

PASTORAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING (M.A.)

Program Policies

The policies in this section are intended to supplement the general GRE policies and procedures that can be found in the Student Resources section of GRE Bulletin.

Individual Remediation Plan Policy

The goal of the program faculty is to help students become successful professional counselors.

Section F.9.a of the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics states, "Counselor educators clearly state to students, prior to and throughout the training program, the levels of competency expected, appraisal methods, and timing of evaluations for both didactic and clinical competencies. Counselor educators provide students with ongoing feedback regarding their performance throughout the training program."

Faculty members have an ethical duty to identify students who may need more support and guidance in order to meet this goal. Once identified, faculty have the ethical duty to remediate, and when remediation is not possible, dismiss students from a counseling program.

Students may need extra support for a number of reasons, including challenges related to

1. maintaining the minimum 3.0 GPA requirements for the program;
2. developing academic research and writing skills;
3. meeting professional standards of behavior in the clinical setting including ethical behavior related to professional boundaries, professional identity, documentation for clinical work, openness to supervision;
4. developing the clinical skills necessary to meet the competency of graduate licensed professional counselor including empathy, reflective listening, integrating theory into practice;
5. managing personal stress, psychological dysfunction, or excessive emotional reactions that interfere with academic and professional functioning.

Remediation is an opportunity for the graduate school to assist a student who is struggling to learn, grow, and improve. An Individual Remediation Plan (IRP) is a formal plan that outlines and documents the individual needs of the student and the plan to successfully meet such demonstrated need. An IRP is initiated by a University faculty member when evidence has been documented of inadequate academic, research, professional, ethical, or clinical skills demonstrated by the student. Feedback is documented formally by

- Academic Advising Form including GPA (each semester);
- Semester Student Evaluation Review & Letter (each year);
- Fitness Review Level 1 Form (after Basic Skills Class pre-internship);

- Clinical Readiness Form (pre-internship meeting with clinical director);
- student self-evaluation of clinical work (four times during the internship year);
- site supervisor evaluation of clinical work (four times during the internship year);
- clinical instructor evaluation of clinical work (four times during the internship year).

Information to complete the above forms is provided in a number of ways, including but not limited to

- feedback from academic instructors;
- major academic papers, case presentations, verbatim;
- One on one and group supervision experiences by the site supervisor and by university supervisors;
- review of clinical documents by the site;
- site visits by the clinical director;
- the final integrative case paper rubric.

When there is documentation of a student not achieving the necessary academic, research, professional, ethical, or clinical skills, the program faculty will decide at their monthly faculty meetings whether an IRP is needed. If it is indicated by the program faculty, a meeting will be arranged with the University clinical director and the student. The meeting may also include the site supervisor, other core program faculty, or other administrators as necessary. Collaboration with the student will provide the opportunity for a student to discuss the need of the IRP, respond to the need for an IRP, and invest in the process of remediation. The IRP will serve as a contract between the student and the program. It will outline specific areas of improvement, craft student goals, indicate warranted intervention to meet the student goals, and indicate the period to meet the goals. The IRP will be signed by the student, the faculty adviser, the clinical supervisor, and other academic administrators as indicated. A timeline for remediation will be specified in the individual meeting with the student, and a summary of the meeting and recommendations will be provided to the student (and placed in the student file).

Interventions that may be indicated to meet student goals include but are not limited to

1. personal therapy;
2. increased meetings with site supervisor;
3. increased monitoring of clinical work by site supervisor including tape review or verbatim reviews;
4. faculty directives related to internship site, client population, and client load;
5. additional meetings with program faculty;
6. repeated or additional course work;
7. academic writing seminar.

If the IRP process does not rectify the specified issues, or when the student is unable or unwilling to follow the IRP, the student may be assisted in implementing a program or career shift or dismissed from the program in accordance with GRE policies. There may be cases where the critical nature of the issue will warrant immediate dismissal from the program.

If a student wishes to appeal the decision of the program faculty for dismissal from the program, they may follow the appeal procedures outlined by the University grievance policy.

Grievance Policy

Fordham University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, age, sex, gender, national origin, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, citizenship status, veteran status, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic predisposition, carrier status, or any other basis prohibited by law. The Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education employs the following Grievance Procedure covering all matriculated and non-matriculated students. Students who believe they have been discriminated against with respect to participation in access to, or benefits of, any program or activity within the school are requested to use the following Grievance Procedure.

Informal Procedure

Since a formal grievance procedure is a last resort, it is assumed that every effort to resolve the grievance through informal approaches has been conducted by the concerned parties. Nevertheless, the use of informal procedures is not a prerequisite for the submission of the grievance through the formal procedure.

Formal Procedure

Step I: School-Wide

- A. An alleged grievance must be brought in writing to the attention of the dean within 25 school calendar days from the time of the incident.
- B. The dean will convene the standing committee, which will conduct the review and which must receive a full written statement of the grievance and pertinent substantiating information from both the aggrieved and the person charged at least five days prior to the review date. All review procedures will be restricted to the parties involved. It is expected that this process will take place within 15 school calendar days after the student submits a written statement to the dean.
- C. This standing committee is to be composed of two faculty members selected by the faculty for staggered terms of two years and one student selected by the student association for a one-year term. Should one of the standing committee members be the person charged, the dean shall appoint an alternate.
- D. The parties will be given an opportunity to attend the meetings and to present information to the committee.
- E. The standing committee will render a written statement of the findings together with recommendations for appropriate remedies to the dean within five school calendar days after the review.
- F. The dean will meet with the concerned parties within 10 school calendar days to present recommendations for resolution of the grievance to the concerned parties.
- G. Should the dean be the person charged, an alleged grievance must be brought in writing to the assistant chairperson within 25 calendar

days. The associate dean will convene the standing committee, receive its report, and communicate recommendations for resolution of the grievance to the concerned parties within the same time limits as specified above.

Step II: University-Wide

- A. If either the aggrieved or the individual school against whom charges have been brought feel that the matter has not been resolved, either party may appeal in writing to the appropriate area vice president within 10 school calendar days after the meeting between the dean and the concerned parties in Step I. The appeal should include 1) a concise summary of the charge(s) and 2) an explanation of why the school-wide process was considered unsatisfactory.
- B. The vice president will review the grievance process to determine whether proper procedures were followed, or if new evidence not available in Step I is being presented. If the vice president is not satisfied with the handling of the grievance investigation, the vice president will return the grievance to the dean for further investigation. The concerned parties will be notified of the vice president's actions and decisions within 20 school calendar days of the receipt of the appeal.
- C. The vice president for academic affairs is the last court of appeal, and the vice president's decision will be final.

Student File Policy

A copy of the University's policy and guidelines regarding student records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) are available from enrollment services.

The program maintains specific documents related to student progress in student files. Active student files are located in the clinical director's office. The office remains locked when the clinical director is not present. The non-active student files are scanned by the dean's office and kept electronically. Only the assistant dean and the administrative assistant have access to the computer files. All computers are password protected and require dual authentication to access the computer. Once scanned, the paper files are kept in a locked closet for a period of 10 years. Only the dean's office has access to the closet.

The following forms are maintained in student files kept in the assistant dean's office:

1. **Application for Admission**
2. **Signed Handbook Welcome Letter**
This form indicates that the student has read and agrees to the policy and procedures outlined in the Pastoral Mental Health Counseling Handbook.
3. **Academic Advising Progress Form**
This form is completed and updated by the student with the academic adviser during academic advising each semester.
4. **Yearly Student Evaluation Form**
This form is completed by the faculty every May during the student evaluation process and reviewed with the student.
5. **Fitness Review Basic Skills Form**
This form is completed by the instructor of the basic skills course and reviewed with the student prior to the end of the course.

6. Internship Placement Forms

This series of forms is found in the appendices of the student handbook and are required to be filled out by the internship site and returned to the faculty clinical director prior to starting an internship. It is the student's responsibility to be certain the forms are turned in prior to internship. The forms include detailed information on the internship site, the site supervisor, the days and times a student will be at the site, and documentation of the site supervisor's ability to supervise interns.

- a. Agency Opening Form
- b. Educational Agreement
- c. Supervisor Dossier
- d. Contract (if required by site)

7. Monthly Hours Log

This form is in the appendices of the student handbook and must be filled out each month during internship by the student, signed by the student and the site supervisor, and handed into the Fordham faculty clinical director.

8. Clinical Integration I PCSE Forms

These forms are located in the appendices of the student handbook. will be completed by the student, site supervisor, and the Fordham faculty member, and will serve as a guide to a student's areas of strength and areas of growth as a professional counselor.

- a. Student mid semester clinical evaluation form
- b. Student final clinical evaluation form
- c. Site supervisor midterm form
- d. Site supervisor final form
- e. Clinical instructor midterm form
- f. Clinical instructor final form

9. Clinical Integration II PCSE Forms

- a. Student final clinical evaluation form
- b. Site supervisor final form
- c. Clinical Instructor final form

10. Integrative Case Paper & Graded Rubric**11. Student Review Evaluation Letters (if applicable)**

This letter is sent to students and remains in their file if a student demonstrates unsatisfactory academic or professional/clinical skills.

12. Individual Remediation Plan & Subsequent Letters (if applicable)**13. Waiver/Course Substitution Form (if applicable)**

This form is completed when a student wishes to waive or substitute a course taken at the GRE or another graduate school. It must be completed by the student and approved and signed by the academic adviser and the program director.