



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

COMMERCE

Master of Education, Department of Counseling

**Student Affairs
Student Handbook**

2021-2022

Department of Counseling

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1. Introduction

The student handbook for the Department of Counseling (Student Affairs) degree program has been prepared as a way of communicating to students and prospective students the nature and spirit of the Higher Education and Student Affairs program at Texas A&M University-Commerce (TAMUC). This handbook does not replace the *Graduate School Announcements (The TAMUC Graduate Catalog)*, but it does provide a more detailed presentation of the program and student expectations.

Students are expected to study this handbook and be familiar with its contents. The materials outlined in the following pages are an attempt to help students understand the Department of Counseling (Student Affairs) degree program from application to graduation. The importance of proper advisement, course sequencing, ethical conduct, and adequate planning are emphasized throughout this handbook. This handbook is designed to serve as a guide; it is not a substitute for the Graduate School Catalog or your academic advisor. Students are held to the 2021-2022 policies and procedures posted on the TAMUC Graduate School and College of Education websites, and the Department of Counseling (Student Affairs) degree program requirements associated with the semester and year of student's admission.

Each student is responsible for meeting the deadlines outlined in the Graduate School Catalog and for regular meetings with your assigned advisor. Each student is required to meet with their advisor every semester prior to enrolling for any coursework. Failure to do so may result in students not being able to graduate as planned or obtain necessary courses.

The Department of Counseling (Student Affairs) degree is housed within the Higher Education and Student Affairs program at TAMUC. This program is a part of the Department of Education and Organizational Leadership development.

Graduate school is a wonderful and challenging opportunity. You will be exposed to many new ideas, people and experiences. Make the most of the opportunity that you have—learn from faculty, peers, and yourself.

2. Mission

College of Education and Human Services:

Texas A&M University-Commerce provides a personal educational experience for a diverse community of life-long learners. Our purpose is to discover and disseminate knowledge for leadership and service in an interconnected and dynamic world. Our challenge is to nurture partnerships for the intellectual, cultural, social, and economic vitality of Texas and beyond.

Department of Counseling Department Mission Statement:

The Student Affairs program offers graduate education at the master's level for students interested in becoming professionals in student affairs working at colleges and universities.

3. Master's Degree Program Overview

The Master of Education in Counseling is a 36-semester hour program designed for those students who plan to work in college and university student affairs, but prefer a counseling foundation in their preparation. Graduates of this program typically seek employment in student activities, career services, academic advising, Greek affairs, recruiting and admissions, residence life, and other departments and offices within the student affairs division of community colleges and four-year colleges and universities.

Master's Degree Admission Requirements

Admissions to the program is highly competitive and the department values diversity in its student population. Program applicants are selected based on their ability to succeed academically, personal qualifications necessary to function as student affairs professionals, and relevance of professional goals.

MED-Counseling

An interview is not required for admission consideration to this program.

Your Path to Becoming a Lion

Step 1. Submit Application

Step 2. Submit Documents

Step 3. Interview with Department

Step 4. Apply for Financial Assistance

Step 5. Register for Classes

4. Verification of Citizenship

ALL APPLICANTS TO TAMUC are required to verify on their application whether they are a U.S. citizen, Permanent Legal Resident or will be lawfully present in the United States at the time of enrollment on some other grounds. Enrollment at TAMUC for graduate students is conditioned upon verification of lawful presence in the United States.

5. Advising

Each student is assigned an advisor whose responsibilities include:

- Program planning and approval
- Monitoring student progress each semester
- Approving electives (if applicable)
- Determining readiness for field experiences
- Approving field experience placement
- Informing students about employment possibilities

Your advisor will be assigned upon admission into the program and may change once you are registered for the program to balance faculty advising responsibilities. If a change from the initial advisor is necessary, students will be notified.

It is required that students meet with their advisor at least once a semester to ensure appropriate course sequencing. It is your responsibility to contact your advisor.

Scheduling of courses in each program is designed to accommodate full-time students as well as students who pursue the degree on a part-time basis. The 36-credit semester hour sequence can be completed in a minimum of 1 ½ years.

6. Policy and Procedures for Waiving a Course

This policy applies to students in the Department of Counseling (Student Affairs) degree program having already completed an undergraduate or graduate course (over 5 years old) that they believe to be the equivalent of a course required for the master's degree. In these situations, students may petition to waive a course requirement. Students may only request to waive a course for which they received no less than a B. The following procedures must be followed:

1. After admission and prior to or during the student's first semester in the program, student submits a written request (see sample below) to their advisor requesting a course waiver. The request should (1) list the name and course number of the previously completed course as well as the semester/year and institution where the course was completed and (2) indicate the name and number of the required course that the student believes is the course equivalent. See *Graduate School Announcements* for further information.
2. Student signs and dates the written request.
3. Student also attaches a syllabus (ideally) or published course description from the previously completed course as well as an unofficial copy of a transcript showing completion of this course with a grade of B or better.
4. Student's advisor reviews the syllabus, seeking input from an instructor who currently teaches the equivalent course when needed in order to determine whether the courses are equivalent.
5. Student's advisor signs the request, indicating approval or rejection of the request.
6. Student's advisor makes copies of the final, signed request, giving one to the student and placing one in the student's permanent file.

It is important to note that waiving a course does not mean that the student will have one less course to complete. In order to meet Graduate School requirements, students still must complete the total number of credit hours required for the degree. If approval is granted for a student to waive a course, an approved elective must be taken in its place.

7. Policy and Procedures for Transferring in a Course

This policy applies to students in the Department of Counseling (Student Affairs) degree program who have completed a graduate course (within the past 5 years only) that they believe to be the equivalent of a course required for the master's degree. In these situations, students may petition to transfer in that course for credit. Students may only request to transfer in a course for which they received no less than a B. Also, students may transfer in no more than 12 credits. Unlike waiving a course, transferring a

course means that the course credits WILL count toward the total degree hours and DO NOT need to be made up with electives. The following procedures must be followed:

1. After admission and prior to or during the student's first semester in the program (or prior to registering for a class at another institution while enrolled in the master's degree program at TAMUC), the student submits a written request (see sample below) to their advisor requesting to transfer in a course. The request should (1) list the name and course number of the previously completed course as well as the semester/year and institution where the course was completed and (2) indicate the name and number of the required course that the student believes is the course equivalent. See *Graduate School Announcements* for further information.
2. Student signs and dates the written request.
3. Student also attaches a syllabus (ideally) or published course description from the previously completed course as well as an unofficial copy of a transcript showing completion of this course within the past 5 years with a grade of B or better.
4. Student's advisor reviews the syllabus, seeking input from an instructor who currently teaches the equivalent course when needed in order to determine whether the courses are equivalent.
5. Student's advisor signs the request, indicating approval or rejection of the request.
6. Student's advisor makes copies of the final, signed request, giving one to the student and placing in the student's permanent file.
7. If the request is approved, the student should have an official graduate transcript, clearly identifying this course, sent directly to the Graduate School.

8. Registration and Payment for Courses

Students are encouraged to register for courses as soon as the university allows. Occasionally, a course will be full. In those instances, the student should not complete the request log provided on the registration system, but they should contact the instructor of record to see if they can be added to the course. The request log is a function primarily used with the undergraduate registration process. Students are also reminded that failure to pay fees by the university stated deadline may result in being dropped from courses.

Graduate School and Program Procedures and Checklist

1. Be accepted by the Graduate School for admission to the student affairs/Department of Counseling program.
2. Apply and interview for a graduate assistantship through TAMUC Department of Counseling
3. If not a full-time employee, be offered and accept an assistantship and then confirm your acceptance with the graduate school and program coordinator.
4. Become familiar with what you need to do as a new graduate student at TAMUC University: Iso, review the Graduate Student website for programs and services: [Graduate School - Texas A&M University-Commerce \(tamuc.edu\)](https://graduate.tamuc.edu)
5. Arrange a meeting with assigned advisor before taking any graduate courses. These meetings can take place virtually via email.
6. Transfer in no more than 12 hours of graduate credits from another university, as approved by your advisor (see policy in the previous section in this handbook).
7. Retain a grade point ratio of at least 3.00.

8. Arrange a meeting with assigned advisor prior to each semester you're enrolled to ensure your program of study is a complete 36 hours.
15. Familiarize yourself with all graduate school deadline dates available at [Deadlines for Thesis and Dissertation Submissions - Texas A&M University-Commerce \(tamuc.edu\)](https://www.tamuc.edu/deadlines)

The final responsibility for following all Graduate School procedures rests with the graduate student.

University Academic Calendar

Important dates for graduation and enrollment can be found at:
[Academic Calendars - Texas A&M University-Commerce \(tamuc.edu\)](https://www.tamuc.edu/academic-calendars)

9. Curriculum

Central to any program is a unified curriculum rather than simply a collection of courses. The Department of Counseling (Student Affairs) curriculum was guided by the Council for Advancement of Standards in Higher Education Administration (CAS).

TAMUC has established this curriculum to create programs that provide the students with knowledge, skills, and self-insight so as to enhance their performance as student affairs and student support professionals. There has been a conscious effort to avoid indoctrinating students with a specific "school of thought" and instead to increase sensitivity to a variety of approaches of increasing a student's awareness of freedom, of personal responsibility, and of options for the future. In addition to the classroom experience and field experience, students are encouraged to participate in workshops, seminars, and other activities that contribute to personal and professional development.

Program Curriculum Requirements

Master of Education Degree – Student Affairs (43 Semester Hours)

Course Curriculum

COUN	505	Intro College Stu Affairs	3
COUN	510	Counsel Theory & Tech	3
COUN	512	Career Development	3
COUN	522	Counseling Diverse Populations	3
COUN	581	Assess & Treat of Chem Dependence	3
COUN	590	Legal Issues Stu Affairs	3
COUN	606	Stu Affairs Serv Hi Educ	3
COUN	607	Contemp College Student	3
COUN	595	Research Lit & Techniques	3
HIED	540	American Community College	3
COUN	560	Crisis Intervention	3

Course Sequencing

Sequencing of courses are dependent upon whether the student is full-time or part-time student and if full-time, dependent upon whether the student has a 9 or 12 month assistantship. The information below is a suggested sequence for students enrolled in the program. All students should work with their advisor to ensure proper sequencing of courses. It is highly recommended that all students follow the course sequencing in order to build foundational knowledge and skills.

Students must be in constant contact with their advisor as certain courses may or may not be offered each semester. Students are advised to meet with their academic advisor each semester. All coursework requires the permission of the advisor.

To maintain an assistantship, students must enroll in 9 credit hours of course work (fall and spring semester) and for those with a 12 month assistance, they must enroll in 6 credit hours (summer semester, three must be in each five week term).

Grade Appeal Policy

A student wishing to contest a grade must first try to resolve any disagreement with the course instructor. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, the student must follow the procedures under "Grievances" in the Graduate School Announcements (the Graduate Catalog) on the Graduate School website.

Academic Standards

- A minimum grade of C must be made on all course work to obtain graduate credit.
- A cumulative B average (3.0 GPA) must be maintained for all courses.
- Students unable to maintain a 3.0 GPA become ineligible for graduation and are placed on academic probation.
- Per the detailed policy below, students will remain on probation until an additional 9 credit hours have been attempted and a 3.0 cumulative GPA is achieved. Those unable to remove the probationary status are subject to academic dismissal.
-

10. Professional Standards

In addition to maintaining high scholastic standards, students enrolled in the CST program must develop skills necessary to work with diverse individuals. The faculty expect students to:

- Respect the dignity and worth of all individuals
- Demonstrate commitment to the fulfillment of human potential
- Understand educational and counseling processes

- Develop knowledge in the counseling program area
- Be knowledgeable about and demonstrate ethical competencies
- Demonstrate commitment to inquiry
- Display self-awareness
- Embrace advocacy dispositions

Further, students are expected to adhere to the codes of ethics of their respective professional associations (e.g., NASPA, ACPA).

In some instances, faculty may become concerned about a student's suitability for entry into their respective professional field even though the student may be evidencing satisfactory performance in academic course work (e.g., if a student's professional integrity, skill level, or professional development is deficient).

Examples of behaviors that may be evidence of professional impairment include, but are not limited to:

- violation of professional standards or ethical codes;
- inability or unwillingness to acquire or exhibit professional skills at a competent level;
- behaviors that can reasonably be predictive of poor future professional functioning, such as excessive lateness, or poor compliance with supervisory requirements;
- interpersonal behaviors and interpersonal functioning that impair one's professional functioning;
- inability to exercise sound clinical judgment; and
- poor interpersonal skills or pervasive interpersonal problems.

Department of Counseling (Student Affairs) Professional Probation Process

The following steps will be followed to monitor student progress toward completing remediation plans developed through the process described in the Ongoing Evaluation Section:

- The advisor will monitor the student's progress in meeting remediation plan requirements and will request a review meeting as needed and/or as specified in the remediation plan.
- A review committee consisting of an odd number of members (including program faculty as well as a faculty member or administrator from outside the program) will be appointed by the department chair to review the student's progress and determine if the remediation plan requirements have been met;

- The student will be invited to attend the review committee meeting to provide information regarding how they have completed the remediation plan requirements;
- The student will be permitted to bring another person to the meeting for support, but the student must speak on their own behalf;
- If the committee determines that the remediation plan requirements have been met, the student will be permitted to move forward in their program with assistance from the advisor;
- If the committee determines that the remediation plan requirements have not been met, they will decide regarding further action, which could include the development of a second remediation plan or possible recommendation for dismissal from the program;
 - A student not satisfied with the decision can follow up with the Graduate Student Academic Grievance Committee as outlined below.

Graduate Student Academic Grievance Process

Students enrolled in online degree/distance education programs at A&M-Commerce have the right to know the grievance process related to academic programs. The grievance process at A&M-Commerce is outlined under [Judicial Affairs](#). After exhausting the internal process, a student who physically resides outside of Texas can contact the state agency where the student physically resides. Students residing in the State of Texas will contact [The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board](#).
[Student Rights & Responsibilities - Texas A&M University-Commerce \(tamuc.edu\)](#)

11. Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the Student Guidebook.

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

12. TAMUC Attendance

For information about the attendance policy please visit the Attendance webpage: <https://inside.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

13. Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf \(tamuc.edu\)](#)

<https://inside.tamuc.edu/aboutus/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10.pdf>

14. Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library – Room 162

Phone: 903-886-5150 or 903-886-5835

Fax: 903-468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: <https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/campuservices/StudentDisabilityServices/default.aspx>

15. Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

16. Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill – 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

Webpage: <https://inside.tamuc.edu/aboutus/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

17. Professional Organizations

Students and graduates are encouraged to join and to become active in professional organizations or associations. One method to remain current in the profession is by participating in professional organizations (presenting at various conferences, serving on committees, writing for professional journals, attending workshops, and becoming active in leadership). There are many benefits derived from membership in a professional organization. As a member of a professional organization, the student:

- receives the most recent publications.
- is entitled to reduced membership registration rates for professional meetings/workshops.
- is eligible for such membership services as professional liability insurance, legal defense fund, library resource use, etc.
- has a method of direct involvement with activities and issues pertinent to the profession.
- is affiliated with other professionals having interests and areas of similar expertise.
- can stay up-to-date in the knowledge, practices, and research findings in the field.

Student Personnel Association

The purpose of the Student Personnel Association (SPA) is to promote interest, involvement and professional development in student affairs through association with friends, faculty and staff who are interested in this field. SPA hosts many professional development, community service and social activities throughout the year. This organization is open to anyone interested in student affairs. Please contact your academic advisor for more details.

American College Personnel Association (ACPA)

Headquartered in Washington, D.C. at the National Center for Higher Education, ACPA is the leading comprehensive student affairs association that advances student affairs and engages students for a lifetime of learning and discovery. ACPA, founded in 1924, has nearly 6,000 members from across the U.S. and around the world. Information can be found at: <http://www.myacpa.org/>

National Association for Student Personnel Association (NASPA)

NASPA is the leading association for the advancement, health, and sustainability of the student affairs profession. They provide programs, experiences, and services that cultivate student learning and success. NASPA was founded in 1919, and it is comprised of more than 16,000 members in all 50 states, 29 countries, and 8 U.S. Territories. Information can be found at: www.naspa.org.

Southern Association for College Student Affairs (SACSA)

With over 700 members and representing 15 states and the District of Columbia, the Southern Association for College Student Affairs (SACSA) is an independent, regional, and generalist association designed for the professional development of practitioners, educators, and students engaged in the student affairs profession. Information can be found at www.sacsa.org.

18. Student Affairs Program of Study Faculty & Staff

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