

# DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION COUNSELING

## GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

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## **Welcome to the VCU Department of Rehabilitation Counseling**

One of the first rehabilitation counseling programs in the U.S. when established in 1955, VCU now ranks 4<sup>th</sup> among 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 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 dual emphasis on rehabilitation and mental health will 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 is fully accredited by the Council on Rehabilitation Education and those graduates are immediately eligible for certification as Certified Rehabilitation Counselors. Graduates are also eligible for independent counseling licensure in Virginia. The Department of Rehabilitation Counseling is currently seeking accreditation from The Council for Accreditation on Counseling and Related Education Programs. 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 under Category D or R designation.

Your faculty has years of experience and we are committed to the program. 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,

Amy J. Armstrong, Ph.D., Department Chair

### Contact Information

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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. As of 2016, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) enrolls 31,242 students. The university employs 2,264 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.

### **Mission of the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling**

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.

### **Department Goals**

- To provide students with educational experiences that facilitates the development of knowledge, skills and values necessary to practice as a licensed professional counselor and 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.

### **Program Objectives**

- Develop a well rounded education in rehabilitation counseling;
- Advance the basic philosophical tenets of rehabilitation, including the value and worth of all individuals, a belief in human dignity, and the right of all persons to fully participate in society.
- Exercise skills and competencies on a high ethical level and with personal integrity; and
- Acquire a comprehensive understanding of the personal, social, vocational, and psychological needs of persons with disabilities.

## **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.

## **The VCU Department of Rehabilitation Counseling**

### *Accreditation*

The Department of Rehabilitation Counseling was established in 1955 and is currently accredited by CORE (Council on Rehabilitation Education). Recently, CORE has entered into an agreement to merge with another accrediting body, CACREP (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs). The department is currently seeking accreditation from CACREP for the degree of Master's of Science of Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling.

### *Admission Deadlines and Requirements*

Both full-time and part-time students are valued and are welcome to apply. Applications are reviewed on an ongoing basis. To be considered, all pertinent materials must be received in the Graduate Admissions Office by March 1<sup>st</sup> (for Fall), or October 1<sup>st</sup> (for Spring). See the Department's website [www.rehab.vcu.edu](http://www.rehab.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. \(http://sahp.vcu.edu/departments/rehab/prospective-students/admission-deadlines-and-requirements/\)](http://sahp.vcu.edu/departments/rehab/prospective-students/admission-deadlines-and-requirements/).

### *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 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.

When the student receives notification of admission to the Department, it is his/her 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*

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. Please read the policy in its entirety [here](http://www.policy.vcu.edu/sites/default/files/Student%20Email%20Policy_0.pdf). ([http://www.policy.vcu.edu/sites/default/files/Student%20Email%20Policy\\_0.pdf](http://www.policy.vcu.edu/sites/default/files/Student%20Email%20Policy_0.pdf)).

### *Transfer Credit*

If a student matriculated in another graduate degree program at VCU or another university, a maximum of 12 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 School of Allied Health Professions. 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.

### *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, 696/697) 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.

### *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 (<http://graduate.admissions.vcu.edu/apply/finaid/>).

### *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: Allied 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.

### *Diversity inclusion*

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 Student Multicultural 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, School of Allied Health Professions, and University on an ongoing basis. The program recently celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

### **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 under Category D or R designation. More information can be found [here](https://www.crccertification.com/eligibility-requirements). (<https://www.crccertification.com/eligibility-requirements>). All students will work with their assigned adviser to determine a course schedule relevant for personal requirements.

### **Master's Program**

The VCU Department of Rehabilitation Counseling, formed in 1955, is ranked 4<sup>th</sup> 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 can complete the program in 2 years going full time (including summers), or 4 years going half time.

The program has both on-campus and distance formats for many classes. On-campus students are 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 on-campus courses (Counseling Techniques, Group Counseling). These on-campus experiences are structured in a week-long intensive 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.

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).

## Department of Rehabilitation Counseling Coursework

All course descriptions can be found in the VCU Graduate Bulletin located [here](http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-allied-health-professions/rehabilitation-counseling/).  
(<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-allied-health-professions/rehabilitation-counseling/>).

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

- 521 – Addictions Counseling
- 525 – Introduction to Rehabilitation Counseling
- 526 – Introduction to Mental Health Counseling
- 611 – Counseling Theories
- 612 – Group Counseling
- 615 – Human Growth and Development
- 616 – Couples and Family Counseling
- 623 – Career Counseling and Job Placement
- 625 – Assessment
- 626 – Research and Program Evaluation
- 633 – Case Management
- 640 – Medical and Psychosocial Aspects of Disability
- 642 – Diagnosis and Treatment Planning
- 654 – Multicultural Counseling
- 691 – Counseling Techniques
- 692 – Advanced Professional Counseling Issues/Practicum
- 697 – Internship

Students will also take two 3-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

**Suggested Course Schedules for Fall Admission (note: Spring admission schedules are available through faculty advisers)**

### Full Time

2016-2017	Fall	Spring	Summer
	526 – Intro to Mental Health 611 – Theories 623 – Career/Job 691 - Techniques	525 – Intro to Rehab 624 – Assessment 642 – Mental Health Disorders 692 – Advanced Issues/Practicum	521 – Addictions 633 – Case Management

<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer</b>
	612 – Group 625 – Research 640 – Med Aspects 697- Internship	616 – Couples and Family 654 – Multicultural 697 – Internship Elective	615 – Human Growth and Development Elective

### **Part Time**

<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer</b>
	526 – Intro to Mental Health 611 – Theories	525 – Intro to Rehab 624 – Assessment	521 - Addictions
<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer</b>
	623 – Career/Job 691 - Techniques	642 – Mental health disorders 654 - Multicultural	633 – Case Management
<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer</b>
	612 – Group 640 - Med aspects	616 – Couples and Family 692 - Advanced Issues/Practicum	615 – Human Growth and Development
<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer</b>
	625 – Research 697 – Internship	697 – Internship elective	elective

### **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 in 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 here:

<https://www.counseling.org/resources/aca-code-of-ethics.pdf>

The Commission on Rehabilitation Counseling Certification’s codes can be found here:

<https://www.crc certification.com/filebin/pdf/CRCCCodeOfEthics.pdf>

## **Certification and Licensure**

The Master's in 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) national credential.

Students are eligible to sit for the CRCC examination after they have completed 75% of the courses in their master's degree program. Upon passage of the exam and graduation from the program, they are immediately qualified as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor.

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. After the completion of 3,400 hours, students will sit for an exam.

Students who would like to become licensed in other states are responsible for knowing that particular state's licensure laws and requirements.

For more information please see the applicable websites:

LPC in Virginia

<https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/counseling/>

CRCC

<https://www.crc certification.com/>

## **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](mailto:cehawley@vcu.edu)

### *Chi Sigma Iota*

*Chi Sigma Iota* (XΣI) 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. XΣI 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 will be 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 inductions are held in the spring. Dr. Courtney Holmes is the liaison for this opportunity and can be reached at: [cmholmes@vcu.edu](mailto: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](http://www.counseling.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.

## **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/>).

## **Expectation of Students**

Students are encouraged to reach beyond what is expected. Pervasive throughout the program is 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.

## **Remediation and Retention Policy**

The Department of Rehabilitation Counseling has developed the following student evaluations 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/general-academic-regulations-graduate-students/>.

Respecting these guidelines, the 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.

Each term, faculty members in consultation with Practicum and Internship supervisors meet in order to evaluate each student's progress in academic work, counseling skills, and intra-personal and interpersonal effectiveness. Forms such as the Professional and Clinical Performance Review may be utilized. Those 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. However, a situation that involves a significant ethical violation as determined by the departmental faculty may result in 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 Meeting*

An identified faculty member will meet with the student (e.g., faculty supervisor or adviser) and give specific examples of the difficulties, which have been identified by the faculty, supervisors, recipients of services, or relevant members of the University community. The student and the adviser will then discuss the change expectations and relevant procedures. Explanation will be made at this time as to the seriousness of the problem. Steps for resolution will be recommended. A time frame for change will be created and agreed upon by both parties. An agreement about steps for resolution will be signed and placed in the student's Department file.

### *Recurring or Critical Problems*

If the agreed upon resolution of the initial identified problem is not met by the student, or

the situation is continuing or is critical (e.g., ethical breach), a team of faculty members may be appointed by the department chair to meet with the student. 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 particular 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 by the student, the faculty team, and the department chair. A copy of this agreement will be given to the student and the original placed in the student's departmental file.

### *Insufficient Progress, Dismissal*

If a student does not make expeditious progress toward resolution of the identified problem(s), 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. The department chairperson will appoint a committee composed of Rehabilitation Counseling faculty who are not directly involved in the specific complaints or problems involving the student. This committee will investigate the history of progress toward resolution and report this to the full faculty. The decision whether to dismiss a student will then be made by the department faculty in a closed meeting. The student will be notified of the decision by the department chairperson.

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.

### *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/graduate/study/general-academic-regulations-graduate-students/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 SAHP will be notified, followed by the VCU Graduate School. The VCU Graduate School Dismissal procedure can be found [here \(http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/general-academic-regulations-graduate-students/appeal-process-students-dismissed-vcu-graduate-program/appeal-process-students-dismissed-vcu-graduate-program.pdf\)](http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/general-academic-regulations-graduate-students/appeal-process-students-dismissed-vcu-graduate-program/appeal-process-students-dismissed-vcu-graduate-program.pdf)

### *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](http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/general-academic-regulations-graduate-students/appeal-process-students-dismissed-vcu-graduate-program/) for more information. (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/general-academic-regulations-graduate-students/appeal-process-students-dismissed-vcu-graduate-program/>)

### *Confidentiality*

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

## **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, that incomplete must be successfully completed before the conclusion of the following semester. If it is not resolved in that 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 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. Clinical experiences or field internships, however, may be an integral part of the academic program and 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, DMV 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 an outside facility are personally responsible for completing the required checks or screenings and assuring that results are obtained by the facility that asks for them. This means that students also may 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 be unable to be placed at another facility and consequently may be unable to complete program requirements. The University will make reasonable efforts to place all enrolled students in clinical training.

Students unable to obtain a clinical site due to questionable background checks may be subject to Administrative Review, and 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 School of Allied

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.

### *Required Immunizations*

In compliance with the code of Virginia (Section 23-7.5), VCU requires all full-time students to provide documentation of their immunizations. Read more at this [link](http://www.students.vcu.edu/health/immunizations/). (<http://www.students.vcu.edu/health/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 OR a signed waiver
- 3 Polios, with one dose after 4th birthday (required for students  $\leq$  18 years old; required for students from high risk countries; may be required for some away rotations)
- 1 Tdap within the past 10 years
- 2 Varicella vaccines 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)

### *Submitting Your Immunization Record*

Submit a Certificate of Immunization on time to avoid a hold for registration!

Students must complete the [VCU Certificate of Immunization](http://www.students.vcu.edu/media/student-affairs/ushs/docs/SHS1415-24CertificateofImmunization4.pdf) (<http://www.students.vcu.edu/media/student-affairs/ushs/docs/SHS1415-24CertificateofImmunization4.pdf>) or the [VCU Health Sciences Certificate of Immunization](http://www.students.vcu.edu/media/student-affairs/ushs/docs/SHS1415-24Ammendments8.pdf). (<http://www.students.vcu.edu/media/student-affairs/ushs/docs/SHS1415-24Ammendments8.pdf>).

These forms are available online or directly from the offices of University Student Health Services.

Students may hand-deliver their completed Certificate of Immunization to either [Student Health clinic location](http://www.students.vcu.edu/health/about/location-and-hours/) (Monroe Park campus or the VCU Medical Center campus, <http://www.students.vcu.edu/health/about/location-and-hours/>).

Students may also send, fax, or email completed forms to:

Immunization Department  
University Student Health Services  
P.O. Box 842022  
Richmond, VA 23284-2022  
Phone: (804) 827-8047  
Fax: (804) 828-1093  
Email: [ushsimmuniz@vcu.edu](mailto:ushsimmuniz@vcu.edu)

### *Psychosocial Impairment*

Counselors with untreated psychological disorders, emotional problems, and/or substance abuse disorders of their own can significantly compromise the effectiveness of counseling and other professional activities. Further, they may cause harm to their clients. If a student is currently being treated for a psychological disorder, with psychotherapy, medications, and/or

hospitalization, the student will inform the department through the faculty adviser assigned. If, in the judgment of the department faculty, a psychological disorder, emotional problem, and/or substance abuse are significantly compromising the student's learning as a counselor in training, or are disruptive to the training of other students, participation of that student in the program will be evaluated by the faculty following the Evaluation and Retention Procedures. That student may be asked to verify participation in a treatment program that deals with specific issues identified by the department faculty. If adequate change is not forthcoming, as determined by the department faculty, further action such as dismissal from the program may be taken by the faculty to protect the student, other students, individual clients, and/or organizations.

### *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. An unwillingness or inability to participate in such experiences may be grounds for intervention or dismissal from the program.

### **Academic Appeal Policy**

A student who wishes to challenge a decision made by the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling faculty has the right to an appeal using relevant appeals procedures established by Virginia Commonwealth University. See this [link](http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/general-academic-regulations-graduate-students/appeal-process-students-dismissed-vcu-graduate-program/) for more information (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/general-academic-regulations-graduate-students/appeal-process-students-dismissed-vcu-graduate-program/>).

### **Biographical Sketches of Department Faculty**

Amy J. Armstrong is chair and 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 33 years. She has extensive experience providing national personnel training on employment of marginalized populations, wellbeing, leadership and motivational topics. Armstrong has held a variety of community agency positions including both direct service and management at the local, regional and national levels (including the National United Cerebral Palsy Association and the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Supported Employment/Workplace Supports).

Her interests include the employment of individuals with significant disabilities, community re-integration, wellbeing/positive psychology leadership and personal/professional transformation. She received an M.A. in Rehabilitation Counseling from Michigan State University and a Ph.D. in Education from VCU.

Carolyn E. Hawley is an Assistant 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, NCC is an assistant Professor in the Rehabilitation Counseling department. She received her M.A. from Gonzaga University in Mental Health Counseling and her Ph.D. from The College of William & Mary in Counselor Education and Supervision. Her experience includes work with individuals, families, and couples on a variety of mental health related issues. Dr. Holmes has experience as both a clinic director and clinical supervisor for mental health and family counseling students. She currently serves on the editorial board of the Journal of Counselor Practice. Courtney has received the Outstanding Supervisor Award from the North Central Association for Counselor Education and Supervision.

Jeong Han Kim, Ph.D., CRC is currently an assistant professor at the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling. He received his B.A. in psychology, and his M.S and Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Kim has experience with several rehabilitation agencies, including state/federal VR, long-term health care, veterans hospital (compensated work therapy, mental health unit, AODA counseling unit), and independent living centers. His research and other scholarly activity includes publications through national and international journals, presentations, grantsmanship and editorial activities. His primary research interests focuses on virtues and character traits in the context of resilience, posttraumatic growth, well-being and vocational success.

Brian T. McMahon, Ph.D., CRC Dr. Brian T. McMahon is a Professor of Rehabilitation Counseling and Associate Dean for Research in the School of Allied Health Professions. His Ph.D. is in Rehabilitation Psychology from the University of Wisconsin--Madison. As a health care manager in the 1980s, he developed brain injury rehabilitation programs at various levels of care in several states. A rehabilitation educator for 39 years, Dr. McMahon has authored many publications and books on matters of employment and disability. His primary research interest is in disability policy and implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Dr. McMahon is retired licensed psychologist, Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, and Certified Case Manager. He is a Fellow in the American Psychological Association, and a former board member of its

Division of Rehabilitation Psychology, the National Council on Rehabilitation Education, and the American Counseling Association. Dr. McMahon is also past-President of the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association, and a recipient of its Career Research Award. In 1995, he was recognized by the International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals (IARP) as the Outstanding Rehabilitation Educator of the Year. In 1996, he was selected by the University of Wisconsin--Milwaukee Alumni Association to receive its Award for Teaching Excellence. He also has awards for Outstanding Achievement or Research Innovation from Illinois Institute of Technology, VCU, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and IARP.

Christine A. Reid, Ph.D., CRC is a Full Professor who joined VCU in 1997. Her Ph.D. is in Rehabilitation Psychology from Illinois Institute of Technology. She has over 30 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 primary research is in the area of psychometric methodology, focused on the development and validation of assessment instruments and processes related to rehabilitation counseling. Additional research interests include deafness, distance learning, and life care planning. Dr. Reid has more than 75 publications and 175 professional presentations to her credit, including some in journals or conferences targeted to international audiences. She was awarded over \$5.5 million in grants for VCU. A Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, Certified Life Care Planner, and Licensed Applied Psychologist, 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 the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs.

Christopher C. Wagner is an associate professor, department vice-chair, and licensed clinical psychologist. His scholarship focuses on motivational interviewing (MI) and interpersonal processes in mental health/substance abuse treatment. He has focused on expanding MI theory and practice to a broader focus than originally conceived as well as developing MI group psychotherapy. He is the lead author on the MI in Groups book that is part of the official Guilford Press series on MI. His practice and training has included outpatient, inpatient and residential treatment of individuals and groups with a variety of health, mental health and addiction problems. Dr. Wagner can be reached by email at [ccwagner@vcu.edu](mailto:ccwagner@vcu.edu).

#### Professors Emeriti

Richard E. Hardy, Ed.D.,  
Marcia L. Lawton, Ph.D.,  
Richard S. Luck, Ed.D.

University of Maryland  
Northwestern University  
University of Virginia

## **Additional Resources**

American Counseling Association

<https://www.counseling.org/>

Council for Accreditation on Counseling and Related Educational Programs

<http://www.cacrep.org/>

Council on Rehabilitation Education, Inc. (CORE):

<http://www.core-rehab.org/>

National Board for Certified Counselors

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

National Council on Rehabilitation Education

<https://ncre.org/>

International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals

<http://www.rehabpro.org/>

Virginia Counselors Association

<http://www.vcacounselors.org/>

How to Be a Good Graduate Student:

<http://www.cs.indiana.edu/how.2b/how.2b.html>

Characteristics of Graduate School Superstars:

<http://www.psywww.com/careers/suprstar.htm>

Appendix A - Student Evaluation

EVALUATION OF INTERNS/PRACTICUM STUDENTS	UNABLE TO JUDGE	POOR	BORDERLINE	ACCEPTABLE	GOOD	EXCELLENT
<b>Personal/Professional Qualities</b>						
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						
<b>Counseling Competencies</b>						
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. Expresses empathy						
4. Engages clients						
5. Focuses clinical interactions (focused/goal-oriented)						
6. Evokes client motivation						
7. Builds therapeutic relationships with clients						
8. Maintains appropriate boundaries						
9. Handles client reluctance/discord						
10. Explores client emotions/clinical themes						
11. Uses specific counseling techniques appropriate to situation (e.g., role play, behavioral rehearsal, scaling, guided imagery, desensitization, etc.)						
12. Demonstrates multicultural awareness						
13. Overall caseload management						
14. Ethical decision-making						
<b>Group Counseling Competencies</b>						
15. Demonstrates group leadership skills (e.g., linking, blocking, drawing members out)						

16. Demonstrates skill in executive functions of leadership (e.g., managing time, organizing content focus, initiating and closing group sessions)						
17. Skillfully facilitates group therapeutic factors (e.g., climate, cohesion)						
18. Effectively facilitates group process (e.g., interactions between members)						
<b>Overall Evaluation</b>						
<b>Growth/Development over the Semester</b>						
<b>Additional comments:</b>						

Appendix B

Student Acknowledgement of Receipt of Handbook

Submit signed form to assigned adviser.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and agree to follow the program (print name) guidelines and procedures as described in the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Program Adviser Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date