



VCU

College of Health Professions

Department of Rehabilitation Counseling

Concentrations:

Clinical Mental Health Counseling

Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling

STUDENT HANDBOOK

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Table of Contents

Contact Information	5
Virginia Commonwealth University General Information	6
Department of Rehabilitation Counseling	7
Student Learning Outcomes	7
Clinical Rehabilitation Concentration Outcomes	8
Clinical Mental Health Concentration Outcomes	8
VCU Department of Rehabilitation Counseling	8
Accreditation	8
Admission Deadlines and Requirements	8
Faculty Adviser	8
Department Communication and Technology	9
Transfer Credit	9
Historical Repeat Policy	10
Time Limit for Degree Completion	10
Keys to Planning a Course Sequence	10
Student Profile Data and Enrollment	11
Financial Aid	11
Disability Services	11
Title IX Support and Resources	11
Global Education	11
Academic Honesty, Student Conduct, and Artificial Intelligence	12
Student Fees	12
Multicultural Student Affairs	12
Alumni Activities	12
Advanced Certificate Program	13
Master's Program	13
Department of Rehabilitation Counseling Coursework	14
Two Concentrations	15
Course Schedules	16

Prerequisites	18
Foundations of Clinical Training	18
<i>Code of Ethics.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Certification and Licensure.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Professional and Student Organizations.....</i>	<i>20</i>
ARCA	20
Chi Sigma Iota	20
Other	21
<i>Professional Conduct/Expectation of Students</i>	<i>21</i>
Personal Counseling Services	21
Psychosocial Impairment	22
Personal Growth Requirement.....	22
<i>Academic Progress: Developmental and Retention Policy</i>	<i>22</i>
Problem Identification	23
Recurring or Critical Problems.....	23
Insufficient Progress, Dismissal	23
Due Process Procedures.....	24
Removal or Dismissal/Termination from Site.....	24
Academic Review Committee	24
Leave of Absence	25
Withdrawal	25
Confidentiality.....	25
CHP Appeal Policy	26
<i>Conditions for Retention</i>	<i>28</i>
Criminal Background Checks	28
Required Immunizations.....	29
<i>Biographical Sketches of Department Faculty.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Student Services and Additional Resources.....</i>	<i>35</i>
Professional Counseling Resources.....	37
<i>Appendix A</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>Appendix B.....</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Appendix C.....</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Appendix D</i>	<i>41</i>

Chair's Welcome to VCU's Department of Rehabilitation Counseling

Dear Students,

We welcome you to the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling at Virginia Commonwealth University. The graduate education journey in which you are engaging will prove to be both challenging and rewarding. It is our hope that as you put effort and dedication into your education that you will experience a period of unprecedented growth. We are here to help you achieve that goal.

The program at VCU was established in 1955, and is currently ranked 4th among Rehabilitation Counseling training programs in the nation, according to U.S. News & World Report. With nearly 2,000 alumni, our program has prepared qualified professionals who work within their communities to enhance the mental health, wellbeing, and engagement of people with disabilities and chronic illness.

Rehabilitation Counseling is a diverse and dynamic profession which enjoys a faster than average projected employment growth (U.S. Department of Labor), as well as, one of the top ten most meaningful careers (Payscale.com). Our concentrations in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling prepare graduates to provide holistic and comprehensive services. The profession values community inclusion, social justice, focusing upon the strengths and assets of individuals who experience cognitive, physical, sensory, addiction and/or psychiatric conditions.

Our 60-credit Master of Science in Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling program has two concentrations (Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling), both of which are fully accredited by The Council for Accreditation on Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP). The Advanced Certificate in Professional Counseling program is designed for persons with master's degrees from VCU or other institutions who are seeking the Licensed Professional Counselor credential in Virginia or other states. The certificate program can also benefit those who would like to become CRC certified.

The faculty has years of experience and are engaged in research and service work that is having a direct impact on the field and our communities. I encourage you to reach out to the faculty and get to know them and learn about the scholarly work in which they are involved. We are excited that you are pursuing your graduate education with us, and we look forward to your contribution to our program and ultimately the profession of Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling. It is our hope that you will find the profession to be a meaningful and rewarding experience.

Sincerely,



Jared C. Schultz, Ph.D., CRC, HS-BCP
Department Chair

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Virginia Commonwealth University General Information

Founded: 1838

Campus: Located on 150 acres in downtown Richmond, Virginia. There are two campuses, the Monroe Park Campus and the Medical Campus. Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) enrolls over 28,000 students. The university employs over 2,400 full-time faculty members. Virginia Commonwealth University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award baccalaureate, master's, doctoral and first-professional degrees.

Type: VCU is a premier urban, public research university focused on academic success.

Mission Statement: As the premier urban, public research university in Virginia, VCU's mission is to advance knowledge and student success through its commitments to:

- an engaged, learner-centered environment that fosters inquiry, discovery and innovation in a global setting;
- research that expands the boundaries of new knowledge and creative expression and promotes translational applications to improve human health;
- interdisciplinary collaborations that bring new perspectives to complex problems and mobilize creative energies that advance innovation and solve global challenges;
- health care that strives to preserve and restore health for all people, to seek the cause and cure of diseases through groundbreaking research, and to educate those who serve humanity;
- diversity that provides a climate of inclusion, a dedication to addressing disparities wherever they exist, and an opportunity to explore and create in an environment of trust;
- sustainable, university-community partnerships that enhance the educational, economic and cultural vitality of the communities VCU serves in Virginia and around the world.

Vision Statement: VCU will be a premier urban, public research university distinguished by its commitment to:

- the intellectual and academic success of a diverse student body;
- research and discovery that advances knowledge, inspires creativity and improves human health;
- the global engagement of students, faculty and staff that transforms lives and communities.

VCU Core Values

- **Accountability** – committing to the efficient and transparent stewardship of our resources to achieve institutional excellence.
- **Achievement** – ensuring distinction in learning, research and scholarly pursuits, service, and patient care.
- **Collaboration** – fostering collegiality and cooperation to advance learning, entrepreneurship, and inquiry.

- **Freedom** – striving for intellectual truth with responsibility and civility, respecting the dignity of all individuals.
- **Innovation** – cultivating discovery, creativity, originality, inventiveness, and talent.
- **Service** – engaging in the application of learning and discovery to improve the human condition and support the public good at home and abroad.
- **Diversity** – ensuring a climate of trust, honesty and integrity where all people are valued and differences are recognized as an asset.
- **Integrity** – adhering to the highest standards of honesty, respect and professional and scholarly ethics.

Department of Rehabilitation Counseling Mission

The VCU Department of Rehabilitation Counseling serves as a national leader in the professional preparation of Licensed Professional Counselors, Certified Rehabilitation Counselors, and Nationally Certified Counselors who will exercise skill and competence on a high technical and ethical level. Department faculty conduct active programs of research and service, and maintain high levels of teaching competence. In partnership with students, community agencies, and consumer and professional organizations, the Department endeavors to enhance the personal, social and economic well-being of the clients they serve, regardless of disability or other life circumstances.

Department Goals

- To provide students with educational experiences that facilitate the development of knowledge, skills and values necessary to practice as a licensed professional counselor and/or certified rehabilitation counselor
- To provide students with learning opportunities that foster culturally responsive and ethical counseling practices
- To provide students with clinical training environments that prepare them to work in a variety of counseling settings
- To provide an inclusive education that focuses on the intersections of people's identities
- To interweave a mental health and disability focus into all course work

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Develop a professional counseling identity, and demonstrate ability to function ethically and effectively within settings that offer counseling, advocacy, and related services to diverse populations.
2. Identify a range of counseling theories and skills applicable in a pluralistic society with individuals, groups, couples and families, and demonstrate the ability to apply this knowledge in a therapeutic manner to promote change and growth.
3. Demonstrate respect for the impact of social and cultural factors on human behavior and the role of individual differences in establishing and working toward counseling objectives.
4. Identify and apply the stages of development throughout the lifespan, including developmental goals, when working with individuals, regardless of disability or other

- impairing conditions.
5. Identify and apply career development theory and tools.
 6. Use case management techniques and describe the range of community resources available.
 7. Use appropriate assessment techniques when working with individuals and utilize relevant information within the counseling process.
 8. Read and evaluate professional research literature and incorporate such information into their professional development.
 9. Demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to be an effective professional counselor through supervised practicum and Internship experiences.

Clinical Rehabilitation Concentration Outcomes

- Participate in clinical experiences focused on providing a variety of counseling services with clients that include people with disabilities and/or chronic illness. Students will perform a wide range of therapeutic services among diverse client populations.

Clinical Mental Health Concentration Outcomes

- Participate in clinical experiences focused on providing a variety of counseling services that address mental health and emotional well-being. Students will perform a wide range of therapeutic services among diverse client populations.

VCU Department of Rehabilitation Counseling

Accreditation

The Department of Rehabilitation Counseling was established in 1955 and is currently accredited by The Council for Accreditation on Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP) for the degree of Master of Science of Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling. We are currently accredited through 2032.

Admission Deadlines and Requirements

Full- and part-time students can be accommodated by the program. All pertinent materials must be received in the department by Jan. 15 for fall admission. See the Department's website <https://rehab.chp.vcu.edu/> for links to admissions procedures. A complete set of application materials is also available online through the Graduate School website, which can be found here: <https://www.vcu.edu/admissions/apply/graduate/>

Faculty Adviser

Every graduate student must have a Faculty Adviser from the Department. When the student is accepted into the Department, a Faculty member is appointed to serve as an Adviser to the student to provide guidance about course selection and scheduling, to supervise his/her/their research (if applicable), to provide information about career options and assistance with professional development, and to act as a channel of communication with the Department, to other Departments, and to the School of Graduate Studies. **Communication between the student and their adviser is expected.**

When the student receives notification of admission to the Department, **it is his/her/their responsibility to contact the Faculty Adviser to arrange for an individual program planning meeting.** This is usually done as part of the Orientation program when a student first begins in the program. Ultimately, students are responsible for the proper completion of their academic programs. They must be familiar with the Graduate Bulletin (catalog) as well as all additional academic regulations promulgated by individual schools and departments. Students should also consult with Faculty Advisers on a regular basis to ensure orderly progress through the entire program of study, select clinical placement sites, select electives, and plan their careers. Students will find their Faculty Advisers to be sources of fruitful guidance, advice, support, and information throughout their graduate programs. It is not unusual for a mentor-type relationship to continue with the Faculty Adviser throughout the professional career of the student.

Department Communication and Technology

The Department hosts a Canvas site that contains pertinent information such as updated department and clinical handbooks. Please access this site for current versions of these documents. The Department periodically sends department emails containing timely information regarding courses, faculty, student updates, job and volunteer opportunities, community resources for individuals with disabilities, and workshops and symposia of interest to the rehabilitation professional.

Email is considered an official method for communication at VCU because it delivers information in a convenient, timely, cost-effective, and environmentally aware manner. Students are expected to check their official VCU email on a frequent and consistent basis in order to remain informed about university-related communications. The university recommends checking email daily. **Students are responsible for the consequences of not reading, in a timely fashion, university-related communications sent to their official VCU student email account.** This policy ensures that all students have access to this important form of communication. It ensures students can be reached through a standardized channel by faculty and other staff of the university as needed. Mail sent to the VCU email address may include notification of university-related actions, including disciplinary action.

There are some classes that may require access to technology such as videoconference. See VCU's guidelines for the student computer initiative: <https://sci.vcu.edu>

Transfer Credit

If a student matriculated in another graduate degree program at VCU or another university, a maximum of 24 semester hours of graduate credit may be transferred if that credit has *not been applied* previously to another degree. Transfer credits must carry a grade of "B" or higher from an accredited institution. Acceptance of transfer credit is made at the level of the Department Chair and Dean of the College of Health Professions, and is contingent upon demonstrating that the transfer course meets all of the required CACREP content areas of the course it will be replacing. Transfer credits earned as a non-degree seeking graduate student are limited to six semester hours of credit. Credits earned as deficiency hours or to demonstrate the ability to compete at the graduate level, though transferable, may not be applied to the 60-semester hour program of study. The **non-degree seeking student transfer policy** can be found [here](#).

Historical Repeat Policy

With the necessary program approval, a graduate student can apply the historical repeat policy for a didactic course in which a grade of C, D or F is earned on the first attempt for a maximum of two graduate courses during the degree. The credits attempted and the grade points earned for all excluded historical repeats are not included in computing the cumulative and program GPA. A course can be taken as a historical repeat only once (if available) and the passing grade may be counted only once as credits presented toward all GPA calculations. Grades for all attempted courses remain on the student's permanent record. Students may not invoke the historical repeat policy for courses using the pass/fail (P/F), satisfactory/unsatisfactory/fail (S/U/F) or incomplete/fail (FI) grading system. Additionally, this policy cannot be used for courses in which an honor code violation grade has been assigned.

A repeated course using the historical repeat policy must be completed within the approved period provided by the program and prior to graduation. The student should complete the graduate historical repeat course option form upon completion of the repeated course and prior to graduation. The program GPA will be adjusted at the end of the semester when the historical repeat form is processed. The form is available online at [Records and Registration Forms](#). Students should contact their graduate program directors for confirmation of program participation in the historical repeat grade policy prior to registration. If receiving federal aid, students should also contact their financial counselors for more information about aid during satisfactory academic progress recovery.

Be advised that repeating a course may delay your graduation date and you will need to work with your advisor to both get approval to use the policy and develop a new course plan. <http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/repeated-courses/> .

Time Limit for Degree Completion

The time limit for a graduate degree will not extend beyond a period of six years for graduate certificates and master's degrees and eight years for doctoral degrees. Course work completed before matriculation and applied toward the degree, including course work at VCU and that transferred from other institutions, will be evaluated by the program/department to determine whether it can be used to fulfill degree requirements. For course work that was taken more than eight years prior to the completion of the VCU degree, the program/department will evaluate the course work for acceptability and report those courses deemed acceptable to the dean of the Graduate School.

Keys to Planning a Course Sequence

Students should check with their Faculty Adviser every semester. Some courses must be taken in sequence (e.g., 691, 692, 693/5/7) and students must complete them in order. Students should set a course schedule in their first semester of enrollment to plan for graduation. Students should defer elective or specialization coursework until most required courses are completed. Finally, all students should begin to plan their clinical experiences early in their program.

The first call for a Fall placement is October 1 with the deadline of November 1 *the year before* you would like to enroll in 692. The first call for a Spring placement is May 1 with the deadline of June 1 *the year before* you would like to enroll in 692. Initial informational calls/meetings will occur in October and May. Students are expected to attend in order to be placed for the following year. If this timeline is not adhered to, the department may be unable

to place you during the semester in which you originally intended to enroll in 692.

Student Profile Data and Enrollment

Maximum enrollment is set at approximately 120 students. The student body is currently approximately 75 percent female, 65 percent full time, and culturally diverse. Approximately 20 percent of students have identified themselves as individuals with disabilities.

Financial Aid

Please contact the [VCU Financial Aid office](#) for information specifically regarding financial aid applications and procedures .

Disability Services

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact VCU's Division for Academic Success (<http://das.vcu.edu>). The Division for Academic Success (DAS) offers disability and academic support services to students in the VCU Health Sciences schools: College of Health Professions, Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy.

DAS provides disability support services to students on the MCV Campus who have a documented disability. If a student would like to request accommodations, a meeting with a staff member is recommended at least four weeks before classes are scheduled to begin. The meetings are individual and confidential. **All academic accommodations need to be approved by the DAS.**

Title IX Support and Resources

VCU Equity and Access Services offer important support and services for students who experience assault, interpersonal violence, sexual assault, retaliation, etc. Any university employee who is not a confidential employee is responsible to report prohibited contact to the Title IX Coordinator, including department faculty and staff. See www.equity.vcu.edu for more information.

Global Education

Global Education Office (GEO).

[Global Student Engagement Programs](#): The Global Learning department's global student engagement team organizes many different events and programs to help international students connect with VCU at large, as well as find community in the Richmond area. Some programs of particular note are our [Global Buddies program](#), our [Family Cultural Exchange Program](#), and our monthly Global Cafe's, which are often hosted by VCU student organizations or affinity groups. These programs are a great way for international students to establish a community in Richmond.

[Incoming Student Meet-Ups and Office Hours](#): GEO is committed to ensuring all incoming international students are prepared to be successful at VCU! GEO's Incoming Fall 2025 Student "Meet-Up" dates and times are listed [here](#). At these Meet-Ups, members of our immigration team and global student engagement team share relevant preparatory information, and answer questions regarding housing, visa procurement, health insurance, etc.

Using GEO as a resource for international student needs:

- Please be sure to direct any questions from students regarding [maintaining F-1 status](#), [Full Course of Study \(FCS\)](#), or [employment](#) to GEO's Immigration Services team at geois@vcu.edu.
- Any student questions related to housing, insurance, banking, dependent resources, and more can be sent to the Global Learning global student engagement team at global@vcu.edu.

Academic Honesty, Student Conduct, and Artificial Intelligence

The faculty are exploring ways in which we can include A.I. in our courses, and the role it may have in professional practice. As you can imagine, there are significant ethical and professional identity issues that come with such a revolutionary technology. As we grow in our understanding of, and proficiency with using A.I., we anticipate it will play a larger role in our educational activities and professional practice over time. However, please assume that the use of A.I. for completing coursework and assignments is not appropriate unless otherwise specified by the instructor. If students are unclear as to the use of A.I., seek clarification from respective instructors as it relates to course assignments. Expectations related to original work, creativity, and academic integrity remain consistent in graduate-level work and students should consult the VCU Student Conduct policy [here](#).

Student Fees

The department collects a minimal amount of student fees per credit hour each semester. This fee supports technology software the department uses that is critical toward your education. Our intention is to be good stewards with your investment and believe the software systems to be integral to your success as professionals. The software systems will be discussed further in your Clinical Handbook.

Multicultural Student Affairs

VCU is an urban university, and has over 32,000 students, including 29 percent minority students/students of color and 1,429 international students from 113 countries. The VCU Office of Multicultural Student Affairs assists traditionally underserved and/or underrepresented student populations (i.e. race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender) through advising, support, program development, retention, mentoring and promoting an appreciation of diversity throughout the campus community. More information can be found here: <http://www.omsa.vcu.edu>

Alumni Activities

With over 2200 alumni, the Department enjoys the involvement and support of an active alumni association that has regularly scheduled meetings. Social and other alumni activities are organized through the Department, College of Health Professions, and University on an ongoing basis. The program celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2025.

Advanced Certificate Program

Post-master's preparation is available through the Advanced Certificate in Professional Counseling. This is designed for people with master's degrees from VCU or other institutions who are seeking the Licensed Professional Counselor credential in Virginia or other states. The certificate program can also benefit those who would like to become CRC-certified. All students will work with their assigned adviser to determine a course schedule relevant for their individual needs.

Master's Program

The VCU Department of Rehabilitation Counseling, formed in 1955, is ranked 4th in the nation in US News and World Report Rankings. The 60-credit master's degree in Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling prepares students for licensure as professional counselors (LPC) and rehabilitation counselors (CRC). Students have multiple options for completing the program ranging from accelerated (intended for those who are working part-time or less and/or don't have other substantial life commitments outside of school) to part-time.

The program includes a 100-hour practicum and a 600-hour internship in an approved, supervised practice setting. Students can enroll in Internship after the completion of 30 credit hours in the program. Following graduation, students may practice in supervised settings such as community services boards, public and private rehabilitation settings, hospitals and other settings. The Virginia Counseling Board requires an additional 3,400-hour residency with 2,000 supervised counseling practice hours in order to qualify for independent practice as licensed professional counselors (LPCs).

On campus and Distance Learning Modality Options

The program has both on-campus and distance formats for many classes. We also offer hybrid courses where distance and campus students are combined. Some distance courses have synchronous components where students are required to virtually attend a class at a specific time. Examples of current courses that require synchronous learning through virtual platforms are 611, 612, 616, 691, 692, 693/5. On-campus students are generally expected to take all courses in an on-campus during their first semester and at least 50% of on-campus courses overall. Students can petition the chair for exceptions on a case-by-case basis, and accommodations can be made, with a review of the larger context. The distance program is limited to students living a significant distance from campus and requires at least two courses that include intensive components with face-to-face instruction on campus (e.g., Counseling Techniques, Group Counseling). These on-campus experiences are structured in a several consecutive-day format.

Be advised that students that live within a 60-mile radius of Richmond, VA may be required to submit additional information regarding their preference to enroll in the DL program rather than the on-campus program. If you are a student located within this area, be advised that you will need to plan ahead, in conjunction with your adviser and/or clinical coordinator, if you need to enroll in a DL option of any course in the clinical sequence (e.g., 691, 692, 693/5/7). The department suggests that students connect with their adviser upon entering the program to discuss their course of study related to DL/campus learning options.

Department of Rehabilitation Counseling Coursework

All course descriptions can be found in the VCU Graduate Bulletin located [here](#).

Students are **required to complete 60 credits**. Required courses (all designated as RHAB in the course listings) are as follows:

- 521 – Addictions Counseling
- 522 - Clinical Evaluation, Assessment, and Treatment Planning in Addiction Counseling
- 523 - Contemporary Issues in Addiction Counseling
- 525 – Introduction to Rehabilitation Counseling
- 526 – Introduction to Mental Health Counseling
- 611 – Theories of Professional Counseling
- 612 - Group Counseling Theories and Techniques
- 615 – Human Growth and Development
- 616 – Couples and Family Counseling
- 623 – Career Counseling and Job Placement
- 624 – Assessment and Evaluation
- 625 – Research and Program Evaluation
- 633 – Case Management
- 640 – Medical and Psychosocial Aspects of Disabilities
- 642 – Diagnosis and Treatment of Mental Health Disorders
- 644 - Crisis and Trauma Counseling
- 654 – Multicultural Counseling
- 691 – Counseling Techniques
- 692 – Counseling Practicum

1 of the following internship sequence:

- 693 – Supervised Practice in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling (9 credits)
- 695 - Supervised Practice in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (9 credit)

Students will also take either **a one 3-credit elective or three 1-credit electives** during their course of study. Some examples of offered electives include:

- Positive Psychology and Wellbeing
- Couples and Sexuality
- Crisis and Trauma
- Advanced Issues in Rehabilitation
- ADA Implementation and Issues
- American Sign Language
- Advanced and applied CBT
- Play Therapy
- Advanced Motivational Interviewing
- Clinical Evaluation, Assessment and Treatment Planning in Substance Abuse
- Contemporary Issues in Substance Abuse Treatment and Recovery
- Narrative Therapy
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy
- Appreciative Leadership

Two Concentrations

Current students will be enrolled in one of the following concentrations:

- Clinical Mental Health Counseling
- Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling

Students' transcripts will show the chosen concentration, but the degree title will be "MS in Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling". The diploma will have only the degree title printed. While students are in the program, the concentration will also show in Degree Works.

Understanding the Concentrations

The American Counseling Association defines counseling as: A professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals.

The VCU Department of Rehabilitation Counseling serves as a national leader in the professional preparation of Licensed Professional Counselors and Certified Rehabilitation Counselors who will exercise skill and competence on a high technical and ethical level. Department faculty conduct active programs of research and service, and maintain high levels of teaching competence. In partnership with students, community agencies, and consumer and professional organizations, the Department endeavors to enhance the personal, social and economic well-being of the clients they serve, regardless of disability or other life circumstances. The Master's in Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling at Virginia Commonwealth University has two concentrations in which students are able to enroll. The concentrations are in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling. While both concentrations lead to licensure in Virginia as a Licensed Professional Counselor, there are some distinct differences in these concentrations. Concentrations are considered areas of specialization – the opportunity to achieve an advanced skill set in a particular counseling specialty area.

Our program is dedicated to providing an inclusive education that focuses on the intersections of people's identities, and interweaves a mental health and disability focus into all coursework. The concentrations mainly differ at the clinical experience level, allowing for the advancement of specialized counseling skills focused in one of the two areas.

Clinical Rehabilitation Counselors (CRC) use counseling to assist people with disabilities to achieve their goals and realize their full potential in their chosen communities and environments. Rehabilitation Counseling is defined by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) as "a systematic process that assists persons with physical, mental, developmental, cognitive, and emotional disabilities to achieve their personal, career, and independent living goals in the most integrated setting possible through the application of the counseling process. The counseling process involves communication, goal setting, and beneficial growth or change through self-advocacy, psychological, vocational, social, and behavioral interventions." (<https://crrccertification.com>)

This concentration will allow graduates to be eligible for the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor certification immediately upon graduation. This concentration meets all academic requirements to become a Licensed Professional Counselor in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling skill sets include but are not limited to: individual and group counseling; conducting career and work-related assessments; engaging in job analysis, work site modification, and transferrable skills analysis; assisting people to develop job readiness and work preparation; advocating with people who have disabilities and chronic illness; conducting diagnostic interviews and mental status examinations; using symptom inventories,

psychoeducational, and personality assessments; gathering biopsychosocial histories; assessing assistive technology needs; and conducting assessments for treatment planning.

Clinical Mental Health Counselors (CMHC) use counseling to both prevent and treat a broad range of mental health issues. Mental health counselors treat the cognitive, behavioral, and emotional aspects of mental health and substance use conditions. They work with individuals, families, couples, and groups in a variety of community-based, residential, outpatient, and private settings. Clinical Mental Health Counseling skill sets include but are not limited to: individual and group counseling; intake interviewing; conducting mental status, biopsychosocial, and mental health assessments; caseload management; diagnosis and treatment planning; developing interventions for the prevention and treatment of a broad range of mental health issues; and interfacing with integrated behavioral health care professionals. This concentration meets all academic requirements to become a Licensed Professional Counselor in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Typical Clinical Sites

These two professional specialties utilize many of the same skill sets and knowledge domains to accomplish their objectives. However, the nature of their work and way that counseling skills are employed will depend on the type of job setting, client population, and other contextual factors. Typical clinical sites for students specializing in *Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling* may include but are not limited to: state agencies such as Virginia Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired or Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitation Services, community-based employment services organizations, university offices of services for students with disabilities, and evidence-based service programs of VCU's Rehabilitation Research and Training Center. Typical clinical sites for students specializing in *Clinical Mental Health Counseling* may include but are not limited to: hospitals with psychiatric inpatient units, state mental hospitals, addiction treatment facilities, municipal behavioral health authorities, nonprofit organizations providing mental health services, and Community Services Boards which provide outpatient mental health services in Virginia.

Individual Professional Identity Development

Professional identity development is a lifelong process, not a single event. Professionals continue to develop and grow in their knowledge, skill sets, and professional identity. The concentration that a student chooses should be a reflection of the interest of the student at that time in their professional journey. However, the selection of a concentration at the time of graduate education is a professional starting point, not a final decision. Students graduating from the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling are prepared academically in areas of rehabilitation and mental health, and are poised to explore additional areas of training and specialty areas post-graduation. Continuing education, professional training, supervision, and consultation are important areas for professional development over time and are encouraged throughout career journeys.

Course Schedules

The department offers flexible timelines to allow for students to engage in life outside of school. **Given the demanding nature of graduate-level coursework, the department strongly suggests that the accelerated program only be taken by students who are working part-time or less and/or don't have other substantial life commitments.** Be advised that several courses (e.g., 692, 693/5) require weekly engagement (10+ hours) in clinical placements outside of school hours and in addition to weekly class requirements.

See the options below and discuss the most appropriate one with your adviser prior to registering for classes. Note: Internship cannot be started until **30 credits** have been earned. Internship/elective schedules may vary based on site and should be coordinated with clinical coordinator and advisor.

Suggested Course Schedules

Note: Parentheses indicate the number of credits.

2 Year Plan – Accelerated Option

Year	Fall Schedule	Spring Schedule	Summer Schedule
1 (30 Total Credits)	526-Intro Mental Health Counsel 611-Theories Prof Counseling 623-Career Couns/Job Placement 640-Med/Psych Aspects Disability (12 Total Credits)	525-Intro Rehabilitation Couns 624-Assessment/Evaluation 654-Multicultural Counseling 691-Counseling Techniques (12 Total Credits)	521-Addiction Counseling 633-Case Management (6 Total Credits)
2 (30 Total Credits)	616-Couples/Family Couns 625-Research/Program Eval 642-Mental Health Disorders 692- Counseling Practicum (12 Total Credits)	612-Group Counseling 693/5- Supervised Clinical Practice (6) Elective (3) (12 Total Credits)	615-Human Growth & Development 693/5 - Supervised Clinical Practice (3) (6 Total Credits)

3 Year Plan

Year	Fall Schedule	Spring Schedule	Summer Schedule
1 (21 Total Credits)	526-Intro Mental Health Counsel 611-Theories Prof Counseling 623-Career Couns/Job Placement (9 Total Credits)	525-Intro Rehabilitation Couns 624-Assessment/Evaluation 654-Multicultural Counseling (9 Total Credits)	521-Addiction Counseling (3 Total Credits)
2 (21 Total Credits)	616-Couples/Family Couns 640- Med/Psych Aspects Disability 642-Mental Health Disorders (9 Total Credits)	612-Group Counseling 691-Counseling Techniques Elective (3) (9 Total Credits)	633-Case Management (3 Total Credits)
3 (18 Total Credits)	625-Research/Program Eval 692-Counseling Practicum (6 Total Credits)	693/5-Supervised Clinical Practice (6) (6 Total Credits)	615-Human Growth & Development 693/5-Supervised Clinical Practice (3) (6 Total Credits)

4 Year Plan

Year	Fall Schedule	Spring Schedule	Summer Schedule
1 (15 Total Credits)	526-Intro Mental Health Counsel 611-Theories Prof Counseling (6 Total Credits)	525-Intro Rehabilitation Couns 624-Assessment/Evaluation (6 Total Credits)	521-Addiction Counseling (3 Total Credits)
2 (15 Total Credits)	623- Career Couns/Job Placement 640-Med/Psych Aspects Disability (6 Total Credits)	654- Multicultural Counseling 691-Counseling Techniques (6 Total Credits)	633-Case Management (3 Total Credits)
3 (15 Total Credits)	616-Couples/Family Counseling 642-Mental Health Disorders (6 Total Credits)	612-Group Counseling Elective (3) (6 Total Credits)	615-Human Growth & Development (3 Total Credits)
4 (15 Total Credits)	625-Research/Program Eval 692- Counseling Practicum (6 Total Credits)	693/5-Supervised Clinical Practice (6) (6 Total Credits)	693/5-Supervised Clinical Practice (3) (3 Total Credits)

Prerequisites

Theories (611) and Techniques (691) are prerequisites for Practicum (692)
Practicum (692) is a prerequisite for Internship (693/5)

Foundations of Clinical Training

Experiential clinical training and supervision are the hallmarks of counselor education. As a student in the program, students will undertake a myriad of experiences in the community that will strengthen overall skills and knowledge as a counselor. The clinical courses are sequential nature and build in a developmentally appropriate way so that students are able to increase comfort level, confidence, knowledge and skill as they continue through the program. The Handbook for Supervised Clinical Experiences contains the information necessary to successfully engage in the clinical training portion of the degree.

Code of Ethics

Professional ethical codes guide the work of counselors. All counselors must understand and abide by relevant ethical codes at all times.

The American Counseling Association's codes can be found at <https://www.counseling.org/resources/ethics> .

The Commission on Rehabilitation Counseling Certification's codes can be found [here](#) .

Certification and Licensure

The Master's of Mental Health and Rehabilitation Counseling program will prepare graduates for the Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) credential in Virginia as well as the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) Nationally Certified Counselor (NCC) credentials.

Students (depending upon concentration) are eligible to sit for one of two certification examinations in their last semester in the master's program (or after 75% completion of specified coursework): 1) the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) examination; and 2) the Nationally Certified Counselor (NCC) examination. If you are interested in obtaining both credentials, check with your faculty advisor to develop a plan of study that will accomplish that goal.

For LPC in Virginia, students must complete 3,400 hours of supervised practice after the completion of their degree. While in their program, they will complete coursework required for licensure, as well as 600 hours of relevant supervised clinical experiences to be eligible to apply for licensure. Students also need to pass the NCMHCE (licensure exam).

Distance learning students as well as in-state students may be interested in eventually becoming licensed in other states besides Virginia. The Department cannot guarantee that the current curriculum meets the individual licensure standards of every state. Students who may seek professional licensure in other states will work together with their advisers to determine requirements so that students will be informed of additional coursework they may need to be eligible for licensure in their preferred state.

The Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling Program at VCU has determined that its curriculum includes applicable educational prerequisites for professional licensure for counseling in Virginia and the following states (as of Summer 2025): Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, West Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming. The Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling Program has determined that its curriculum ***does not*** immediately satisfy all of the requirements of the following states (as of Summer 2023): Arkansas, California, Florida, Idaho, Kansas, Maryland, Montana, Nevada, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont, Puerto Rico. Please note, that it is possible that licensure requirements in other states have changed since we last checked and so consult the licensure requirements of the individual states if you have any questions.

However, just because a state's requirements are not met immediately with the requirements of VCU's Rehabilitation and Mental health Counseling program, this does not mean that they cannot be met with assistance and planning. In some cases, students may need to simply accrue more hours in their internships or take an additional elective. If this will have an impact on your professional plans, reach out to your advisor for guidance.

Certified Substance Abuse Counselor (C-SAC)

The Department of Rehabilitation Counseling is offering specialty coursework for students to earn their Certified Substance Abuse Counseling (CSAC) credential in Virginia.

A CSAC is a certification that shows professional-level training in addictions and substance use prevention, assessment, diagnosis, and treatment. This credential can help counselors be prepared to work directly with substance use disorders and people in recovery across the continuum of care. Enrolled Master's degree students can elect to complete additional coursework and their clinical placement at an approved site to earn the didactic and clinical experience necessary to achieve this credential. Interested students will work with their advisor, once enrolled, to determine an appropriate course of study.

**Be advised that the attainment of all necessary coursework will extend beyond the timeframe discussed in the accelerated program format for the MS program.*

Professional Counseling Certificate students may enroll in the coursework they need to achieve the CSAC credential. Since most students require an individualized course plan based on their previous educational experience, certificate students will work with their advisor to determine a course of study that will assist them in achieving this credential.

All state board licensing information can be found here:

<http://www.nbcc.org/Search/StateBoardDirectory>

LPC in Virginia - <https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/>

CRCC - <https://www.crccertification.com/>

NBCC - <https://www.nbcc.org/exams>

CSAC -

<https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/Boards/Counseling/ApplicantResources/CSACapplicationinfo/>

Professional and Student Organizations

ARCA

The American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA) is a national chapter of the American Counseling Association (ACA). The primary goal of ARCA is to improve the lives of people with disabilities. The individuals who make up the ARCA organization are counselors, educators and students who come together to enhance and promote the rehabilitation counseling profession.

Here at VCU, we want to follow the path that the national chapter has set. If students want to change lives in a positive manner, counteract negative stereotypes, network, and have fun, then joining the Student ARCA organization at VCU is a great step! Dr. Carolyn Hawley is the faculty liaison for the student chapter and can be reached at: cehawley@vcu.edu

Chi Sigma Iota

Chi Sigma Iota (XSI) is a rapidly growing international counseling academic and professional Honor Society that has invited over 14,000 individuals and 150 chapters to membership since its formation in January, 1985. XSI was established in order to create a link

between students, educators, practitioners, and supervisors in various counseling settings. The objective of XΣI, as stated in its bylaws, is “to promote scholarship, research, professionalism, and excellence in counseling, and to recognize high attainment in the pursuit of academic and clinical excellence in the field of counseling.”

The VCU XΣI chapter, Omega Lambda Iota, is a collaborative chapter with the Counselor Education program on the Monroe Park Campus. This is a wonderful opportunity to join a national, professional honor society for the profession of counseling. The Omega Lambda Iota chapter is established in the VCU and Richmond community and participates in philanthropic and educational events throughout the year. Additionally, there are opportunities to run for leadership positions. Finally, it is a great opportunity to network with students in a different department and increase professional and social connections. Members will also have the option to wear honors cords at graduation to showcase academic and professional success.

In order to be eligible for induction, students must complete at least 9 credit hours and maintain a 3.5 GPA. Formal initiation ceremonies are held in the spring. Dr. Courtney Holmes is the liaison and can be reached at: cmholmes@vcu.edu.

Other

Students are encouraged to participate in various University and professional organizations. Examples of appropriate professional organizations include:

- 1) National Rehabilitation Association (<https://www.nationalrehab.org/>);
- 2) International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals (<http://www.rehabpro.org/>);
- 3) American Counseling Association (www.counseling.org).
- 4) Virginia Counselors Association (<https://www.vcacounselors.org>)

Membership in a professional association gives students a chance to become acquainted with the literature in their chosen profession, to come into personal contact with practicing counselors and other rehabilitation workers, and to learn about potential career opportunities. Department Faculty will be happy to assist the students in making application for membership.

Professional Conduct/Expectation of Students

Students are encouraged to reach beyond what is expected, the department and college hold the expectation of excellence. Theoretical knowledge and practical skills in counseling are basic expectations. Students are encouraged to explore the profession through professional growth opportunities and professional/student organizations. **Students should actively engage in ongoing conversation with faculty, including their faculty adviser, throughout their course of study.** All students are continually evaluated throughout their program on personal and professional standards. See Appendix A for an example evaluation.

Personal Counseling Services

The Department of Rehabilitation Counseling promotes both personal and professional growth in all students. There is no requirement to obtain personal counseling services while enrolled in the program. However, the Department supports the participation in such services as the benefit is two-fold: 1) students gain the experience of being a client and gain personal

empathy regarding the nature of such experience; and 2) students can practice continued self-reflection and work on personal growth. VCU offers free personal counseling services for students. More information can be found [here](http://www.students.vcu.edu/counseling/). (<http://www.students.vcu.edu/counseling/>). [The Center for Psychological Services and Development](https://cpsd.vcu.edu) offers reduced and sliding scale rates: <https://cpsd.vcu.edu>

Psychosocial Impairment

The American Counseling Association (2016) defines impairment as a “significantly diminished capacity to perform professional functions.” Counselors with untreated mental health concerns, trauma, or those that face a crisis that negatively impacts their ability to cope can significantly compromise the effectiveness of counseling and other professional activities. Impairment during the program can impede the student in managing coursework, participating meaningfully in class discussion and exercises, and participating ethically and appropriately in clinical experiences. Faculty and supervisors evaluate student performance as discussed on pg. 23 in the Academic Progress section of this handbook. If a student feels as if they are experiencing significant mental or emotional hardships or facing a significant stressor or crisis and need support or a referral, please contact the adviser. The Division for Academic Success also offers disability and support services (<https://das.vcu.edu/>).

Personal Growth Requirement

Students enrolled in the programs offered by the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling are expected to participate in the role of “clients” in individual or group counseling training experiences during the time they are enrolled as graduate students. This requirement is based on a philosophy that recognizes the value of such an experience to the continuous development of self-awareness and personal identity. The Department faculty members believe that first-hand experience as a client bridges the often-existing gap between intellectual understanding and emotional awareness of the client experience. These experiences will be growth centered and are not intended to provide psychotherapy for students. This experience should focus on personal growth and awareness in addition to specific skills training. Important components could include the following: sharing of here-and-now feelings; working out communication blocks; interpersonal feedback; individual expression of concerns; or expression of feelings about self; significant people in one’s life as well as other members of the counseling training experience. Students are careful to monitor appropriate self-disclosure and keep ethical boundaries. An unwillingness or inability to participate in such experiences may be grounds for intervention or recommended dismissal from the program.

Academic Progress: Developmental and Retention Policy

The Department of Rehabilitation Counseling has developed the following student evaluation and retention procedures. These follow relevant principles and codes found in the Codes of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the American Counseling Association and the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification. All policies are held in conjunction with VCU policies regarding graduate student academic regulations. These standards can be found here: <http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/>

With respect to these guidelines, faculty members consider not only academic abilities and skill performance when making retention decisions about students, but also such aspects as whether the student has demonstrated appropriate levels of maturity, judgment, emotional stability, interpersonal skills, and self-awareness appropriate to fulfill professional roles in counseling.

As professionals who adhere to the ethical standards of the profession, each term, faculty members (in consultation with Practicum and Internship supervisors when applicable) meet in order to evaluate each student's progress in academic work, counseling skills, and intra-personal and interpersonal effectiveness. Each student in the program is evaluated for personal and professional competencies every fall and spring semester, regardless of whether or not they are in clinical placement. Forms such as the Professional and Clinical Performance Review may be utilized. Students assessed as having difficulty in academic, professional/interpersonal, or clinical skill sets will receive feedback concerning their progress from their adviser or faculty supervisor. Instances may arise when a situation requires evaluation and intervention at any time throughout a semester. **However, a situation that involves a significant ethical violation as determined by the departmental faculty may result in the recommendation for immediate dismissal from the program.** Students who are identified as having issues amenable to change in one or more of the areas evaluated are provided the following assistance in order to improve their performance.

Problem Identification

If a student is identified by a relevant stakeholder (e.g., faculty, adviser, site supervisor, other VCU faculty/staff) with a presenting concern regarding their ability to successfully engage professionally with others, it will be addressed by the department. The teaching faculty, adviser, or campus supervisor may reach out to additional faculty to receive input on how the student is participating and engaging in other responsibilities. A faculty member will contact the student to discuss the concerns and possible plan for the student to amend behavior to address concerns. This contact may be provided in a face to face, telephonic, or written format.

Recurring or Critical Problems

If the student is unable or unwilling to address the concerns identified in the previous communication and/or meeting, or the situation is continuing or is critical (e.g., ethical breach), at least two faculty will meet with the student to re-address the ongoing concerns. The concerns will be delineated in writing and given to the student prior to this meeting for student review, unless ethical concerns require more urgent action. During this meeting, the student will be given specific information about the identified problem, the steps needed for resolution, and the time frame allowed prior to determining if further action must be considered. A written contract that states the areas that need to be improved, the methods for improvement, and time frame needed for improvement will be signed. An Academic Review to determine continuation in the program may be conducted for any student who does not meet the required deadline to sign the plan. A student may appeal any decision rendered as a result of the Academic Review, per the College and Graduate School policies.

Insufficient Progress, Dismissal

If a student does not make expeditious progress toward resolution of the identified problem(s) by the specified timeframe, and if the faculty members agree that the student is unlikely to successfully achieve the academic, skills, or intra-and interpersonal effectiveness objectives needed to be successful in the program and the profession, then dismissal of the student from the program will be considered. A team of faculty will do a thorough review of the documentation.

Any request for dismissal is forwarded to the school dean/dean's designee, who reviews the action, signs the form and forwards it to the graduate dean within 10 business days. The graduate dean/dean's designee reviews the action, signs the form, notifies the Office of Records and Registration and sends a dismissal letter to the student via VCU email. This letter must include a statement of the student's right to appeal and inform the student that appeals must be initiated at the program/department and/or school level within 10 business days after receipt of the letter. (see here for the VCU graduate bulletin dismissal information: <http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/dismissal/>)

Due Process Procedures

A student who wishes to challenge a decision of the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling faculty regarding dismissal from the program has the right to an appeal using relevant appeals procedures established by Virginia Commonwealth University. See this link for more information. (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/dismissal/>)

Removal or Dismissal/Termination from Site

If a student is removed or dismissed from a site for personal or professional reasons by request of the site, the site supervisor or department faculty, the student will not be re-placed in a training site during the semester in which the termination occurred and may not be placed the following semester. The student will be unable to complete the clinical course in which they are enrolled. Please note this means a student's matriculation plan may be impacted. A formal developmental process will be evoked and the student will need to show significant improvement in the identified areas before another clinical placement is sought. Depending upon the circumstances and severity of reasons for dismissal from the clinical site, dismissal from the program may also be recommended. Dismissal may be recommended without full developmental proceedings discussed above should the level of ethical and/or professional concern rise to a critical level. The Department does not guarantee a student a second placement, which may jeopardize the ability to continue in the program.

Academic Review Committee

The Academic Review Committee is composed of several department faculty. The purpose of this committee is to evaluate student performance and make recommendations related to a student's academic or professional behavior in the program (including in clinical placement). This committee is convened at the end of each semester to discuss academic concerns (e.g., students carrying less than a 3.0 GPA, or grades below C) and other times throughout the year as needed should a personal/professional situation arise (e.g., dismissal from a clinical placement or egregious ethical concern). The committee makes recommendations related to whether a developmental plan or dismissal from the program is warranted. The committee may also determine whether or not the requirements of an implemented developmental plan have been met by a student.

Prior to a student review by the committee, the student will receive notice of their impending review and will be invited to submit documentation for the committee to review prior to the meeting. The committee will not be involved in every development plan carried out in the department, but is available for review of student situations when deemed necessary due to the nature of concern.

Leave of Absence

Graduate students may request leaves of absence (LOA) from their programs through written appeals to their advisers. The graduate advisers/program directors will forward the requests to the appropriate school dean/dean designee who, following departmental governance procedures, will forward their recommendations and any supporting documentation to the dean of the Graduate School who will respond for the university. Students who are out of compliance with continuous enrollment policies and who have not been granted approved leaves of absence by the graduate dean must reapply for admission to VCU and to their graduate degree programs.

Graduate students with approved leaves of absence are exempted from continuous enrollment requirements for the LOA period. Students should note that while leaves of absence temporarily suspend continuous enrollment requirements, they do not extend time limits for completion of degrees. (See policy on Exceptions: <http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/exceptions/>). Leaves of absence must be requested and approved before or within a current semester. Requests for retroactive leaves of absence will not be approved.

The posting of the leave of absence on the student's academic record prevents registration for the approved leave of absence period. If the student wishes to return to academic study before the end of the approved leave of absence period, the Graduate School must be notified via the Special Action Form process so that the leave of absence is cancelled and the registration hold removed.

Withdrawal

Graduate students in good academic standing, according to the academic rules and regulations articulated in the Graduate Bulletin and by individual graduate programs, may request to withdraw from a graduate program at any time. Students should notify their graduate program directors as soon as possible of the intent to withdraw from the program. The program director will then notify the Graduate School via the Special Action Form procedure. The effective term of withdrawal is recorded as the end of the last term of active registration. Students who choose to withdraw from the program will need to re-apply for admission if they wish to return to the program. There are no guarantees that a student who has chosen to withdraw from the program will be accepted back into the program. All possible variables will be considered including the method and reasons for withdrawal, the student's current mental and emotional well-being, the impact of the withdrawal and proposed re-entry on the cohort and program, as well as other concerns. The department reserves the right to deny re-entry or to require that the student resolve any unfinished business. The Department further reserves the right to require the student to resolve any barriers to successful training or education. The Department may require that the student retake courses that are deemed by the department critical for the student's professional growth. If a student is dismissed from the program, the Dean of the CHP will be notified, followed by the VCU Graduate School. The VCU Graduate School Dismissal procedure can be found here: (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/dismissal/>)

Confidentiality

All proceedings involving disciplinary actions will be held in confidence within the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling faculty and CHP Dean unless to do so would violate legal or ethical guidelines or prevent due process.

CHP Appeal Policy

Students have a right to appeal a dismissal or another decision affecting their academic standing to the Dean of the College of Health Professions.

A student wishing to appeal can do so by submitting a written appeal with pertinent documentation to the Dean within ten (10) business days of notification of the decision. The Dean, or the Dean's designee, has discretion to grant an appeal based on evidence that the appealed decision was reached arbitrarily or capriciously, meaning without regard for applicable academic criteria, requirements or procedures or without reasonable academic judgment.

Consistent with the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity process, “during the appeal process, [students] have the same student status [they] had prior to the departmental action being appealed and can continue to participate in courses. If [students] choose to register for and/or participate in classes while this matter is pending, they do so at their own potential financial risk.” However, departments may determine that the student is not fit to continue clinical training based on a determination that the student's participation in clinical training presents an unreasonable risk to the health or safety of patients or others. For example, if a student is dismissed based on unsatisfactory or unethical performance in the clinical practicum and the student chooses to appeal the decision, they will be permitted to attend and participate in didactic offerings but will not be assigned clinical patient care responsibilities until all appeals are exhausted. If reinstated as a result of appeal, the student may be required to make up clinical assignments missed during the appeal process. In some instances, this may result in delaying a student's graduation date.

Suspension from clinical training is a temporary measure designed to mitigate risk to health and safety and will be lifted upon a showing that the student no longer presents an unreasonable risk to the health and safety of patients or others. The department will notify the student in writing of the decision to suspend their clinical training. A student wishing to contest the suspension of clinical training may contact the department in writing and should include information relevant to a determination that the student can participate in clinical training without unreasonable risk to the health or safety of patients or others.

Appeal Process

Upon receipt of a submitted written appeal, the Dean will appoint an Appeal Panel of faculty and a student, within five business days or as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter, to review the merits of the appeal and make a recommendation to the Dean. The faculty members of the Appeal Panel will be selected from the standing CHP Student Appeals Committee. Each Appeal Panel will be composed of five members, including a chair of the Appeal Panel:

- Four faculty members, including a Chair. At least one shall teach at the same level of the student who is appealing (i.e., at least one faculty who teaches at the undergraduate level if the appealing student is an undergraduate).
- A student enrolled in the program from which the appeal is initiated.

The Dean's designee shall request that the appealing student and the department or program responsible for the appealed decision (each a party to the appeal) submit relevant information in writing within five business days of the request. Requests for time extensions must be submitted to the Dean or their designee.

The Appeal Panel shall maintain the confidentiality of all student and employee information in accordance with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and VCU's personnel policies, respectively.

The Chair shall convene a meeting of the Appeal Panel, in person, by videoconference or by other electronic means, such as email. Following review, the Appeal Panel must decide and recommend to the Dean or their designee one of the following:

- Dismissal or granting of the appeal.
- Mediation of the issue informally with the consent of the student and department chair/program director; or,
- A hearing

Appeal Hearing

If the Appeal Panel determines that a hearing is necessary, the Appeal Panel Chair will schedule a hearing within five business days or as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter and notify all parties. Rules for the hearing are:

1. The hearing will be closed. Only those invited by the Chair, Dean, or their designee may attend.
2. Witnesses (rather than the appealing student and the department or program representative) shall be excluded from the hearing except when being questioned.
3. The appealing student and department or program representative (the parties) remain present throughout the hearing until the Chair of the Appeal Panel calls for closed deliberations. At that point, the hearing concludes, and all but the members of the Appeal Panel leave.
4. An appealing student may have a non-participating advisor of his or her choice. If an advisor is an attorney, the appealing student must notify the Chair of the Appeal Panel, who will notify the Dean or their designee at least forty-eight hours in advance of the hearing and include the name, email address and phone number for the attorney-advisor.
5. The hearing will consist of the following phases:
 - Opening statement by the department chair, program director or duly designated representative describing the academic action subject to the student's appeal and the basis for the action. (Written evidence may be presented.)
 - Opening statement by the student, which includes statement of the grounds upon which the appeal is based. (Written evidence may be presented.)
 - Questioning of the department or program representative by the Appeal Panel, as necessary.
 - Questioning of the student by the Appeal Panel, as necessary.
 - Questioning of other individuals, identified by the parties or by the Appeal Panel, as may be necessary. Either party may ask questions or request clarification of statement made by the individual/s called by the Appeal Panel. To maintain the academic nature of the hearing, the Chair may require all parties to direct questions to the Chair, who will relay the question to the individual for response. The Appeal Panel will consider responses only as they are relevant to the student's appeal. If an appealing student asks questions that are not relevant to the appeal, the Chair may limit the amount of time that an appealing student has to ask questions.
 - Closing summary statements may be made by both parties.
 - Following closed deliberations, the Appeal Panel recommends to the Dean or her designee that the action of the department or program should be upheld, overturned or modified as specified by the Appeal Panel.

Appeal Disposition

The Appeal Panel Chair will submit the recommendation to the Dean or their designee within five business days of the deliberations or as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter. The recommendation must include the rationale for the recommendation and supporting materials.

The Dean shall have final decision-making authority in the matter and shall inform the appealing student and department chair or program director of her decision in writing via university email within five business days of receipt of the Appeal Panel's recommendation or as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter. The Dean's decision is the final decision in the College of Health Professions and, for undergraduate students, there is no further appeal.

Graduate School Review for Appeals Resulting in Dismissal

After the College of Health Professions Student Academic Appeal Process, graduate students may further appeal dismissal from a graduate program to the Dean of the Graduate School as provided in the Graduate Bulletin: <http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/dismissal/>

Conditions for Retention

Academic Requirements

Students are expected to maintain at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA overall in all graduate coursework. Students who fall below a 3.0 GPA will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and may have an opportunity for a probationary academic period during which they remediate their GPA. If a student receives an incomplete ("I") grade in a course, the student and professor must complete an Incomplete Grade form. That form will specify the work to be completed and the deadline for completion. If the required work is not completed by the designated time, the incomplete grade ("I") is changed to an "F". Failure to comply with these requirements may result in academic probation and/or dismissal from the program.

Students may not present courses receiving grades less than "C" for fulfilling degree requirements. At the end of each semester, graduate faculty advisers and program directors will review the academic progress of all graduate students in their programs. The academic standing of any graduate students who receive multiple grades of "C" or any grades of "D" or "F" will be reviewed for possible termination from their programs. Although the grade of "U"(unsatisfactory) is not included in the calculation of the graduate GPA, graduate students who receive one or more grades of "U" will be considered for possible termination.

Once admitted to a degree program, a graduate student is expected to comply with minimum enrollment of at least one full course per 12-month period from the beginning of his/her/their program. A graduate student who has completed course requirements for a degree must register for at least one credit at VCU each Fall and Spring semester until the degree is awarded. Students must be enrolled during their graduation semesters.

Criminal Background Checks

VCU policy does not require students to undergo criminal background checks, drug screenings, credit checks or the like as a condition of acceptance or enrollment. However, clinical practicum and internship are an integral part of your academic program. Many of the clinical affiliates with which the University contracts to provide such clinical experiences

do require criminal background checks, health screenings or drug screens as a condition of allowing students to participate in the clinical experience. Some affiliates may also require credit checks, Department of Motor Vehicles records check, review of professional disciplinary records, registry searches of certain types of sex offenders and/or verification of Social Security Numbers or legal residency.

Students assigned to a clinical rotation or internship at a clinical facility are personally responsible for completing the required checks or screening and assuring that results are obtained by the facility that asks for them. Students also will be required to bear the costs of such tests. It will be the decision of the clinical affiliate whether the student will be allowed to participate in the clinical activities. Virginia Commonwealth University does not assume any responsibility for obtaining or evaluating the results of a criminal background check, drug screen or other check, maintaining the records of results or for delivering them to clinical sites. Students may not request to be assigned only to those sites that do not require such checks. Students who refuse to undergo a criminal background check or drug screen or other required check may not be able to be placed at another facility and consequently may not be able to complete program requirements and graduate. The University will make reasonable efforts to place all enrolled students in clinical training. Recent Virginia legislation changes regarding the legality of cannabis possession do not change above requirements.

Clinical placement is a first step toward a career in the health professions and background checks and drug screens are typical components of hiring processes for such jobs. Sites may or may not follow through or they only do one and not the other. This is unique to agencies and the department doesn't necessarily know what they will do. **For that reason, students should always expect to have a background check and drug screen.** If you have a prescription for a controlled substance, contact the clinical coordinator.

Students are also reminded that licensing boards for certain occupations and professions may deny, suspend or revoke a license, or may deny the opportunity to sit for an examination, if an applicant has a criminal history or is convicted or pleads guilty or *nolo contendere* to a felony or other serious crime. Students should consult the licensing board of their intended profession for further information. Successful completion of a program of study at VCU's College of Health Professions does not guarantee licensure, the opportunity to sit for a licensure examination, certification or employment in the relevant occupation. **Students unable to obtain a clinical site due to questionable background checks or drug screens may be subject to Administrative Review, with a possible recommendation for dismissal from the program. If a student is dismissed from a site because they either refuse a background check/drug screen or other reasons related to the background check/drug screen, they will be unable to be placed that semester and will be required to meet with the clinical coordinator and their advisor and may be subject to Administrative Review, with a recommendation for possible dismissal from the program.**

Required Immunizations

All full-time students are required by the Code of Virginia (Section 23.1-800) to provide documentation of their immunizations by a licensed health professional. If you are unable to provide appropriate documentation, vaccines may be repeated. A registration hold for the upcoming semester will be placed if all required immunizations are not up-to-date.

<https://health.students.vcu.edu/immunizations/required-immunizations/>

REQUIREMENTS FOR HEALTH SCIENCES STUDENTS: (Allied Health, Dental, Medical, Nursing, Pharmacy)

- 3 Hepatitis Bs AND a positive titer
- 2 MMRs after 1st birthday OR a positive titer
- 1 Meningococcal vaccine after the 16th birthday OR a signed waiver
- 3 Polios, with one dose after 4th birthday (required for students ≤ 18 years old; required for students from high-risk countries)
- 1 Tdap within the past 10 years
- 2 Varicella vaccines after the first birthday OR a positive titer
- 1 Influenza vaccine annually
- Tuberculosis testing (2-Step TST or IGRA on admission & annually thereafter; chest x-ray required if testing is positive. Chest x-ray from the last 6 months is required if testing is positive.)

Submitting Your Immunization Record

Submit a Certificate of Immunization on time to avoid a hold for registration at <https://health.students.vcu.edu/web-portal/>! Students can find the Certificate of Immunization Form at this website: <https://health.students.vcu.edu/media/student-affairs-sites/ushs/docs/USHSTeamCopyofCertificateofImmunizationFormJuly2024.pdf> .

Upload your Certificate of Immunization at <https://health.students.vcu.edu/media/student-affairs-sites/ushs/docs/USHSTeamCopyofCertificateofImmunizationFormJuly2024.pdf>.

Students may also fax or email completed forms to: Immunization Department, VCU University, Student Health Services, Fax: (804) 828-3181, Email: ushsimmuniz@vcu.edu . Questions, call (804) 828-9220.

Biographical Sketches of Department Faculty

Amy J. Armstrong, Ph.D., CRC is an associate professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling at Virginia Commonwealth University. She has been involved in advocacy, education and employment issues related to individuals with disabilities for over 40 years. She has extensive experience providing national personnel training on employment of marginalized populations, wellbeing, appreciative inquiry and appreciative leadership. Dr Armstrong has over 20 years of experience in strength based leadership within academia and community organizations. She received an M.A. in Rehabilitation Counseling from Michigan State University and a Ph.D. in Education from VCU. She also has The Appreciative Inquiry Certificate of Positive Business and Societal Change from the Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University and is a certified Appreciative Inquiry Facilitator through the Appreciative Inquiry Commons.

Lauretta (Laurie) Cathers, Ph.D. serves as director of the Bachelor of Science in Health Services Program for the College of Health Professions. In this capacity, she works in collaboration with departments within and outside the college to enhance undergraduate student learning. She has been at Virginia Commonwealth University for over 20 years and has focused mostly on community-based research in HIV and Addiction. She received her PhD in Health Related Sciences, concentration in Rehabilitation Leadership in 2013 and MSW in 2000, both from VCU.

She received her Bachelor's in Communications for Webster University in St. Louis, MO in 1993. She engages in a variety of research, teaching and service projects. She co-developed the Behavioral Science Curriculum; an interdisciplinary collaboration between Rehabilitation Counseling and VCU School of Dentistry. The curriculum focuses on behavior theory, interpersonal communication and patient-centered care. In addition, provides guest lectures on qualitative inquiry, addiction, interpersonal communication at both undergraduate and graduate level courses. Her research methodology experience ranges from randomized clinical trials to qualitative inquiry. Dr. Cathers resides in Richmond, Virginia.

Denise Hall, MS, LPC, NCC, CRC is a licensed professional counselor (LPC), a nationally certified counselor (NCC), a certified rehabilitation counselor (CRC) and a member of Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT). Ms. Hall is currently the Clinical Coordinator in VCU's the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling. Through her career, Ms. Hall has worked along the continuum of care in both public and private mental health and substance abuse systems and maintains many joint collaborations with community partners. Ms. Hall has 17 years of experience in providing training and consultation in Motivational Interviewing among other topics to include Clinical Supervision, Adolescent Development, Trauma-informed care and Substance Misuse. Ms. Hall has extensive experience working in different human service agencies that are developing their own cadre of evidence-based staff and supervisors.

Alena C. Hampton, Ph.D., serves as the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Student Success for the College of Health Professions. She holds a B.A. from Spelman College (psychology) and M.A. and Ph.D. (counseling psychology) degrees from the Ohio State University. She is a licensed clinical psychologist in the state of Virginia. Hampton served as the founding director of the Office of Student Experience here at VCU from 2015 to 2020 and was a staff psychologist and assistant director for clinical services at University Counseling Services from 2008 to 2014. She is active nationally as a member of the American Psychological Association (APA), the Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education (NASPA), and has regularly serves as a SACSCOC evaluator. She has presented nationally on supporting graduate and professional students and has regularly presented in departments and schools across VCU and VCU Health System on implicit bias. Prior to VCU, Hampton provided direct clinical services at a small college counseling center, an inpatient eating disorder clinic, and maintained a small private practice. Her research interests include well-being, resilience, leadership, and the imposter phenomenon.

Carolyn E. Hawley, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling at Virginia Commonwealth University. She has over a decade of experience related to counseling, training, research and education in employment and community service needs of people with disabilities. She completed a fellowship at McGill University's International Centre on Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors and has worked in programs specializing in traumatic brain injury rehabilitation. Dr. Hawley has served on state and national boards. She has experience managing grants through the National Science Foundation and the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research. Her research interests include problem gambling, disability management in the workplace, and the community re-integration needs of veterans. She obtained her M.S. in Rehabilitation Counseling at the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee; and her Ph.D., at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Courtney M. Holmes, Ph.D., LPC, LMFT, CRC, NCC, Certified Clinical Trauma Professional, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling. As a Licensed Professional Counselor and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, she has worked with individuals, families, and couples on a variety of mental health related issues. Dr. Holmes received her MA from Gonzaga University in Mental Health Counseling and her PhD from The College of William & Mary in Counselor Education and Supervision. Dr. Holmes has also serves as a clinical supervisor for counselors-in- training across various specialties, such as clinical mental health, family systems counseling, and rehabilitation counseling. She facilitates Virginia board-approved supervision training for counselors and social workers in the state. Her clinical and supervision work is largely informed by humanistic, feminist, experiential, developmental, psychodynamic/attachment theory and Internal Family Systems. Her research is focused on advancing perinatal, maternal, and parent mental health through a trauma-informed perspective. Dr. Holmes currently serves on projects focused on promoting trauma-informed ultrasound procedures, promoting access to and engagement with quality prenatal care, supporting the parental mental health of families with children with complex medical needs, and working with emerging adults transitioning out of the justice system. She currently serves on several editorial boards of counseling and mental health-related journals. She has received the Outstanding Supervisor Award from the North Central Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (NCACES) as well as the Distinguished Faculty Award for Teaching and Award for Leadership Excellence from the College of Health Professions at VCU.

Kanako Iwanaga, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling program at Virginia Commonwealth University. She earned her Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Counselor Education from the University of Wisconsin–Madison and previously served as an Assistant Professor at Northern Illinois University. Dr. Iwanaga is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor and a Licensed Professional Counselor in Wisconsin. Her professional background includes extensive experience in both practice and research, having worked as a rehabilitation counselor for the Japanese government, a researcher at the National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation in Japan, and a lecturer at Polytechnic University in Tokyo. Dr. Iwanaga has authored over 120 peer-reviewed journal articles and nine book chapters. Her research centers on evidence-based rehabilitation counseling, demand-side employment strategies, positive psychology, health promotion, and the development and validation of psychological and vocational assessment tools for individuals with disabilities from diverse backgrounds. She currently serves as Associate Editor for the Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin and Editorial Reviewer for several journals in the field of rehabilitation counseling. Her work has been recognized with numerous awards, including the National Council on Rehabilitation Education (NCRE) New Career in Rehabilitation Education Award, NCRE Doctoral Student of the Year Award, NCRE Best Doctoral Dissertation Award, three American Rehabilitation Counseling Association Research Awards, and five NCRE William Downey Student Poster Awards.

Christine A. Reid, Ph.D., CRC is a Full Professor who joined VCU in 1997. Her Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Psychology is from Illinois Tech. She has 40 years of experience as a Rehabilitation Counseling educator, researcher, and service provider. She has developed and coordinated service systems such as a university-based counseling center and an office of disability resources. Dr. Reid's research is primarily in the areas of psychometric methodology (focused on the development and validation of assessment instruments and processes related to

rehabilitation counseling), program evaluation, deafness and blindness, distance learning, life care planning, and cultural identity. Dr. Reid has more than 100 publications and 230 professional presentations to her credit, including some in journals or conferences targeted to international audiences. She was awarded over \$7.3 million in grants and contracts for VCU. A Certified Rehabilitation Counselor and Certified Life Care Planner, Dr. Reid was awarded Fellow status from the National Rehabilitation Counseling Association, and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Symposium on Life Care Planning. Dr. Reid has served in leadership roles for the National Rehabilitation Counseling Association, Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification, Council on Rehabilitation Education, Foundation for Life Care Planning Research, Louisiana Vocational Evaluation and Work Adjustment Association, Illinois Deafness and Rehabilitation Association, and chapters of honor societies including Phi Kappa Phi (interdisciplinary), Rho Chi Sigma (Rehabilitation Counseling and services) and Chi Sigma Iota (Counseling). She has also served on the board of directors for the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs.

Jared C. Schultz is a Professor and serves as the Chair of the Department of Rehabilitation at Virginia Commonwealth University. He has been working in the area of mental health and disability services for 30 years, twenty of which have been primarily in counselor education programs. Dr. Schultz's research and scholarly activities have focused primarily on counselor supervision, counselor education, and services to persons with disabilities. He has extensive experience providing consultation and training nationwide in these areas of practice. He has over 70 professional publications, over 120 professional presentations, and has secured a number of grants to support his work. He has served in various professional leadership roles, including as President of the National Council of Rehabilitation Education.

Kelli Gary Talley, Ph.D., MPH, OTR/L, CBIS is an associate professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling (RC) at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in Richmond, VA. She obtained a Bachelor of Science in OT from Chicago State University in Chicago, IL, a Master of Science and Master of Public Health from Columbia University in New York, NY, and a Ph.D. from VCU all while having residual cognitive and emotional deficits from a traumatic brain injury. She has 30 years of clinical practice, 20 years of research, and 14 years of teaching experience at VCU. She is a member of the leadership team for Culture, Race, and Health Core in the VCU Institute on Inclusion, Inquiry, and Innovation. Dr. Talley has authored/co-authored more than 40 peer-reviewed journal articles and five book chapters primarily focused on racial and ethnic minorities and caregivers with TBI and other disabilities. She has written grants to fund the development of an after-school program in Petersburg, VA, to develop her research in TBI and health disparities, and to pay off student loans. She is a past member of the board of directors and the conference planning committee for the Brain Injury Association of Virginia (BIAV) and the national committee for Veterans with special disabilities that reports directly to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in Washington, DC. Currently, she is in the Board of Directors for the Brain Injury Association of America. She has presented at numerous conferences and has been invited as a keynote speaker around the nation and internationally to present her research and her experience of living with a TBI and relying on education and training to become successful and productive.

Christopher C. Wagner is an associate professor and licensed clinical psychologist whose work bridges clinical practice, psychological theory, and systems-level insight. He has provided outpatient, inpatient, and residential treatment to individuals and groups facing a range of health, mental health, and substance use challenges. Dr. Wagner's scholarship has focused primarily on motivational interviewing (MI) and interpersonal processes in behavioral health care. A major

emphasis of his work has been expanding the theoretical scope of MI and advancing its application in group psychotherapy. He is the primary author of *Motivational Interviewing in Groups*, part of the official Guilford Press MI series, which he is currently revising for a new edition. His current work explores how psychological and relational processes shape the human response to emerging global challenges, with a focus on motivation, culture, and intergenerational impact. Dr. Wagner can be reached at ccwagner@vcu.edu.

Waganes (Waggy) A. Zeleke is an Associate Professor of Mental Health Counseling in the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling at Virginia Commonwealth University. She earned her doctorate in Counseling from the University of Montana and holds multiple master's degrees in Youth & Family Development, Psychology, and Special Needs. A licensed professional counselor in several states and a National Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselor, Dr. Zeleke directs the [HEARTFUL Lab](#), where she leads qualitative, quantitative, and community-based action research on trauma-informed interventions, autism services, evidence-based mental health treatment, and mindfulness-based approaches to mitigate imposter phenomenon among first-generation college students. In her teaching role, she has rich experience teaching different graduate-level courses such as counseling theory, counseling techniques, group counseling, multicultural counseling, trauma counseling, assessment, and internship/practicum supervision while mentoring master's and doctoral students; during her 2022–2023 Fulbright Scholar appointment at Addis Ababa University and the University of Gondar, she taught postgraduate courses, advised on Counseling Psychology Ph.D. curriculum development, and conducted workshops on trauma recovery and culturally responsive counseling. Clinically, Dr. Zeleke provides counseling, supervision, and consultation focused on mindful practice, parenting, autism intervention, and wellness care, particularly for youth and families affected by autism spectrum disorders. She has received over 18 awards, including U.S. Fulbright Scholar, Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship, the Cultural Diversity Research Award from the International Society for Autism Research, and the Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Teaching Award from Duquesne University. With over 35 authored articles and book chapters and over 72 presentations at professional conferences on autism, trauma, immigrant mental health, and parenting, she has also led or contributed to research grants in immigrant mental health, trauma intervention, autism, and social skills training. Dr. Zeleke serves as Associate Editor for *Frontiers in Special Needs Education* and holds guest editor and editorial board positions with several peer-reviewed journals.

Professors Emeriti

Richard E. Hardy, Ed.D.

Marcia L. Lawton, Ph.D.

Richard S. Luck, Ed.D.

Brian T. McMahon, Ph.D.

Adjunct Professors

Paige Berry, MS, CRC

Anne Catlett, LMFT, RPT

Ari Laoch, CRC, LPC

Muriel Azria-Evans, Ph.D. LPC, CRC

Jennifer Jurlando, CRC

Rebecca Kaderli, LPC, LSATP, NCC, ACS, C-DBT

Todd Van Wieren, Ph.D., CRC

Student Services and Additional Resources

The Division of Student Affairs offers coordinated well-being resources designed to support students during their time at VCU. Recreation and Well-Being (RecWell) provides a broad range of programs and services including group exercise, outdoor adventure, intramural sports, personal training, aquatics, and well-being education. University Counseling Services (UCS) offers individual and group counseling sessions, recovery support through Rams in Recovery, and survivor support through Survivor Support Services. Additionally, VCU students have access to free virtual care services through [TimelyCare](#). The University Student Health Services (USHS) physician team offers primary care services to students who need medical care. The Office of Student Advocacy helps students with a wide variety of needs including those experiencing food insecurity (Ram Pantry) or off-campus problems or concerns (Off Campus Student Services). The Student Accessibility and Educational Opportunity (SAEO) team assists students in need of any disability related accommodations.

University Student Health Services

<https://health.students.vcu.edu/>

VMI Building, Room 305, 1000 E. Marshall St.; (804) 828-9220

University Student Health Services is a nationally accredited health care service committed to providing high-quality outpatient care to VCU students. They offer a wide range of primary care services, including care in the following areas: allergy shots, blood and/or body fluid exposures, immunizations, mental health & ADHD, nutrition consults, sexual health & wellness, and travel health care.

University Counseling Services

<https://counseling.vcu.edu/>

VMI Building, Room 412, 1000 E. Marshall St.; (804) 828-3964

UCS provides comprehensive evaluation and consultation for students on the best options for their mental health care. This can include any of the following: case management, referral services to a community provider, brief individual and couples therapy, group therapy, consultation, sexual and intimate partner violence advocacy services and resiliency workshops.

Recreation and Well-Being

<https://recwell.vcu.edu>

MCV Campus, Larrick Center, 900 Turpin St; (804) 828-6100

Monroe Park Campus, Cary St. Gym, 101 S. Linden St; 804-827-1100

Division for Academic Success

<https://das.vcu.edu/>

VMI Building, Suite 231, 1000 E. Marshall St.; (804) 828-9782

DAS offers disability and academic support services. Their mission is to assist VCU in creating a learning environment where all students have equal access to every aspect of the University's programs, services and activities. They can assist with academic accommodations, studying and exam strategies, and overall learning skills.

Career Services

<https://careers.vcu.edu/>

Hunton Student Center, Suite 205, 1110 E. Broad St.; (804) 828-1645

Career Services assists students in defining and achieving their career and professional goals. They offer career advising appointments, professional development events, and tools to help students develop awareness of their interests and strengths.

CHP Student Success

<https://chp.vcu.edu/student-success/>

CHP Building, 2nd Fl, Suite 2023; (804) 628-9827

The CHP Student Success team is available to assist students with challenges or difficulties they may be experiencing. Students can access the Student Grievance process or make suggestions about ways to improve the CHP student experience by visiting the Student Success webpage.

Equity and Access Services

<https://equity.vcu.edu/>

912 W. Grace St., 2nd Fl; (804) 828-1347

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal law intended to end sex discrimination in all areas of education. Conduct prohibited by Title IX includes sexual harassment, gender-based discrimination and sexual violence. Equity and Access Services is a resource for students who would like to report sexual misconduct or violence, other forms of discrimination or harassment, or to report accessibility concerns.

Financial Support -- Student Financial Services

<https://sfs.vcu.edu/financial-aid/>

VMI Building, Room 420, 1000 E. Marshall St., Richmond, VA 23298

TEL (804) 828-6669; Email sfmc@vcu.edu

The Office of Financial Aid at VCU provides a variety of services to help students afford higher education via grants, scholarships, work-study employment, and loans. Our office administers and distributes funds from federal, state, institutional and private fund sources.

Financial Support through the Dean of Student Advocacy Office

<https://dos.vcu.edu/services/financial-support/>

Hunton Student Center, 1110 E. Broad St., 2nd Floor, Suite 205, Richmond, VA 23219

TEL (804) 828-0525 (MCV); Email vcudean@vcu.edu

The Dean of Students office administers the VCU Student Emergency Fund and the Regalia Assistance Fund. The detailed information can be found in the weblink above.

Professional Counseling Resources

The American Art Therapy Association - <https://arttherapy.org/>

American Counseling Association - <https://www.counseling.org/>

- Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development – <https://multicultural-counseling-network.mn.co>
- Counselors for Social Justice - <https://www.counseling-csj.org>
- Society for Sexual, Affectional, Intersex, and Gender Expansive Identities - <https://saigecounseling.org>

American Mental Health Counseling Association - <https://www.amhca.org/home>

American Rehabilitation Counseling Association – www.arcaweb.org

Association for Play Therapy - <http://www.a4pt.org/>

Black Therapists Rock - <https://www.blacktherapistsrock.com>

Council for Accreditation on Counseling and Related Educational Programs - <http://www.cacrep.org/>

National Association for Black Counselors - <https://www.nabcounselors.org>

National Board for Certified Counselors - <http://www.nbcc.org/>

International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals - <http://www.rehabpro.org/>

Virginia Counselors Association - <http://www.vcacounselors.org/>

[Ted Talks for when you're feeling stressed/burned out](#)

[Things to do in RVA](#)

Appendix A

Evaluation of Interns/Practicum Students

Personal/Professional Qualities	Not applicable/unable to judge	Below expectations/Unacceptable/Harmful	Near/developing toward expectations	Meets expectations	Exceeds expectations
1. Dependability/Punctuality					
2. Effort/Initiative/Enthusiasm					
3. Cooperation/Flexibility/Openness to new ideas					
4. Self Confidence/Poise					
5. Warmth/Genuineness					
6. Professionalism (e.g., dress, attitudes, language, collegiality)					
7. Awareness of impact on others					
8. Effective communication					
9. Willingness to accept and use feedback					
10. Seeks consultation as appropriate					

Counseling Competencies	Not applicable/unable to judge	Below expectations/Unacceptable/Harmful	Near/developing toward expectations	Meets expectations	Exceeds expectations
1. Basic counseling communication skills (e.g., basic reflections, open questions, affirmations, summaries)					
2. Advanced counseling communication skills (e.g., complex reflections, reframing, interpretations, giving feedback, challenging)					
3. Interviewing/assessment skills					
4. Handles client reluctance/resistance/discord/conflict					
5. Uses specific counseling techniques appropriate to situation (e.g., role play, behavioral rehearsal, scaling, guided imagery, desensitization, etc.)					
6. Multicultural awareness and competency					
7. Overall caseload management including record keeping					
8. Ethical decision-making and appropriate boundaries					

9. Case conceptualization, diagnostic skill, and treatment planning					
10. Knowledge and application of theoretical model					
11. Termination skills					
12. Crisis response and management					
13. Engages in self-care strategies and understands the importance of self-care					

Group Counseling Competencies	Exceeds expectations	Meets expectations	Near/developing toward expectations	Below expectations/Unacceptable/Harmful	Not applicable/unable to judge
14. Demonstrates group leadership skills and overall group management					
15. Effectively facilitates group process and therapeutic factors (e.g., interactions between members)					

Overall Evaluation	Exceeds expectations	Meets expectations	Near/developing toward expectations	Below expectations/Unacceptable/Harmful	Not applicable/unable to judge
Overall Evaluation					
Growth/Development over the Semester					

Please note the counselor's or trainee's areas of strength, which you have observed:

Please note the counselor's or trainee's areas that warrant improvement, which you have observed:

Please comment on the counselor's or trainee's general performance during his/her/their clinical experience to this point:

Appendix B

Student Acknowledgement of Receipt of Handbook

I, _____, have read and agree to follow the program guidelines and procedures as described in the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling Handbook. I acknowledge the following:

- ◇ It is my responsibility to be in contact with my adviser throughout my program and that there is a course schedule suggested for me
- ◇ I understand the requirements of an accelerated course schedule
- ◇ I am aware of the synchronous learning requirements if I am taking classes online
- ◇ The deadline to contact the clinical coordinator for a fall or spring practicum placement is November 1 or June 1, respectively. If this timeline is not adhered to, the department may be unable to place you during the semester in which you originally intended to enroll in 692.
- ◇ I will be engaging in ongoing feedback processes throughout the program and understand I will be receiving professional feedback from peers, instructors, and site supervisors designed to support my growth and development.
- ◇ The program has a formal assessment and success process
- ◇ That the program prepares students for Virginia licensure and students should check with their adviser should they plan to become licensed in another state
- ◇ Our program values diversity in all forms and I agree to contribute to a safe and inclusive environment for all students

This acknowledgement is due by September 1st, 2025 via DocuSign.

Appendix C

College of Health Professions Virginia Commonwealth University
Statement of Understanding regarding Criminal Background Check and Drug Screening

I understand that agencies with which my department or program has established a clinical affiliation agreement may require a drug screening and/or a criminal background check for student placement. I further understand that I am financially responsible for any costs associated with such screenings.

I acknowledge that having a criminal background or a positive drug screen may preclude my placement in a clinical agency. Further, having been convicted of certain crimes may result in my not being licensed in my chosen profession and/or not being approved to work in a number of health care settings.

I understand that it is my responsibility to be forthcoming regarding criminal convictions prior to any attempt for clinical placement, and to seek legal advice as needed.

Signature

Date

Appendix D

College of Health Professions Virginia Commonwealth University

Drug Testing Policy

Clinical placement is a first step toward a career in the health professions and background checks and drug screens are typical components of hiring processes for such jobs. Sites may or may not follow through or they only do one and not the other. This is unique to agencies and the department doesn't necessarily know what they will do. **For that reason, students should always expect to have a background check and drug screen.**

Rules Prohibiting Cannabis Use in Clinical Training

First, VCU's [Alcohol and Other Drugs policy](#) states:

VCU prohibits the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of drugs and alcohol by students and employees on university property, or as part of or affecting any university activity. Marijuana (cannabis) is a controlled substance under federal law and therefore its possession, use, or distribution is prohibited by this policy as a drug, regardless of any law of the Commonwealth of Virginia that may permit its possession or use.

Second, VCU requires students participating in clinical training to comply with the applicable requirements of the training site. Many health care providers that serve as clinical training sites prohibit any use of cannabis and require students to undergo a 10-panel screening, which includes testing for cannabis, as a condition for participating in training at the site. Additionally, some clinical sites reserve the right to perform drug screenings randomly, if a student is suspected of being impaired, or if there is a significant event during the clinical training. A clinical training site can deny an individual, including a student, access to the training site following a positive test result for cannabis or any other drug in the screening. In response to requests from students, VCU has asked several clinical training partners to make exceptions to their policies to allow medical use of cannabis. They have declined to do so.

Medical Use of Cannabis

As set forth in VCU's policy on Accessibility and Reasonable Accommodation for Individuals with Disabilities, VCU is committed to providing equal access and reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities. If a student with a disability is [authorized to access cannabis for medical use in Virginia](#), the student may request a reasonable accommodation for their disability. An accommodation is an adjustment or modification of a university requirement to remove barriers or provide equal access to the university's program for a student with a disability. (Note: Cannabis use is not a disability and does not itself warrant accommodation. Rather, cannabis can be used as a treatment for a disability.)

If a student with a disability desires an accommodation related to clinical training or field placement, the student should register and consult with the Division of Academic Success (DAS) for the MCV Campus programs and the Student Accessibility and Educational Opportunity Office (SAEO) for MPC programs. DAS/SAEO will engage in an interactive assessment with the student to determine

whether a requested accommodation or an alternative accommodation is reasonable to mitigate the impact of disability symptoms on academic activity. For example, in some cases, accommodations that do not involve cannabis use may be reasonable and may permit a student to participate in clinical training in compliance with the training site's cannabis prohibition. In other cases, VCU may be able to work with the specific requirement of a clinical training site to see whether adjustments can be

made to the timing of the drug screening and/or academic program to allow the student to satisfy the requirements with or without accommodation. In some cases, a student may qualify for a leave of absence for time to manage their health situation in a way that would enable them to pass a clinical site's drug screening.

Please know these requirements and consider that despite any state laws regarding the legal use of cannabis, students are obligated to follow the rules and procedures of clinical sites. While schools are required to make a sincere effort to find placements for students, the inability of a student to meet site requirements may result in a delay of graduation or the **recommendation for possible dismissal from the program.**

Students are also reminded that licensing boards for certain occupations and professions may deny, suspend or revoke a license, or may deny the opportunity to sit for an examination, if an applicant has a criminal history or is convicted or pleads guilty or *nolo contendere* to a felony or other serious crime. Students should consult the licensing board of their intended profession for further information. Successful completion of a program of study at VCU's College of Health Professions does not guarantee licensure, the opportunity to sit for a licensure examination, certification or employment in the relevant occupation.

Students unable to obtain a clinical site due to questionable background checks may be subject to Administrative Review, with a possible recommendation for dismissal from the program. If a student is dismissed from a site because they either refuse a background check/drug screen or other reasons related to the background check/drug screen, they will be unable to be placed that semester and will be required to meet with the clinical coordinator and their advisor and may be subject to Administrative Review, with a recommendation for possible dismissal from the program or delayed matriculation.

Students are also reminded that licensing boards for certain occupations and professions may deny, suspend or revoke a license or may deny the opportunity to sit for an examination if an applicant has a criminal history or is convicted or pleads guilty or *nolo contendere* to a felony or other serious crime. Students should consult the licensing board of their intended profession for further information. Successful completion of a program of study at VCU's College of Health Professions, Department of Rehabilitation Counseling does not guarantee licensure, the opportunity to sit for a licensure examination, certification, or employment in the relevant occupation.

I have read and understand the policy on background check and drug screens.

Student's Printed Name

Student's Signature

Date

Name of practicum or internship site