

**Carlow University**  
**Professional Counseling Program**  
**Essential Standards**

*Counselor educators clearly state to students, prior to and throughout the training program, the levels of competency expected, appraisal methods, and timing of evaluations for both didactic and clinical competencies. Counselor educators provide students with ongoing feedback regarding their performance throughout the training program. (ACA, 2014, p.15)*

The essential standards are the minimum expectations of those students entering the Professional Counseling Program at Carlow University. For more information about feedback provided to students throughout the masters program, please see the Professional Counseling Advising Guide.

1. Professional Disposition

a. Social:

- i. Behaves and expresses oneself, both in writing and verbally, in a professional manner with faculty, staff, supervisors, and fellow students.
- ii. Maintains professional behavior and demeanor when faced with challenging situations.
- iii. Collaborates effectively with others in dyads and groups.
- iv. Respects and appreciates the contributions of others.
- v. Demonstrates compassion, integrity, motivation, and concern for others.
- vi. Responds non-defensively to supervisory and/or faculty feedback and alters behavior in accordance.
- vii. Maintains appropriate boundaries with faculty, staff, supervisors, and fellow students.

b. Emotional:

- i. Behaves professionally in class and clinical settings by evidencing emotional regulation (i.e., is able to control the expression of emotional response).
- ii. Demonstrates consistent self-awareness and emotional stability (i.e., congruence between mood and affect) and self-control (i.e., impulse control) in interpersonal and classroom interactions.
- iii. Accepts responsibility for actions/behaviors in both clinical and academic settings and willingly participates in professional development when necessary.

2. Cognitive:

- a. Elicits, interprets, and effectively applies verbal and nonverbal communications, including facial expressions and body language, from clients, families, faculty, and classmates in clinical and academic settings.
- b. Communicates effectively, both verbally and in writing, using effective communication skills that include accuracy, clarity, and proficiency in the English language.
- c. Demonstrates cognitive learning including the ability to think logically, assess, problem solve, apply reasoning skills, and reach judgments in relation to new procedures through clinical application.
- d. Reads and cognitively comprehends graduate level written course materials, clinical documents, and policies and procedures of healthcare institutions.
- e. Demonstrates an openness, acceptance, and respect of culture and diverse world views (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, spirituality, religion, sexual orientation, disability, social class).

- f. Demonstrates awareness of and is responsive to ways in which culture impacts personal perspective, development, and interpersonal interactions.
  - g. Demonstrates ability to effectively adapt to changing circumstances, unexpected events, and new situations.
3. Physical:
- a. Maintains orientation to person, place, and time; alertness; and consciousness for several one hour intervals in a sequential 8-10-hour period.
  - b. Demonstrates an understanding and appreciation for all University, Counseling Program, and course policies and procedures.
  - c. Presents to all classes, program meetings, and clinical placement obligations on time and stays for the duration of the required time.
  - d. Is not currently under the addicting influence of alcohol, a narcotic, or other habit-forming drug.
  - e. Is free of all intoxicating substances while in class and on clinical placement.
  - f. If physical or emotional wellbeing is compromised to the point where inpatient, partial, or intensive outpatient services are required, the student must provide a release from their licensed treatment provider to engage in any clinical activity.
4. Legal:
- a. Some sites require that interns (a) pass state and federal background checks; (b) have no felony conviction.

*“Effective counselors are well-integrated individuals committed to their own continued growth. They tend to be open to new experiences, aware of their own motivations, values, vulnerabilities, and unmet needs. They know when to seek counseling or therapeutic help themselves to maintain growth and meaning in life.” Nugent & Jones, 2008, p.80*

Students with a limitation related to the above criteria, may request accommodations from the Disabilities Services Office (DSO) each semester as referenced in the University Catalogue. No accommodations will be made retroactively. Accommodations will be decided based on provided documentation and the essential standards delineated here. Consultation between the Dean of Leadership and Social Change and the Professional Counseling Program Chair may be necessary, but documentation will remain confidential. Each case will be decided on an individual basis.

In situations wherein the student is unable to (a) meet these essential standards after admission to the program, and/or (b) evidence the dispositions outlined in the Professional Dispositions Assessment (PDA), the student will be put on a Professional Development Plan (PDP). More information about the PDP and the PDA can be located in the Professional Counseling Advising Guide.

## References

- American Counseling Association (2014). *Code of Ethics*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Nugent, F. A. & Jones, K. D. (2005). *Introduction to the profession of counseling* (4<sup>th</sup> Edition). Columbus, OH: Pearson.