

## **Master's Student Code of Conduct**

University of Texas at Tyler Department of Psychology and Counseling  
Voted and Approved by Faculty on 11 November, 2020

This document applies to students the following programs:

- a. Clinical Mental Health Counseling MA
- b. School Counseling MA
- c. Clinical Psychology MA (general, neuropsychology)

### **Professional Ethical Standards**

Clinical Psychology MA students are bound by the APA Ethical Principles (2016); CMHC MA and School Counseling MA students are expected to abide by the ACA Code of Ethics (2014); and School Counseling MA students are also bound by the Texas Administrative Educators' Code of Ethics (Rule §247.2, 2018) and the Texas Administrative Educators' School Counseling Standards (Rule §239.15, 2017).

Graduate students are expected to adhere to the ethical principles of their profession in all domains of their professional career, including the roles of student, researcher, instructor, and therapist. A statement of the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists/ACA Code of Ethics/Texas Administrative Educators' Code of Ethics will be given to each graduate student in the UT Tyler Psychology and Counseling graduate program(s). It is also the responsibility of each graduate student to be familiar with the content of the relevant Ethical Principles/Code of Ethics, to maintain awareness as the principles are changed or clarified by the APA/ACA, and to consult with his/her advisor and/or a trusted faculty member or administrator if they have questions or concerns about ethical issues. Each student will also be given this Graduate Student Code of Conduct and the UT Tyler Psychology and Counseling Faculty Code of Conduct, and is expected to become familiar with them. Some of the issues most relevant to graduate student training are discussed below. Students also need to be aware that violation of the Ethical Principles of Psychologists/Code of Ethics by a student is considered to be academic misconduct, and may lead to dismissal from the program. In a situation where different Ethical standards appear to be inconsistent, the standard that offers the strongest protection for the most vulnerable party (e.g., client, student, subordinate) is expected to be followed.

Graduate students assume a variety of roles during professional training, some of which are subordinate in nature and some of which entail influence and responsibility over others. It is important that students be aware of both their rights and their responsibilities with respect to issues of sexual harassment and dual-role relationships. Any students with questions or concerns about these issues should discuss them with their advisor, the Department Chair, or another trusted faculty member, with the assurance that confidentiality will be maintained unless we are legally required to report the information. Issues pertaining to sexual harassment, multiple relationships, and exploitation are covered in Section 3 of the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists (APA, 2016), section F.10 of the ACA Code of Ethics (2014), and the TAE Code of Ethics (2018) standard 3 (selections copied below)

### **Selections from the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists**

#### **3.02 Sexual Harassment**

Psychologists do not engage in sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature, that occurs in connection with the psychologist's activities or roles as a psychologist, and that either (1) is unwelcome, is offensive, or creates a hostile workplace or educational environment, and the psychologist knows or is told this or (2) is sufficiently severe or intense to be abusive to a reasonable person in the context. Sexual harassment can consist of a single intense or severe act or of multiple persistent or pervasive acts.

### **3.05 Multiple Relations**

A psychologist refrains from entering into a multiple relationship if the multiple relationship could reasonably be expected to impair the psychologist's objectivity, competence, or effectiveness in performing his or her functions as a psychologist, or otherwise risks exploitation or harm to the person with whom the professional relationship exists.

### **3.08 Exploitation**

Psychologists do not exploit persons over whom they have supervisory, evaluative, or other authority such as clients/patients, students, supervisees, research participants and employees.

### **Selections from the ACA Code of Ethics**

#### **F.10. Roles and Relationships Between Counselor Educators and Students**

**F.10.a. Sexual or Romantic Relationships.** Counselor educators are prohibited from sexual or romantic interactions or relationships with students currently enrolled in a counseling or related program and over whom they have power and authority. This prohibition applies to both in-person and electronic interactions or relationships.

**F.10.b. Sexual Harassment.** Counselor educators do not condone or subject students to sexual harassment. (See C.6.a.).

**F.10.c. Relationships with Former Students.** Counselor educators are aware of the power differential in the relationship between faculty and students. Faculty members discuss with former students potential risks when they consider engaging in social, sexual, or other intimate relationships.

**F.10.d. Nonprofessional Relationships.** Counselor educators avoid nonacademic relationships with students in which there is a risk of potential harm to the student or which may compromise the training experience or grades assigned. In addition, counselor educators do not accept any form of professional services, fees, commissions, reimbursement, or remuneration from a site for student or supervisee placement.

**F.10.e. Counseling Services.** Counselor educators do not serve as counselors to students currently enrolled in a counseling or related program and over whom they have power and authority.

**F.10.f. Potentially Beneficial Relationships.** Counselor educators are aware of the power differential in the relationship between faculty and students. If they believe that a nonprofessional relationship with a student may be potentially beneficial to the student, they take precautions similar to those taken by counselors when working with clients. Examples of potentially beneficial interactions or relationships include, but are not limited to, attending a formal ceremony; conducting hospital visits; providing support during a stressful event; or maintaining mutual membership in a professional association, organization, or community. Counselor educators discuss with students the rationale for such interactions, the potential benefits and drawbacks, and the anticipated consequences for the student. Educators clarify the specific nature and limitations of the additional role(s) they will have with the student prior to engaging in a nonprofessional relationship. Nonprofessional relationships with students should be time-limited and/or context specific and initiated with student consent.

### **Selections from the Texas Administrative Code**

#### **1) Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices, and Performance**

**Standard 1.4.** The educator shall not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.

**Standard 1.5.** The educator shall neither accept nor offer gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment or that are used to obtain special advantage. This standard shall not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents of students, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service.

## **2) Ethical Conduct Toward Professional Colleagues**

**Standard 2.6.** The educator shall not use coercive means or promise of special treatment in order to influence professional decisions or colleagues.

**Standard 2.8.** The educator shall not intentionally or knowingly subject a colleague to sexual harassment.

## **3) Ethical Conduct Toward Students**

**Standard 3.6.** The educator shall not solicit or engage in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor.

**Standard 3.9.** The educator shall refrain from inappropriate communication with a student or minor, including, but not limited to, electronic communication such as cell phone, text messaging, email, instant messaging, blogging, or other social network communication. Factors that may be considered in assessing whether the communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:

- (i) the nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;
- (ii) the subject matter of the communication;
- (iii) whether the communication was made openly, or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;
- (iv) whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;
- (v) whether the communication was sexually explicit; and
- (vi) whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the educator or the student.

The Department of Psychology and Counseling endorses these professional ethical principles and considers that they apply to faculty, graduate students and undergraduates in positions of responsibility over others in the department.

We recognize that a power differential exists and is inherent between faculty and students and we will make every effort to eliminate real, implied, or perceived biases. We as a faculty agree to engage in relationships that are for the professional benefit of students. We also recognize that inappropriate social relationships between faculty/students, faculty/faculty, and student/student can adversely affect students, faculty and the reputation of the Department and University.

Students will demonstrate professional and appropriate behavior in relation to other students and faculty. This includes avoiding gossip, negative comments/criticisms, whether verbal, written or electronic, to other students or faculty regarding other students or faculty members.

Students shall not engage in social relationships **such as mutually beneficial friendships or romantic relationships** with faculty members who have or will likely have evaluative role(s) in relation to the student (i.e., comps, yearly student evaluations, course work). A faculty member should reasonably expect to have in the future academic responsibility (instructional, evaluative, or supervisory) for (1) students whose academic program will require them to enroll in a course taught by the faculty member, (2) students known to the faculty member to have an interest in an academic area within the faculty member's academic expertise, or (3) any student for whom a faculty member must have academic responsibility (instructional, evaluative, or supervisory) in the pursuit of a degree. Graduate students in a professional role (e.g., GTA, GRA) with responsibilities for other subordinate students (e.g., undergraduate students) shall not engage in social relationships, **such as mutually beneficial friendships or romantic relationships** with other students over whom they have an evaluative or instructional role.

**Selections from the University of Texas at Tyler Sexual Misconduct Prohibition Policy**

Read the full policy (Section 2.4.3) at <https://catalogs.uttyler.edu/UTTyler/HOP/Series->

[200-General-Policies-and-Procedures/2-4-3-Sexual-Misconduct-link-to-policy.](#)

The University of Texas at Tyler (the University) is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). The University encourages any student, faculty, staff or visitor to promptly report violations of this Policy to the Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Coordinators or a Responsible Employee as identified in Section C.

Persons affected: This Policy applies to all University administrators, faculty, staff, students, and third parties within the University's control, including visitors and applicants for admission or employment. It applies to conduct regardless of where it occurs, including off University property, if it potentially affects the complainant's education or employment with the University or potentially affects the University community. It also applies regardless of the gender, gender identity or sexual orientation of the parties. In addition, it applies whether the complaint was made verbally or in writing.

**C. Definitions.**

1. Sexual Misconduct: A broad term encompassing a range of non-consensual sexual activity or unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature. The term includes, but is not limited to, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual intimidation, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. The term also includes "other inappropriate sexual conduct," as defined above. Sexual misconduct can be committed by any person including strangers or acquaintances.

2. Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature including but not limited to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person's student status, employment, or participation in University activities; or such conduct is sufficiently severe or pervasive that it creates a hostile environment as defined by this policy

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that includes:

a. Sexual violence, sexual assault, stalking, domestic violence and dating violence as defined herein.

b. Physical conduct, depending on the totality of the circumstances present, including frequency and severity, including but not limited to:

i. unwelcome intentional touching; or

ii. deliberate physical interference with or restriction of movement.

c. Verbal conduct not necessary to an argument for or against the substance of any political, religious, philosophical, ideological, or academic idea, including oral, written, or symbolic expression, including but not limited to:

i. explicit or implicit propositions to engage in sexual activity;

ii. gratuitous comments, jokes, questions, anecdotes or remarks of a sexual nature about clothing or bodies;

iii. gratuitous remarks about sexual activities or speculation about sexual experiences;

iv. persistent, unwanted sexual or romantic attention;

v. subtle or overt pressure for sexual favors;

vi. exposure to sexually suggestive visual displays such as photographs, graffiti, posters, calendars or other materials; or

vii. deliberate, repeated humiliation or intimidation based upon sex.

## Other Ethical Policies

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism consists of any attempt to present as one's own the ideas or work of another. The department considers such behavior unethical and unprofessional. Evidence of plagiarism should be reported to the course instructor and/or Department Chair. In many cases, however, it is perfectly acceptable for students to form study groups or work together in preparing for exams. Students should consult with the course instructor if they are uncertain about the acceptability of such study groups.

### Confidentiality

Principle 5 of the APA Ethical Principles states that psychologists have a primary obligation to respect the confidentiality of information obtained from persons in the course of their work as psychologists (APA, 2016). Similarly, the ACA Code of Ethics states "Counselors recognize that trust is a cornerstone of the counseling relationship. Counselors aspire to earn the trust of clients by creating an ongoing partnership, establishing and upholding appropriate boundaries, and maintaining confidentiality. Counselors communicate the parameters of confidentiality in a culturally competent manner" (ACA, 2014). The principle of confidentiality applies to information gained in clinical or consulting relationships, in departmental committee work, and in research settings. With regard to research, students should establish a means of maintaining confidentiality in storing and disposing of data (with IRB approval) and in reporting research results. Confidential information (including lists of research participants, or participants and their code numbers) should not be stored on a computer available to others, including unauthorized use by others (e.g., "hackers").

### Publication Credit

APA Principle 6.23/ACA Principle G.5. address issues concerning authorship credit on multiple co-authored papers. Discussion regarding authorship credit and order should routinely occur amongst authors when beginning research projects and working on articles. Please note that section 8.12, principle c of the APA code of conduct (APA, 2016) states that " Except under exceptional circumstances, a student is listed as principal author on any multiple-authored article that is substantially based on the student's doctoral dissertation. Faculty advisors discuss publication credit with students as early as feasible and throughout the research and publication process as appropriate. " Said exceptional circumstances may include when the student's thesis or dissertation work primarily uses data collected as part of a larger project supervised by the faculty member (e.g., large, grant-funded projects). Similarly, section G.5.f of the ACA Code of ethics (ACA, 2014) states "Manuscripts or professional presentations in any medium that are substantially based on a student's course papers, projects, dissertations, or theses are used only with the student's permission and list the student as lead author." There may be exceptions to this standard when a student is using archival data or data from a broader project on which they are not the principal investigator. Authorship order, may sometimes need to be changed as authors assume more or less responsibility on revisions of manuscripts. For more student guidance on authorship practices please visit the APA's tips for authorship: <https://www.apa.org/science/leadership/students/authorship-paper>

### Grievances

If at any time a student has a complaint against a faculty or staff member or another student, the chart below outlines the point of contact and resolution process depending on the type of complaint.

Complaint	Resolve Informally	File Formal Appeal	Appeal Contact	Location of Policy
Sexual Misconduct	NO	YES	Title IX Coordinator	<p><b>Student Success:</b> Nondiscrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy  <a href="https://catalogs.uttyler.edu/en/2018-2019/Catalog/Student-Success/Nondiscrimination-and-Sexual-Harassment-Policy-and-Complaint-Procedure">https://catalogs.uttyler.edu/en/2018-2019/Catalog/Student-Success/Nondiscrimination-and-Sexual-Harassment-Policy-and-Complaint-Procedure</a></p> <p><b>Handbook of Operating Procedures:</b>  <a href="https://catalogs.uttyler.edu/en/UTTyler/2015-2016-HOP/Series-200-General-Policies-and-Procedures/2-4-3-Sexual-Harassment-Complaint-Investigation-and-Grievance">https://catalogs.uttyler.edu/en/UTTyler/2015-2016-HOP/Series-200-General-Policies-and-Procedures/2-4-3-Sexual-Harassment-Complaint-Investigation-and-Grievance</a></p>
Discrimination: age, race, and gender	NO	YES	Chief Student Affairs Officer	<p><b>Student Success:</b> Nondiscrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy  <a href="https://catalogs.uttyler.edu/en/2018-2019/Catalog/Student-Success/Nondiscrimination-and-Sexual-Harassment-Policy-and-Complaint-Procedure">https://catalogs.uttyler.edu/en/2018-2019/Catalog/Student-Success/Nondiscrimination-and-Sexual-Harassment-Policy-and-Complaint-Procedure</a></p> <p><b>Handbook of Operating Procedures:</b>  <a href="https://catalogs.uttyler.edu/en/UTTyler/HOP/Series-200-General-Policies-and-Procedures/2-4-1-Nondiscrimination-Policy-and-Complaint-Procedure">https://catalogs.uttyler.edu/en/UTTyler/HOP/Series-200-General-Policies-and-Procedures/2-4-1-Nondiscrimination-Policy-and-Complaint-Procedure</a></p>
Disability Discrimination	NO	YES	Assistant Director of Student Accessibility	<p><b>Student Success:</b> Nondiscrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy  <a href="https://catalogs.uttyler.edu/en/2018-2019/Catalog/Student-Success/Nondiscrimination-and-Sexual-Harassment-Policy-and-Complaint-Procedure">https://catalogs.uttyler.edu/en/2018-2019/Catalog/Student-Success/Nondiscrimination-and-Sexual-Harassment-Policy-and-Complaint-Procedure</a></p> <p><b>Handbook of Operating Procedures:</b>  <a href="https://catalogs.uttyler.edu/en/UTTyler/HOP/Series-200-General-Policies-and-Procedures/2-4-1-Nondiscrimination-Policy-and-Complaint-Procedure">https://catalogs.uttyler.edu/en/UTTyler/HOP/Series-200-General-Policies-and-Procedures/2-4-1-Nondiscrimination-Policy-and-Complaint-Procedure</a></p>
Academic Grievances	YES	YES	Provost	<p><b>Academic Policies:</b> Academic Complaints  <a href="https://www.uttyler.edu/academicaffairs/student-complaint.php">https://www.uttyler.edu/academicaffairs/student-complaint.php</a></p>
All Other Complaints	YES	YES	V.P. of Area Involved	<p><b>Student Success:</b> Non-Academic Student Grievances  <a href="http://catalogs.uttyler.edu/en/2012-2014/Catalog/Student-Affairs/Non-Academic-Student-Grievances">http://catalogs.uttyler.edu/en/2012-2014/Catalog/Student-Affairs/Non-Academic-Student-Grievances</a></p>