evidence of appropriate adjustment and professional conduct. If satisfactory progress is not being made, the department will inform the student and suggest possible steps toward remediation (and specify criteria to regain good standing in the program) or offer assistance to the student in finding a field of study that is more suited to the student's interests and/or abilities. Unethical behavior is considered grounds for immediate dismissal from all programs in the department.

Students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher throughout the program. In applying for degree candidacy, the student shall have no grade lower than "B" in the core courses. Deficiencies in grades, professional behavior, or adjustment may lead to dismissal from the program. Students earning more than 2 "C's" in any graduate coursework will be dismissed from the program.

Additional Steps in the Retention Process for all Counseling Program Majors

In order to insure that all students demonstrate openness to self-examination and professional self-development as well as the ability to develop and maintain good interpersonal relationships in individual and group contexts that characterize the level of personal functioning necessary for effective professional counseling, faculty members will systematically monitor these factors throughout each student's program. In addition to frequent feedback from faculty and students concerning academic performance, self-understanding, and interpersonal effectiveness, faculty members conduct the following regular assessments:

1. Combined application information including letters of recommendation, personal statements, interviews, and other data will be used to select students for admission who are likely to demonstrate effective personal functioning as well as to develop high levels of professional commitment and skilled practice.
2. Each semester, the Counseling Committee will review the progress of each counseling major in the three areas: effective personal functioning, professional commitment, and skilled practice. If inadequate performance is found in any area, the students will be informed by their faculty advisors of the specific areas and of recommended remediation steps to be completed to regain good standing.
3. During the semester before practicum enrollment, the same three areas will be assessed by the faculty advisor and the faculty practicum review committee. By this point in addition to maintaining at least a "B" grade average in all graduate course work and "A" or "B" grades in all practicum/internship prerequisite courses for the relevant program concentration, students must demonstrate sufficient self-understanding and ability to establish effective personal relationships necessary to engage in supervised counseling practice. If there are limitations in these areas, the practicum application will not be approved for the next semester, and the student will be informed by letter of the steps required for remediation before reapplication in a subsequent semester. The student is also directed to work closely with his or her faculty advisor in the remediation plan.
4. In addition to using academic performance and behavioral evaluation to assess the student's professional development and skilled practice, self development and the ability to establish good interpersonal relationships in both individual and group contexts are monitored and evaluated during each fieldwork semester. If the students' performance in these areas is judged to be insufficient by the faculty instructor in consultation with the site supervisor, the student will not be allowed to enroll in fieldwork until remediation is completed and personal and interpersonal effectiveness demonstrated. If, at any of these points, the Counseling Committee judges that the students' personal, interpersonal, ethical, professional, and/or academic performance, despite remediation, is not sufficient to continue in the program, the student will be informed of the decision and offered the opportunity to discuss alternative academic and/or career plans with his or her advisor. Students may grieve such decisions beginning with a written statement for the Counseling Committee to reconsider, and then following the regular grievance procedure steps described in the PSU Catalog.

Consistent with the philosophy of the Pittsburg State University M.S. in Counseling program, a recommendation for student discontinuance in the Counseling Program is not perceived by faculty as reflecting personal inadequacy. Rather, we view such situations as generally resulting from a mismatch of student interests and abilities with program philosophy and goals.

Student Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the student to meet all requirements. The student should be familiar with the requirements in the University catalog. Any questions should be directed to the assigned advisor.

Foundations Coursework

All graduate programs require a minimum of 15 hours of courses in psychological foundations. Foundations equivalent to those at PSU taken as a part of a student's undergraduate degree program in which a grade of "C" or higher was earned may be waived by the advisor and are replaced by electives at the graduate level. (Students should consult their advisors.)