

Golden Gate University
MA Counseling Psychology

Verification of Understanding Agreement

The Counseling Psychology graduate program at Golden Gate University is charged with the task of preparing individuals to become counselors and marriage and family therapists in a variety of settings and to assume positions of leadership in the profession. To fulfill these responsibilities, faculty and supervisors continuously evaluate students based on their academic abilities, clinical skills, interpersonal behavior, and professional conduct. Successful completion of the graduate program as well as faculty endorsement for licensure and other professional pursuits depend on these factors.

To ensure proper training and client care, a counselor-in-training must be able to demonstrate professional character; the ability to communicate well and convey warmth, genuineness, and respect; and empathy in interactions with others, including clients, classmates, staff, and faculty. Counseling students are expected to be able to demonstrate the ability to accept and integrate feedback, be aware of their impact on others, accept personal responsibility for their actions, express emotions appropriately, resolve conflicts, and demonstrate professional judgment in decision making. Faculty and supervisors will evaluate students' level of clinical understanding and counseling skills and provide students with ongoing feedback as they progress through the program. This is consistent with the expectations of faculty and supervisors as gatekeepers of the profession as explained in the *ACA Code of Ethics* (American Counseling Association, 2014).

It is the aim of the Counseling Psychology program at Golden Gate University to foster ethical and professional behavior in our students in preparation for a career as clinical mental health counselors and to provide an environment conducive to positive learning and teaching. Students are expected to be familiar and comply with the Golden Gate University Code of Community Standards, the Academic Honor Code, the policies published in the most recent editions of the Golden Gate University Graduate Studies Catalog and the Counseling Psychology program Graduate Student Handbook, the *ACA Code of Ethics* and practice recommendations of the American Counseling Association, the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists *CAMFT Code of Ethics* (2019), and the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy *Code of Ethics* (2015). Student progress in the program may be interrupted for failure to comply with professional ethical standards or when intrapersonal, interpersonal, or professional behavior interferes with education and training requirements for self or others. Therefore, it is crucial to become familiar with the policies and procedures of Golden Gate University and the Counseling Psychology program to create an environment that is conducive to student learning and growth.

Civility in the Classroom and All Learning Settings

Civility is expected in all interactions and learning settings connected to the Counseling Psychology graduate program. Civility in the classroom, during off-campus assignments, during small-group work, and in field site settings reflects a student's ability to maintain the professional behavior expected of a practicing counseling professional. Student incivility interferes with student learning and the teaching environment. Therefore, all students are expected to assist in providing

a positive learning environment for other students as well as themselves. Disruptive behaviors in any academic or field setting, such as arriving late, leaving early, arriving under the influence of substances, side discussions during class time, talking over or interrupting other students, and actions that inhibit or disparage the contributions of others are not acceptable. Inappropriate use of technology in the classroom will not be tolerated. Aggressive/volatile behaviors that lead to a negative working or learning environment will be addressed with the individual, and if prosocial changes do not occur, faculty are permitted to and will be supported in asking students to leave the class and/or withdraw from the course. If needed, an investigation will be launched following the grievance process in the University Catalog. The student's final course grade will reflect the unarranged absence penalty described in the course attendance policy. The faculty will address inappropriate, unprofessional, and uncivil behaviors directly with the student in the scheduled meetings with the Chair.

Due Process Procedures

If there are concerns about a student's academic or emotional readiness for traineeship or psychotherapeutic practice, a Traineeship Candidacy Committee of at least two faculty members will be convened and, whenever possible, a plan will be developed with the student to address gaps in academic performance or emotional readiness. Similarly, if a student's traineeship placement is terminated for any reason, their readiness to participate in another traineeship will be evaluated by the Candidacy Committee according to Candidacy guidelines. If reports are submitted regarding academic or behavioral issues in the classroom after Candidacy has been approved, the Committee may reconvene to review those reports and require an in-person meeting with the student. In rare cases, the Committee may decide that the student has failed to demonstrate professional and personal responsibility (as evidenced by violations of professional conduct, interpersonal trust, or ethical practice) and require students to leave the program.

Access to At-Risk Reports, Academic Integrity Records, and Disciplinary Records

As described above, the goal of the MA Counseling Psychology program is to foster ethical and professional behavior in our students in preparation for a career as clinical mental health counselors and to provide an environment conducive to positive learning and teaching. Because of this, by enrolling in the program, the student agrees to allow the Department to access and potentially discuss at-risk reports, academic integrity and disciplinary records with traineeship sites and other relevant parties.

Acknowledgment of Golden Gate University Graduate Program and Course Policies and Procedures

Students are asked to affirm the following statement with their signature: I have received a copy or link to the following documents.

1. Golden Gate University's Graduate Studies Catalog
2. Psychology Department Handbook
3. ACA Code of Ethics (<https://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/ethics>)
4. CAMFT Code of Ethics (<https://www.camft.org/Membership/About-Us/Association-Documents/Code-of-Ethics>)

5. AAMFT Code of Ethics (https://www.aamft.org/Legal_Ethics/Code_of_Ethics.aspx)

Student Name

Date