Comprehensive Evaluation and Retention Policy

Faculty, training staff, supervisors, and administrators of the Psychology and Counseling graduate programs at the University of Texas at Tyler have a professional, ethical, and potentially legal obligation to: (a) establish criteria and methods through which aspects of competence other than, and in addition to, a student-trainee's knowledge or skills may be assessed (including, but not limited to, emotional stability and well being, interpersonal skills, professional development, and personal fitness for practice); and, (b) ensure, insofar as possible, that the student-trainees who complete our programs are competent to manage future relationships (e.g., client, collegial, professional, public, scholarly, supervisory, teaching) in an effective and appropriate manner. Because of this commitment, and within the parameters of our administrative authority, our faculty, training staff, supervisors, and administrators strive not to advance, recommend, or graduate students or trainees with demonstrable problems (e.g., cognitive, emotional, psychological, interpersonal, technical, and ethical) that may interfere with professional competence to other programs, the profession, employers, or the public at large.

As such, within a developmental framework, and with due regard for the inherent power difference between students and faculty, students and trainees should know that the faculty, training staff, and supervisors of our programs will evaluate their competence in areas other than, and in addition to, coursework, seminars, scholarship, comprehensive examinations, or related program requirements. These evaluative areas include, but are not limited to, demonstration of sufficient: (a) interpersonal and professional competence (e.g., the ways in which student trainees relate to clients, peers, faculty, allied professionals, the public, and individuals from diverse backgrounds or histories); (b) self-awareness, self-reflection, and self-evaluation (e.g., knowledge of the content and potential impact of one's own beliefs and values on clients, peers, faculty, allied professionals, the public, and individuals from diverse backgrounds or histories); (c) openness to processes of supervision (e.g., the ability and willingness to explore issues that either interfere with the appropriate provision of care or impede professional development or functioning); and (d) resolution of issues or problems that interfere with professional development or functioning in a satisfactory manner (e.g., by responding constructively to feedback from supervisors or program faculty; by the successful completion of remediation plans; by participating in personal counseling/therapy in order to resolve issues or problems).
This policy is applicable to settings and contexts in which evaluation would appropriately occur (e.g., coursework, practica, supervision), rather than settings and contexts that are unrelated to the formal process of education and training (e.g., non-academic, social contexts). However, irrespective of setting or context, when a student-trainee’s conduct clearly and demonstrably (a) impacts the performance, development, or functioning of the student-trainee, (b) raises questions of an ethical nature, (c) represents a risk to public safety, (d) negatively impacts the learning of other students, or (e) damages the representation of psychology and counseling to the profession or public, appropriate representatives of our programs may review such conduct within the context of the program’s evaluation processes.

[Adapted from the Comprehensive Evaluation of Student-Trainee Competence in Professional Psychology Programs statement developed by the Student Competence Task Force of the Council of Chairs of Training Councils (CCTC), (http://www.apa.org/ed/graduate/cctc.html), approved March 25, 2004.]

Student Fitness Evaluation

Program Standards:
Students enrolled in all graduate programs in the UT-Tyler Department of Psychology and Counseling must maintain high scholastic standards and develop skills necessary to work effectively with people with diverse needs. Students are expected to demonstrate emotional and mental fitness in their interactions with others, use skills and techniques that are generally accepted by others in the professional fields and conform to the codes of ethics of relevant professional associations and the state of Texas. A student's acceptance in any program does not guarantee his or her fitness to remain in that program. The faculty is responsible for assuring that only those students who continue to meet program standards are allowed to continue in any program.

Evaluating Student Fitness and Performance:
Members of the faculty, using professional judgment, continuously evaluate each student's fitness and performance. Students receive information related to their fitness and performance from faculty members, their advisers, and their supervisors. The criteria used by the faculty to make such judgments include instructor's observations of course performance, evaluations of students' performances in simulated practice situations, supervisors' evaluations of students' performances in practice situations, and the disciplines' codes of ethics. Students are formally evaluated at least annually by the program faculty. Students who are not making satisfactory progress or who are not meeting program standards should consider withdrawing from the program. In this context, the term
"unsatisfactory progress in the program" refers to an academic judgment made regarding the student's fitness and performance. It is a determination that the student has failed to meet academic and/or professional standards.

**Required Withdrawal From a Program:**

If a faculty member believes that a student is making unsatisfactory progress or is not meeting program or university standards, he or she will discuss the situation with the student. If the faculty member believes this will restore satisfactory progress, then this informal resolution will be documented, with a copy to the student, and the student allowed to continue in the program. If the faculty member believes the student's performance is unlikely to improve, or has not improved to acceptable standards through informal resolution, the faculty member will refer the student to the Program Faculty Review Committee, hereinafter the Committee. The Committee will consist of three faculty members from the student's discipline, although a fourth member outside the discipline may be added from either the department or another department at the discretion of the Department Chair. This ad hoc Program Faculty Review Committee will be appointed by the department chair, upon receipt of a referral from a faculty member. The Committee will notify the student of the reasons why he or she is not making satisfactory progress or meeting program standards. Furthermore, the student will have the opportunity to meet with the Committee to respond and present information and witnesses. The Committee will also meet with the faculty member who referred the student to the Committee. After considering the matter, and within 15 working days of meeting with the student, the Committee will report to the student and the department chair, recommending that the student either be allowed to remain in the program or be removed from the program. The Committee may make other recommendations, such as suspension for a specified period of time, with criteria for readmission, and/or placing restrictions or conditions on the student's continuance in the program. Within 15 working days of receipt of the faculty recommendations, the student will notify the Chair of the Department of Psychology and Counseling, in writing (paper or email from UT-Tyler Patriot account) of the acceptance of or intent to appeal the Committee's recommendation.

If the student appeals the Committee's recommendations, the Department Chair, after considering the Committee's recommendation and after meeting with the student, will determine whether the student will be allowed to remain in the program. The Chair need not meet with the student before making a decision if the Chair has given the student a reasonable opportunity to meet and the student has either failed or refused to meet. The student will be notified of the Chair's decision in writing within fifteen working days of the
chairperson’s meeting with the student. If the student is dissatisfied with the Chair’s
decision, he or she may appeal to the Dean of the College of Education and Psychology.
However, in order for an appeal to the Dean to be considered, the student must submit a
written notice for an appeal to the Dean within fifteen working days of receiving the Chair's
decision. The Dean will consider the matter based on results compiled by the Department
Chair and notify the student of his or her decision within 15 working days of his/her receipt
of the appeal from the Chair.