Rehabilitation Counseling Student Handbook

Please familiarize yourself with all materials in this handbook upon admission into the program. The information, policies, and procedures in this handbook introduce the NIU Rehabilitation Counseling program. This document also serves as a resource to be used during your affiliation with the program. The handbook is updated annually and when necessary. Students will be notified of changes as appropriate. Students are responsible for the newest version of the handbook and newer policies replace the previously published policies unless noted otherwise. Students are also encouraged to familiarize themselves with the documents referred to in this handbook including, but not limited to, the:

NIU Student Code of Conduct

Code of Professional Ethics for Certified Rehabilitation Counselors

American Counseling Association Code of Ethics

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs Standards

NIU Graduate School Catalog
# Table of Contents

## INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION
- Preface .............................................................................................................................. 4
- Organizational Structure ................................................................................................. 4
- Rehabilitation Counseling Faculty .................................................................................. 5
- Mission, Values, Objectives ............................................................................................ 7
- Rehabilitation Counseling Discipline .............................................................................. 8
  - Definition .................................................................................................................... 8
  - Work Settings and Job Titles ...................................................................................... 8
  - Credentials .................................................................................................................. 9

## PROGRAM POLICIES AND INFORMATION
- Accreditation .................................................................................................................. 11
- Admissions Process ........................................................................................................... 11
  - Conditional Admission ................................................................................................ 12
- Advising ........................................................................................................................... 12
- New Student Orientation ................................................................................................. 13
- Rehabilitation Counseling Curriculum ............................................................................ 13
- Academic Policies ........................................................................................................... 16
  - Accessibility and Accommodations ............................................................................ 16
  - Grade Requirements .................................................................................................... 16
  - Grievances ................................................................................................................... 16
  - Student-At-Large .......................................................................................................... 16
  - Transfer Credit ............................................................................................................. 17
- Student Retention, Remediation, Dismissal ................................................................... 17
  - Types of Review and Procedures ................................................................................. 17
  - Remediation ................................................................................................................ 19
  - Templates for Student Review, Retention, Remediation .............................................. 20
  - Professional Dispositions Rating Rubric for Faculty ....................................................... 24
  - Dismissal ...................................................................................................................... 27
- Comprehensive Examination .......................................................................................... 27
- Practicum and Internship ................................................................................................. 29
  - 100-Hour Supervised Practicum ................................................................................. 34
  - 600-Hour Supervised Internship .................................................................................. 39
- Professional Development Hours ..................................................................................... 42
- Thesis ............................................................................................................................... 44
- Student Association ........................................................................................................... 48
- Communications .............................................................................................................. 48
- Professional Organizations .............................................................................................. 49
- University Resources ....................................................................................................... 51
- Ethical Codes of Conduct ................................................................................................. 52
- Academic Misconduct ...................................................................................................... 53
- Acknowledgment of Receipt of the RC Student Handbook ............................................ 54
Preface
Since 1974, our program has prepared students to assist individuals with disabilities in achieving their goals. We are pleased that you have chosen NIU to further your education, and we look forward to working with you to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to become professional rehabilitation counselors.

The handbook contains much critical information including (1) the mission statement of the program and program objectives, (2) information about professional counseling organizations, (3) opportunities for professional involvement, (4) admission requirements, (5) expectations of students in the program, (6) appeal policy and procedures, (7) endorsement policy for recommending students for credentials and/or employment, and (7) policies for student retention, remediation, and dismissal from the program.

The handbook was designed to provide you guidance throughout your graduate education experience. In this document are policies and procedures important to our program that will help you succeed and steer you toward professionalism. Specifically, the Handbook will help you understand, A) An overview of the university and the discipline of rehabilitation counseling; B) The curriculum and policies that shape the rehabilitation counseling program; and C) Resources to support your education and practice as a rehabilitation counselor in training. It is your responsibility to become familiar with the Handbook and refer to it regularly. The Rehabilitation Counseling Program does not have the authority to waive any university requirements.

Organizational Structure
NIU is comprised of seven colleges, of which, the Rehabilitation Counseling Program is in the College of Health and Human Sciences as part of the School of Interdisciplinary Health Professions (SIHP). Other academic units within the college include the School of Allied Health and Communicative Disorders; the School of Family and Consumer Sciences; the School of Nursing; the School of Health Studies; and the Department of Military Science. Besides Rehabilitation Counseling, graduate programs within the SIHP include Health Sciences.

The rehabilitation counseling program has a program coordinator who is also a core faculty member. The position rotates every two years. The role of the program coordinator is direction of the program and responding to inquiries regarding the program. Students are welcome to contact the program coordinator with any concerns or questions related to the program. Examples include questions about orientation, submission of self-evaluations completed during routine review of student progress, and program accreditation. Dr. Amanda McCarthy serves as the program coordinator through June 15, 2022 and she can be contacted at amccarthy@niu.edu.

The rehabilitation counseling program has a Practicum and Internship Coordinator. The Practicum and Internship Coordinator is responsible for the coordination of practicum and internship experiences and responding to inquiries regarding practicum and internship. Dr. Amanda McCarthy serves as the practicum and internship coordinator through June 15, 2022 and she can be contacted at amccarthy@niu.edu.
SIHP has a department chair, Dr. Paul Priester. Department chairs are responsible for the management of the department. Dr. Priester can be contacted at ppriester@niu.edu.

Offices of Rehabilitation Counseling faculty members are located on the third floor of Wirtz Hall. The main office of the SIHP is located at Wirtz Hall 323. Faculty members maintain office hours, which will be posted at the start of each new semester. Please contact individual faculty members to confirm office hours.

Rehabilitation Counseling Faculty

Daniel Boutin, Ph.D., CRC, NCC, Core Faculty Member, dboutin@niu.edu

Daniel Boutin is an associate professor of rehabilitation counseling with tenure. He received his doctoral degree in counselor education from The Pennsylvania State University. His master’s degree in rehabilitation counseling and bachelor’s degree in rehabilitation services were conferred at Springfield College (MA). He investigates the impact of vocational rehabilitation services for people with disabilities. Boutin worked as a rehabilitation consultant in the private-sector insurance market providing services for long-term disability claimants. He has served as a board member-at-large and executive committee member of the National Rehabilitation Association. He is a certified rehabilitation counselor and a national certified counselor.

Bryan Dallas, Ph.D., CRC, LCPC, Core Faculty Member, bdallas@niu.edu

Bryan Dallas is an associate professor of rehabilitation counseling with tenure. He received his doctorate of philosophy in rehabilitation from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale. Dallas’ experience involves providing accommodation supports for college students with disabilities. He studies the impact of assistive technologies and universal design instructional methods. Dallas is a certified rehabilitation counselor and licensed clinical professional counselor in Illinois.

Abdoulaye Diallo, Ph.D., CRC, Core Faculty Member, adiallo@niu.edu

Abdoulaye Diallo is an associate professor of rehabilitation counseling with tenure. He earned his master’s in professional counseling and in religion from Liberty University, and his doctorate in rehabilitation counseling from Michigan State University. He has worked with persons with disabilities for over twenty years. His current areas of research interest include attitudes towards persons with disabilities,
multicultural counseling, employment for persons with disabilities, health and wellness, religion and spirituality, and mental illnesses (depression and anxiety).

**Amanda McCarthy, Ed.D., CRC, CVE, LCPC, Core Faculty Member, Program Coordinator, Practicum, and Internship Coordinator through June 15, 2022, amccarthy@niu.edu**

Amanda McCarthy is an associate professor of Rehabilitation Counseling with tenure and program coordinator. She earned her master’s degree in vocational rehabilitation counseling and vocational evaluation from the University of Wisconsin-Stout (CORE-accredited), and her doctorate in counselor education and supervision from Northern Illinois University (CACREP-accredited). McCarthy’s work experience involves providing vocational assessment and rehabilitation counseling services in not-for-profit and public settings. Her research interest is in clinical (counseling) supervision. McCarthy is a certified rehabilitation counselor (CRC), certified vocational evaluator (CVE), and licensed clinical professional counselor (LCPC - IL).

**Nahal Salimi, Ph.D. Core Faculty Member, nsalimi@niu.edu**

Nahal Salimi is an assistant professor of rehabilitation counseling on the tenure track. She received her Ph.D. (rehabilitation) from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale. Her primary research interests have been in the areas of quality of life of and mental health, coping strategies for persons living with HIV/AIDS, and potential challenges of vocational assessment and career placement of racial and ethnic minorities. Because of her applied interests in rehabilitation counseling and mental health provision, she has worked with clients with a variety of mental, physical and developmental or intellectual disabilities. Her current research pursuits are in the area of multicultural issues regarding attitudes toward individuals with disabilities.
Mission, Vision and Objectives

Mission

The mission of the NIU MS in Rehabilitation Counseling program is to prepare graduate students as qualified and dedicated professional rehabilitation counselors who will collaborate with individuals with disabilities to improve their quality of life, including meaningful employment, independent living, and full community participation. Program experiences and expectations emphasize cultural humility and evidenced-based practices to provide quality support to people with disabilities.

Vision

The NIU Rehabilitation Counseling Program aims to improve the lives of people with disabilities by building an educated and credentialed workforce.

Objectives

Graduates of the Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling program will:
1. Demonstrate communication skills necessary for entry-level practice in a rehabilitation counseling setting
2. Demonstrate proficiency of rehabilitation counseling concepts as outlined by program accreditation
   b. CACREP Rehabilitation Counseling Specialty domains (3 total): Foundations, Contextual Dimensions, Practice
3. Apply clinical and administrative skills for successful rehabilitation counseling practice.
4. Apply critical thinking skills necessary to carry out essential functions in rehabilitation counseling settings.
5. Demonstrate understanding of multicultural competencies necessary for successful rehabilitation counseling practice.

Rehabilitation Counseling Discipline
The sections below provide a general definition of the rehabilitation counseling profession and further resources for exploring work sectors and settings, job titles and professional credentialing information. The information provided below is not comprehensive of the entire rehabilitation counseling profession but provides a frame of reference for further student exploration.

Definition
Rehabilitation counselors are the only professional counselors educated and trained at the graduate level specifically to serve individuals with disabilities. Through a comprehensive and unique counseling process, rehabilitation counselors help individuals with disabilities set and achieve their personal, career and independent living goals. Rehabilitation Counselors are the bridge between the person and self-sufficiency, helping them to live on their own, which typically includes securing, or returning to productive, meaningful work. Statement taken from the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) website.

Work Settings and Job Titles
Rehabilitation counseling-based work settings can be extremely diverse, as well as job titles. Graduate students in the Rehabilitation Counseling Program will be exposed to many different areas of the profession in order to explore their interests and ultimately, make an informed decision on their desired future work setting. The Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) website is a resource to learn more about work settings and job titles. The CRCC provides comprehensive information on careers and credentialing in the rehabilitation counseling profession.

There are three general sectors of rehabilitation which include:
Public sector. Traditionally, the state and federal vocational rehabilitation (VR) programs have been associated with the public sector of the rehabilitation field. The public VR program is a state and federally funded program that assists eligible individuals with disabilities in securing competitive employment. A common work setting for rehabilitation counselors in the public sector in Illinois is the Illinois Division of Rehabilitation Services (IDRS). Along with an employment focus, rehabilitation counselors working in the public sector may also focus on improving educational or independent living outcomes of individuals with disabilities.

Private nonprofit. Nonprofit organizations offer specific services and often partner or contract with public sector organizations to assist individuals in attaining rehabilitation goals (e.g., employment, independent living). Specialty services may include job development and placement, job-seeking skills training, job coaching, supported employment, among other services.

Private for-profit. The overarching goal of rehabilitation in the private sector is to return individuals to the workforce as quickly as possible, often as a cost containment measure. Services are provided on a fee-for-service basis and specialty areas may include: workers’ compensation, vocational expert legal testimony, disability case management, or business/industrial consulting, among other areas (Rubin, Roessler, and Rumrill 2016). There may also be an emphasis on disability prevention in the workplace.

Credentials

Often, a specific certification or license is needed to work in a particular job setting. Pursuing the appropriate credentials are important for many reasons including: demonstrating competency, eligibility to apply for certain jobs, and career advancement.

The Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) credential is the most sought by recent graduates of master’s-level rehabilitation counseling programs. A non-exhaustive list of common credentials is listed below with a link to learn more about attainment:

- **Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC)**

  The CRC is the premier credential among rehabilitation counselors. Accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), the CRC Certification Program ensures certificates are of good moral character, meet nationally accepted standards of quality in their practice, and have the requisite educational and professional background. As such, the CRC credential can lead to job placements, job advancement, salary advancement, and both medical and non-medical referrals. *Statement taken from the [Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) website](https://www.rehabcounsel.org/certification/crc).*

Students in the NIU Rehabilitation Counseling program are eligible to sit for the CRC exam once 75% of course work toward the master’s degree is completed, usually during their final semester in the program. The CRC exam is used as a program comprehensive examination and exam fees are included in course fees. Information regarding the CRC exam and credential can be found on the [Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification](https://www.rehabcounsel.org/certification/crc) website.
Certification website.

- Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC)

Illinois has two levels of counselor licensing — Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC). Applicants can earn LPC status through education and examination. In order to become an LCPC, you will need to work under supervision and complete an additional exam. In Illinois, Certified Rehabilitation Counselors (CRC) examination is accepted as a required examination for the LPC credential. For more information on how to apply for the LPC credential please see the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation.

Eligibility for the LCPC exam, requires someone to work under supervision for two years and accumulate at least 960 hours of direct counseling with clients. For more information on how to apply for the LCPC credential please see the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation.

- International Certified Vocational Evaluator (ICVE)

The ICVE credential is specifically for professionals who work in vocational evaluation and assessment settings. Professionals working in these areas often assess an individual’s potential to attain and retain competitive employment. For information on the ICVE credential visit the College of Vocational Rehabilitation Professionals website.

- Certified Vocational Evaluator (CVE)

The CVE credential is for professionals who wish to specialize in career assessment. The credential is open to individuals who are a current CRCSs and requires an individual to complete a series of professional development activities. Details are available on the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification website.

- Certified Disability Management Specialist (CDMS)

Rooted in insurance-based rehabilitation, the field has expanded over the years to encompass a wide variety of services and solutions to help people with illnesses, injuries and disabilities to return to work or stay at work. Certified Disability Management Specialists possess specialized knowledge and expertise to analyze, prevent and mitigate the human and economic impact of disability. For more information, visit the Certification of Disability Management Specialist website.

- National Certified Counselor (NCC)

The NCC certification was launched by the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) in 1983 as a result of the efforts of members of the American Counseling Association (ACA). Since that time, NBCC has become an independent entity and more than 80,000 counselors have become NCCs. The NCC is one of two NBCC certifications that are accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). Statement taken directly from the NBCC website. Three specialty certifications that require the NCC as a prerequisite include:

  - Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselor (CCMHC).
  - National Certified School Counselor (NCSC).
\[ \text{o Master Addictions Counselor (MAC).} \]

\[ \text{o Assistive Technology Professional (ATP)} \]
Assistive Technology (AT) is considered any device that helps individuals with disabilities maintain independence (e.g., cane, computer screen reader, wheelchair, etc.). ATPs specialize in assessing clients’ AT needs, the selection of appropriate technology and training clients on its use. The Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA) offers a certification exam that tests individuals’ competence in these areas. More information on the certification exam and eligibility requirements may be found on the RESNA website.

\[ \text{o Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor (CADC)} \]
Information on becoming CADC certified in the State of Illinois can be found on the Illinois Certification Board Inc. website. Information on several other specialty certifications may be found at the same website.

\[ \text{o Certified Life Care Planner (CLCP)} \]
Life Care Planners (LCP) work with individuals with acquired or chronic debilitating disabilities (Rubin, Roessler, and Rumrill, 2016). LCPs provide a comprehensive rehabilitation plan focused on quality of life and long-term care needs. For more information on the LCP certification, visit the International Commission on Health Care Certification website.

**Accreditation**
The NIU Rehabilitation Counseling Program is fully accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) through October 31, 2021. The purpose of accreditation is to identify high-quality programs through external reviews of curricular content and programmatic policies. CACREP acknowledges that the accredited NIU Rehabilitation Counseling Program meets strict standards to ensure that students develop the skills and knowledge to enter various professional environments serving persons with disabilities. CACREP mandates that rehabilitation counseling programs across the United States deliver content related to the following topics:
- Professional identity.
- Ethics.
- Psychological and social aspects of disability.
- Cultural diversity.
- Human growth and development.
- Employment and career development.
- Individual and group counseling.
- Counseling theory.
- Family dynamics.
- Assessment.
- Research.
- Program evaluation.
- Medical and environmental aspects of disability.
- Case management.

Additional information about CACREP is located at the [Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs](https://www.cacrep.org) website.

**Admissions Process**
The Rehabilitation Counseling Program uses a two-step process for admission into the program. First, applicants must complete a written application package including an application to the graduate school, two letters of recommendation, an unofficial transcript (official upon admission) and a personal statement. Second, applicants must complete an interview with program faculty members. During both phases of admission, applicants are evaluated by the admissions committee for, A) Relevance of career goals/commitment to working with people with disabilities; B) Aptitude for graduate-level study; C) Potential success in forming effective counseling relationships; D) Respect for cultural difference; and E) Openness to self-examination/willingness to take constructive feedback. In addition, the admissions committee evaluates each applicant’s professional dispositions using the Student Professional Dispositions Rating Rubric for Faculty. Admission requirements can be found in the current NIU Graduate School Catalog.

**Conditional Admission**
When determined necessary by the admissions committee, students may be admitted to the program with conditions. Conditionally admitted students are also subject to graduate school dismissal policies. Conditionally admitted students who meet the conditions on their admission generally transition to regularly admitted students. Students who are conditionally admitted to the Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling (MS RC) program who do not meet the conditions of admission are automatically dismissed from the MS RC program. The MS RC program allows students who have been dismissed to appeal that decision to ensure fairness and consideration to all factors leading to the dismissal. Please be aware there is no guarantee that an appeal will be approved.

Conditionally-admitted students who wish to appeal dismissal must submit a formal letter of appeal. Appeal letters must include information that would explain the reason for academic difficulty including, but not limited to, A) What prevented you from being academically successful? B) Extenuating circumstance(s) that lead to the academic difficulty (e.g., medical issue, family issue, etc.); C) What would be different if you were allowed to return? and D) Identify resources that you would utilize if allowed to return. The appeal letter should also include the following information, A) Z-ID; B) Student name; C) Student telephone number; and D) Return address. Appeal letters should be submitted via email to the program coordinator. The deadlines to appeal are as follows, A) Fall semester dismissal — 14 days before spring classes begin; B) Spring semester dismissal — June 1; and C) Summer semester dismissal — 14 days before fall classes begin.
Advising
Upon admission, students are assigned a faculty mentor (i.e., faculty advisor, academic advisor). The mentor/advisor is a full-time core faculty member. A list of mentors and mentees will be maintained by the program coordinator. Students must meet with their assigned faculty mentor/advisor prior to enrolling in their first semester of courses to determine a semester-by-semester schedule for program completion, discuss career goals and identify ways to maximize learning opportunities inside and outside of classes. Students should plan to meet with their assigned faculty mentor prior to registering for courses each semester, to discuss feedback provided by the program (e.g., progress letter), and on an as needed basis. Students may request to be transferred to another faculty advisor/mentor by contacting the program coordinator with rationale. Failure to meet with the faculty advisor/mentor in a timely fashion may result in delay of progress towards graduation and career goals. Additionally, the faculty mentor and other program instructors may serve as a reference or provide letters of recommendation for students pursuing employment or other professional development opportunities. Students should make timely requests when asking program faculty to provide letters of recommendation or to serve as a reference. Program faculty do have the right to decline writing letters of recommendation or to serve as a reference. Program faculty do have the right to decline writing letters of recommendation or to serve as a reference for students or graduates of the program.

New Student Orientation
Admitted students are required to attend a mandatory program orientation. The date of the orientation will be provided to students in writing. During orientation students are provided with a copy of the Handbook, a discussion of the handbook, requirements for obtaining the certified rehabilitation counselor credential, requirements for obtaining counseling licensure, ethical obligations as a counselor-in-training and personal growth expectations as a counselor-in-training. Students are also introduced to core faculty, professional development opportunities, behaviors and attitudes for successful transition into graduate school and the counseling profession, as well as provided keys for access to facilities. After completion of orientation, students must acknowledge receipt of the student handbook.

Rehabilitation Counseling Curriculum
Students should review the current graduate school catalog for a full description of degree requirements and course descriptions. Example course sequences are provided on the following pages. These examples should be used as a guide only and do not substitute for advising from a faculty mentor. Students must meet with an assigned faculty mentor each semester before registering for courses. Most required courses are offered through the SIHP. However, some required courses are offered through the Department of Counseling and Higher Education and the Department of Educational Technology, Research and Assessment. Rehabilitation counseling faculty maintain regular and ongoing communication with faculty in those departments to ensure accreditation standards are maintained. Please note, the program will transition to a 60-credit minimum no later than fall 2023.
Full Time Starting in Summer Semester – 56 credit hour program  
(2021-22 Catalog)

Summer – Year 1

REHB 627 Medical Aspects of Disability  
ETR 520 Introduction to Research Methods in Education

Fall – Year 1

REHB 628 Psychosocial Aspects of Disability  
REHB 660 Foundations of Vocational Rehabilitation  
COUN 510 Counseling Interventions Across the Lifespan  
REHB 605x Counseling Skills and Strategies

Spring – Year 1

COUN 565 Multicultural Counseling  
REHB 683 Psychological and Vocational Assessment with Rehabilitation Populations  
REHB 662 Vocational Analysis and Job Placement  
COUN 540 Group Counseling

Summer – Year 2

REHB 686 Pre-Practicum in Rehabilitation Counseling

Fall – Year 2

REHB 690 Practicum in Rehabilitation Counseling  
REHB 777 Seminar in Rehabilitation Counseling  
REHB 682 Theories and Techniques of Counseling People with Disabilities

Spring – Year 2

REHB 694 Internship in Rehabilitation Counseling
Example Part Time Starting in Summer Semester – 56 credit hour program
(2021-22 Catalog)

Summer – Year 1
REHB 627 Medical Aspects of Disability
ETR 520 Introduction to Research Methods in Education

Fall – Year 1
REHB 628 Psychosocial Aspects of Disability
REHB 660 Foundations of Vocational Rehabilitation

Spring – Year 1
REHB 683 Psychological and Vocational Assessment with Rehabilitation Populations
COUN 540 Group Counseling

Summer – Year 2
No Class

Fall – Year 2
REHB 605x Counseling Skills and Strategies
REHB 682 Theories and Techniques of Counseling People with Disabilities
COUN 510 Counseling Interventions Across the Lifespan

Spring – Year 2
COUN 565 Multicultural Counseling
REHB 662 Vocational Analysis and Job Placement

Summer – Year 3
REHB 686 Pre-Practicum in Rehabilitation Counseling

Fall – Year 3
REHB 690 Practicum in Rehabilitation Counseling
REHB 777 Seminar in Rehabilitation Counseling

Spring – Year 3
REHB 694 Internship in Rehabilitation Counseling
Accessibility and Accommodations

If you need a disability-related accommodation for classes, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as soon as possible. The DRC coordinates accommodations for students with disabilities. It is located in the Campus Life Building, Suite 180, and can be reached at 815-753-1303 or drc@niu.edu. Also, please contact instructors privately as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations. The sooner you let instructors know your needs, the sooner they can assist you in achieving your learning goals in courses. Statement taken directly from the DRC website. Additional information on accommodations may also be found on the Graduate School website.

Grade Requirements

Graduate students at NIU must meet all Graduate School requirements to remain in good academic standing. Those requirements are detailed in the most current version of the NIU Graduate Catalog. A summary of the policy is as follows: Graduate students at NIU must achieve a grade of C or higher to receive graduate credit. Typically, a grade of C-minus or lower is not considered passing for graduate coursework. Graduate students must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 to avoid academic probation. A graduate student who has accumulated six or more semester hours of grades C-minus, D, F, U, or WP in graduate coursework at NIU will be academically dismissed regardless of GPA. Graduate students in the Rehabilitation Counseling Program must also earn a C or better in each course prior to entering the clinical phase (i.e., practicum, internship) of the curriculum. However, earning a C in multiple courses would likely result in a GPA below 3.0. Students who are academically dismissed may appeal. The appeal process is outlined in the most recent (see academic reinstatement).

Grievances

There are formal and informal methods for solving disputes. Program faculty expect all students and faculty to work in good faith to solve disputes. This includes, but is not limited to, civilly and clearly communicating concerns to the appropriate individual, providing a desired solution, and providing them with a reasonable opportunity to address the concern. For example, if a student believes a grade was inappropriately assigned, then the student should communicate with the faculty member prior to going to the department chair. Another example is if a student is dissatisfied with the supervision practices of a site supervisor then the student would approach the site supervisor to discuss. This would be considered informal practices and are considered an important step in the resolution of disputes. Resolution of conflicts should begin with a discussion between the affected parties. The SIHP department chair may be asked to participate in the resolution of conflict when the affected parties are not able to reach an agreeable solution.

If informal options are not possible, or have been attempted without success, formal grievances can be attempted. A description of grievance procedures for students can be

2021-2022 Rehab Counseling Student Handbook
found in the NIU Policy Library. Students may also consult with other resources on campus such as the Office of the Ombudsperson. The procedure for appealing a grade is described in the Graduate School Catalog.

Student-at-Large

Students-at-Large (SAL) are not admitted directly into degree-granting programs. However, as non-degree seeking students, SALs are permitted to take graduate-level courses across many graduate programs including non-clinical courses within Rehabilitation Counseling. If admitted into the Rehabilitation Counseling Program, students-at-large may apply up to 12 hours of approved credit, taken as a SAL, toward their degree program. *Statement taken directly from the NIU Graduate School website.*

Transfer Credit

Transferring prior graduate coursework for credit toward the rehabilitation counseling degree is possible pending the approval of the school and the dean of the Graduate School. Specific information on regulations regarding transfer credit can be found in the Graduate School Catalog.

Student Retention, Remediation and Dismissal

Consistent with the Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors and the American Counseling Association’s Code of Ethics, the rehabilitation counseling faculty are concerned with the welfare of current and future rehabilitation counseling clients. Therefore, the faculty have the responsibility of ensuring that each student is fit for the role of rehabilitation counselor. The philosophy of the rehabilitation counseling faculty is that students will be concerned about the general welfare of others, be stable and psychologically well-adjusted, and possess effective interpersonal relationship skills. Further, faculty members expect that students are committed to personal growth and professional development through opportunities provided in coursework, professional development activities, clinical supervision, and self-selected scholarly reading. To help support students to meet these standards and, when necessary, act as gatekeeper to keep students from the profession, students will be evaluated on a continuous basis. That process is described in the following sections. Additional information related to professional competence in practicum and internship is described in the practicum and internship section of this manual.

Review and Retention

The student review policy involves a continuous and systematic examination of student progress within the program by the rehabilitation counseling faculty. This helps to ensure that students receive due process regarding any issues that arise during the graduate program. Progress is evaluated based on academic performance as well as personal and interpersonal growth related to professional development.
1. **Partial Review.** Rehabilitation counseling faculty discuss student performance and growth during routine faculty meetings and document those in meeting minutes. Although faculty members may discuss students without providing advance notification to students, students must be notified if students’ need to take any corrective action. At this level, corrective action does not require a formalized remediation plan. Faculty members shall make every effort to communicate with the student as early as possible after the observed behavior of concern. While students are authorized to view the portion of the meeting minutes that pertains to their behavior, students are not authorized to view complete meeting minutes.

2. **Full Review.** At the end of each semester (fall and spring) faculty members conduct a full review of each student who is currently enrolled in the program and not scheduled to graduate at the end of the current semester. SALs are not reviewed. Faculty members use multiple sources of data to complete the full review, including but not limited to partial review meeting minutes, faculty observations, reports from non-core faculty/staff, completed Student Self-Evaluation Report and completed Student Professional Dispositions Ratings Rubric for Faculty. Based on a review of the evidence, faculty generate a Feedback Letter to Students from Full Review that is provided to each student. The letter outlines the extent that each student is making progress within the program and serves as formal communication between faculty and students. Students who do not submit a Student Self-Evaluation Report will receive a “falls below expectations” rating for that review. Students are expected to meet with their faculty mentor to discuss the outcome of the full review. Students who receive “falls below expectations” ratings must participate in a Faculty Mentor Meeting to discuss the behavior of concern and develop a plan for addressing the concerns. A formal remediation plan may be required if the behavior does not resolve. A rating of ‘falls below expectations’ in multiple semesters may result in formal remediation.

At the end of the fall and spring semester semesters, students submit a completed Student Self-Evaluation Report detailing their achievements, challenges, and feedback for the program. This form is submitted to the coordinator of student review of progress.

At the time of each Full Review, each faculty member completes a copy of the Student Professional Dispositions Ratings Rubric for Faculty for each student in which they interact. Students’ final rating will be calculated by averaging faculty ratings. Students who receive an average rating of 2 or below will receive a “falls below expectations” on the Feedback Letter to Students from Full Review and must participate in a faculty mentor meeting to address the behavior of concern.

3. **Faculty Mentor Meeting.** A meeting between a student and faculty mentor may be requested by either person to discuss student performance and growth in
relation to challenges and strengths of the student toward progressing within the program. Typically, faculty mentor meetings are requested when students were provided with feedback at the partial or full review level, but the necessary changes were not made by the student. See the Faculty Mentor Meeting Form. This is different than a routine meeting with a faculty mentor.

4. **Retention Conference**. When deemed advisable by the faculty, a conference will be held with the student and at least two faculty members to discuss the barriers to academic progress. Concerns could include lack of academic performance, interpersonal behavior inhibiting professional development and effectiveness, or other related concern. During the meeting, conditions for continuing in the program will be determined, if warranted. Retention conferences typically result in formalized remediation plans. Persistent or reoccurring concerns following a Faculty Mentor Meeting, severe concerns, or time-sensitive concerns will require a Retention Conference to, A) Clarify the situation; B) Establish why the situation was not previously rectified (if applicable, following a Faculty Mentor Meeting); and C) Determine if a remediation plan is warranted. Occasionally concerns will be severe or time-sensitive and the Faculty Mentor Meeting will be bypassed. See **Student Remediation and Professional Development Plan Template**. Any student who fails to complete a remediation plan within its time frame is dismissed from the rehabilitation counseling program.

**Remediation**

The Rehabilitation Counseling faculty may develop a plan for remediation when attempts to resolve concerns of student deficiencies associated with academic performance and professional development were unsuccessful through the student review process. The plan is drafted by Rehabilitation Counseling faculty and then shared with the student before any agreed upon amendments to the plan are made. The finalized plan will include the following elements:

- Academic and professional development deficiencies.
- Step-by-step procedures required to remediate skills associated with deficient areas.
- Timeline to complete all requirements of the remediation plan.
- Signatures of all persons involved.

Students may consult with university resources at any time during the remediation process such as the Office of the Ombudsperson, Counseling Services, or other resources noted in the Handbook. Failure to complete the remediation plan will result in dismissal from the program.

At times, students may be required to complete remediation that does not require a formal remediation plan. For example, if a student does not meet the threshold of performance on a course assignment students will be asked to work with the instructor to remediate the knowledge and/or skill not initially demonstrated. Failure to complete this type of remediation can result in a formalize remediation plan.
Templates for Student Review, Retention and Remediation

Student Self-evaluation Report Template

As described in the handbook, program faculty will review the academic progress and professional disposition of each student each semester. Faculty will use a variety of sources of information, including the information you provide on this self-evaluation. The evaluation will result in a progress letter which will be mailed to your NIU email account. Please carefully and completely respond to each of the items listed below by typing in your responses.

This is your opportunity to show off all the hard work you have put into this program! Be sure to explain yourself clearly and assume your faculty know nothing about you when writing out your responses. If you have received a progress letter from the RC Program in the past, be sure to explain how you addressed any areas of growth that were identified.

Please submit this report as an email attachment (Word document or PDF) to xxx no later than xxx. Reports submitted after the deadline or by any other means than described above will not be accepted and will result in a poor progress letter.

Name:
Date:
Faculty Mentor:
Semester:
Number of semesters in program completed:
Current Cumulative program GPA:
Targeted graduation date (month and year):

1. Please state your professional goals. Please include both short and long-term goals.
2. Please list the courses you have taken, and grades received, provide your cumulative GPA for all courses completed, and list anticipated grades for courses in which you are currently enrolled.
3. Please describe your achievements to date. These are achievements you might list on a résumé. Examples include leadership in RCSA, participation in research with a faculty member or presenting at a conference. If you cannot identify any achievements, please explain how you will become more active in the coming semesters.
4. Identify your plan for finishing the program. This involves listing out a semester-by-semester plan for completing required courses, professional development hours, taking the CRC exam, the comprehensive exam and any additional experiences you plan on acquiring (e.g., thesis). If you are not sure of your plan, please make an appointment with your faculty mentor before you complete this form.
5. Discuss your strengths and weaknesses as a professional-in-training. This involves an in-depth analysis of your strengths and areas of growth in relation to the rehabilitation counseling profession. When responding to this item consider feedback you have received while completing this program.
6. Evaluate the program’s strengths and weaknesses. This involves a concrete description of what you view as the program’s strengths and areas of growth. It will be most helpful to faculty if you can provide specific examples and specific suggestions for improvement.
7. Evaluate the availability and quality of university services. This involves a concrete description of the campus resources you have used or wished were available for you to use. For example, the graduate student computer lab, orientation, advising, university libraries, etc.
8. Please include any other information you would like faculty to consider.
9. Please attach a current résumé.
Feedback Letter to Students from Full Review - Template

Date: xxx
Dear xxxx
Per the policy outlined in the Rehabilitation Counseling Student Handbook, the RC faculty conduct a full review of your progress toward degree completion each semester. Our hope is that this feedback helps you make informed decisions to ensure that you successfully complete the program.

Based on our full review, we have determined that you:

- Exceed the minimum expectations and are making satisfactory progress toward completing the degree program.
- Meet the minimum expectations and are making satisfactory progress toward completing the degree program.
- Fall below the minimum expectations and are not making satisfactory progress toward completing the degree program.

Strengths / Areas for Improvement:
- xxxxxx

Please contact me in writing within 14 calendar days from the date of this letter if you have any questions. Also, by the end of the third week of the fall 20xx semester, please make an appointment with your faculty mentor to discuss this letter and your progress in the program.

On behalf of your program faculty,

xxxxxxxx

Faculty Mentor Meeting Template

Faculty Mentor Name:
Student Name:
Date:
Reason for the meeting:
Summary of the meeting:
Action steps:
Is a retention conference needed: Yes  No
Is a follow-up Faculty Mentor Meeting needed: Yes  No
Student Remediation and Professional Development Plan Template

___ Initial Plan Review  ___ Follow-up  ___ Final Review

Student ___________________________  ID __________________
Advisor ___________________________  Date ______________

Identified Areas of Concern:

Remediation Plan and Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Behavioral Objectives and Target Dates</th>
<th>Method of Remediation</th>
<th>Met? Yes/No (and date)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Progress Since Last Review (if applicable):  ___ Sufficient  ___ Insufficient

Other steps taken to remediate concerns:

Advisor Comments and Recommendations:

Student Comments:

Student Signature: ____________________________________________ Date: _______

Advisor Signature: ____________________________________________ Date: _______

Other Faculty
Signature:____________________________________________________ Date: _______

Faculty Responsible for Implementing Remediation Plan (if different from Advisor)

Name: ______________________________________________________ Date: _______

Date of Next Review (if applicable):
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Professional Dispositions</th>
<th>Professional Disposition Descriptors</th>
<th>Exceeds Requirements (4)</th>
<th>Meets Requirements (3)</th>
<th>Developing toward Competencies (2)</th>
<th>Unacceptable (1)</th>
<th>Not Observed (N/O)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Professional Ethics</td>
<td>The student adheres to the Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors, the American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics, and shows advanced awareness of professional ethics and concerns.</td>
<td>Student demonstrates consistent and advanced (i.e., <em>exploration and deliberation</em>) ethical behavior and judgments.</td>
<td>Student demonstrates consistent ethical behavior and judgments.</td>
<td>Student demonstrates unethical behavior and judgments, but on a concrete level and lacks advanced awareness of professional ethics and concerns.</td>
<td>Student demonstrates unethical behavior and poor ethical judgment, and a limited ethical decision-making process.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>Student behaves in a professional manner toward faculty, staff, supervisors, peers and clients (includes appropriate dress and attitudes).</td>
<td>Student is consistently respectful, thoughtful and professionally appropriate within all professional interactions.</td>
<td>Student is respectful, thoughtful and appropriately within all professional interactions.</td>
<td>Student is inconsistently respectful, thoughtful and appropriate within all professional interactions.</td>
<td>Student evidences disrespectful and/or inappropriate behavior within professional interactions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Self-awareness and Self-understanding</td>
<td>Student demonstrates an awareness of their own belief systems, values, needs and limitations (herein called “beliefs”) and the effect of “self” on their work with clients.</td>
<td>Student demonstrates significant and consistent awareness and appreciation of their belief system and the influence of their beliefs on the counseling process.</td>
<td>Student demonstrates awareness and appreciation of their belief system and the influence of their beliefs on the counseling process.</td>
<td>Student demonstrates inconsistent or limited awareness and appreciation of their belief system and the influence of their beliefs on the counseling process.</td>
<td>Student demonstrates poor awareness of their belief system and/or the influence of these and appears closed to increasing their insight.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Emotional Stability and Maturity</td>
<td>Student demonstrates emotional stability (i.e., appropriate congruence between behavior, mood, and affect) and self-control (i.e., impulse)</td>
<td>Student demonstrates consistent emotional resiliency and appropriateness in interpersonal interactions.</td>
<td>Student demonstrates emotional stability and appropriateness in interpersonal interactions.</td>
<td>Student demonstrates inconsistent emotional stability and appropriateness in interpersonal interactions.</td>
<td>Student demonstrates limited emotional stability and appropriateness in interpersonal interactions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
control) in relationships with faculty, staff, supervisor, peers and clients.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Professional Dispositions</th>
<th>Professional Disposition Descriptors</th>
<th>Exceeds Requirements</th>
<th>Meets Requirements</th>
<th>Developing towards Competencies</th>
<th>Unacceptable (1)</th>
<th>Not Observed (N/O)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Motivation to Learn and Grow Professionally</td>
<td>Student is engaged in the learning and development of their counseling competencies.</td>
<td>Student demonstrates consistent enthusiasm for their professional and personal growth and development.</td>
<td>Student demonstrates inconsistent enthusiasm for their professional and personal growth and development.</td>
<td>Student demonstrates limited enthusiasm for their professional and personal growth and development.</td>
<td>Student demonstrates limited enthusiasm for their professional and personal growth and development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cultural Sensitivity and Awareness</td>
<td>Student demonstrates awareness, appreciation and respect of cultural difference (e.g., races, spirituality, sexual orientation, etc.).</td>
<td>Student demonstrates consistent and advanced cultural sensitivity and awareness (knowledge, self-awareness, appreciation and skills).</td>
<td>Student demonstrates inconsistent cultural sensitivity and awareness (knowledge, self-awareness, appreciation and skills).</td>
<td>Student demonstrates limited cultural sensitivity and awareness (knowledge, self-awareness, appreciation and skills).</td>
<td>Student demonstrates limited cultural sensitivity and awareness (knowledge, self-awareness, appreciation and skills).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Openness to Feedback</td>
<td>Student responds non-defensively and alters behavior in accordance with faculty or supervisory feedback.</td>
<td>Student demonstrates consistent openness to faculty or supervisory feedback and implements suggested changes.</td>
<td>Student demonstrates limited openness to faculty or supervisory feedback and does not implement suggested changes.</td>
<td>Student is not open to faculty or supervisory feedback and does not implement suggested changes.</td>
<td>Student demonstrates limited openness to faculty or supervisory feedback and does not implement suggested changes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Professional and Personal Boundaries</td>
<td>Student recognizes the boundaries of their competencies and maintains appropriate professional and personal boundaries</td>
<td>Student consistently demonstrates recognition of appropriate boundaries and appreciates their limitations.</td>
<td>Student demonstrates limited awareness of appropriate boundaries or has limited</td>
<td>Student demonstrates inappropriate boundary awareness and has limited</td>
<td>Student demonstrates inappropriate boundary awareness and has limited</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2021-2022 Rehab Counseling Student Handbook
Dismissal

Students must make satisfactory progress in the Rehabilitation Counseling Program to be allowed to continue and can be dismissed from the program, a course, class, or clinical training for academic reasons, behavior not accepted in the rehabilitation counseling profession, or actions that threaten the health and safety of others. For example, a graduate student may be dismissed from the program for reasons that include but are not limited to plagiarism, persistent academic probation, violations of rehabilitation counseling ethical standards, and acts of abuse or violence onto another person. In most instances dismissal will follow the initiatives outlined in the student review of progress and remediation processes. However, the Rehabilitation Counseling faculty reserve the right to immediately dismiss from the program any student who has behaved in a way to cause serious and grave concern for the health and safety of another person.

Comprehensive Examination

The purpose of the comprehensive examinations is to assess student knowledge of the major domains within rehabilitation counseling and the broader counseling field.

Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination

Starting in fall 2020, students in good academic standing and enrolled in REHB 690 (Practicum), must sit for the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE) administered by the Center for Credentialing and Education (CCE). Students are provided results of their exam immediately after completion. Results must be submitted to the program coordinator for proof of completion. The 2021 application and examination fee for the CPCE exam is $75, but rates are subject to change at the discretion of the CCE. This fee will be built into course fees for the REHB 690 course starting in fall 2020. The exam covers the following areas related to the broader counseling field:

- Professional counseling orientation and ethical practice.
- Social and cultural diversity.
- Human growth and development.
- Career development.
- Counseling and helping relationships.
- Group counseling and group work.
- Assessment and testing.
- Research and program evaluation.

Certified Rehabilitation Counselor Examination

Students in good academic standing and enrolled in their final semester of the program must sit for the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor examination administered by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counseling Certification (CRCC). Students are provided
results of their exam immediately after completion. Results must be submitted to the program coordinator for proof of completion. Most students are eligible to take the CRC exam during their internship semester when they have completed at least 75% of their coursework (CRCC Category 1 applicant). The 2021 application and examination fee for the CRC exam is $410, but rates are subject to change at the discretion of the CRCC. This fee has been built into course fees for the REHB 690 course. The exam covers the following areas related specifically to the rehabilitation counseling field:

- Professional orientation and ethical practice
- Counseling theories, techniques, and evidenced-based practice
- Group and family counseling
- Crisis and trauma counseling and interventions
- Medical and psychosocial aspects of chronic illness and disability
- Assessment, occupational analysis, and service implementation
- Career development and job placement
- Demand-side employer engagement
- Community resources and partnerships
- Case management
- Health care and disability management
- Research, Methodology, and performance management

Failure to pass the CRC exam will result in students being required to complete a remediation assessment (e.g., alternate NIU exam). Failure to successfully complete the remediation assessment will result in dismissal from the program.
Practicum and Internship

Introduction and Overview

The purpose of this section is to outline the policies and procedures associated with Practicum and Internship requirements. Students are required to familiarize themselves with this information. Additionally, the Practicum and Internship Coordinator is available to assist with interpretation or application of policies and procedures. The program will follow 2016 CACREP policies, including any updates, related to clinical experiences.

Pre-Practicum (REHB 686): Consists of observations and experiences aimed at preparing students for the practicum experience.

Practicum (REHB 690): An introductory supervised experience providing students with the opportunity to observe rehabilitation counseling professionals as they function and develop entry-level rehabilitation counseling skills. Students must complete 100 hours of practicum experience over the course of one semester, including 40 direct service hours to persons with disabilities or other barriers to employment. The experience must be supervised by a qualified supervisor. A faculty member will also provide coordination and feedback. A detailed description of practicum can be found later in this section of the manual.

Internship (REHB 694): An extensive supervised experience providing students with the opportunity to practice and develop skills necessary for professional practice as a rehabilitation counselor. Students must complete 600 hours of internship experience, including 240 direct service hours to persons with disabilities or other barriers to employment. The experience must be supervised by a qualified supervisor. A faculty member will also provide coordination and feedback. A detailed description of internship can be found later in this section of the manual.

Criminal Background Checks

All students are required to undergo a criminal background check upon admission into the program. Students who fail to complete the background check will not be allowed to participate in practicum or internship. The College of Health and Human Science policy for handling the criminal background check is followed. Students will receive notification from the college office with instructions for completing the background check. The link for completing this process can also be found on the CastleBranch website. The cost of the background check is $22.75 (price subject to change). If the check results in a status of “no record,” the student may proceed with classes as assigned. If the check results in a status of “pending” or in a “positive” finding, the associate dean of Academic Affairs in the College of Health and Human Sciences is notified and will help the student determine next steps. If the check results in a status of “pending” or in a “positive” finding, the student is not permitted to participate in clinical experiences until the faculty or administration has made a ruling. Criminal background
checks must be completed by Oct. 1 of year one in the program and will remain in effect unless, A) A practicum or internship site determines it necessary to require criminal background checks more frequently; or B) A rehabilitation counseling student interrupts their program for one semester or longer. In the above cases, it is mandatory for the student to have another criminal background check performed.

Professional Liability Insurance

Every student is required to maintain liability insurance when completing any practicum and/or internship placement. Minimum coverage is $1,000,000 per incident/$3,000,000 aggregate annually. Proof of liability insurance must be provided to the practicum or internship instructor prior to completing any hours. Students must always have a valid policy while completing practicum and internship. While the program does not specifically endorse any of these agencies, a list of some carriers is provided.

The American Counseling Association (HealthCare Providers Service Organization
The American Professional Agency

To supplement the policy purchased by students, the College of Health and Human Sciences holds a blanket professional liability policy that covers students during their clinical experience. The cost of the coverage is included in clinical course fees. Typically, the university supervisor for practicum will request that a copy of the policy be forwarded to each site supervisor. Students need to verify with site supervisors that a copy of the policy has been received. Students are required to maintain their own liability insurance even though the college holds a blanket policy.

Practicum and Internship Course Fees

Students are charged the following course fees. Students are responsible for all other fees associated with practicum and internship, including, but not limited to background check fee, liability insurance fee, travel to site, and fees associated with other agency requirements (e.g., vaccines, training, etc.).

REHB 686
$12 -identification tags, supervisor travel, telephone charges, college professional liability insurance)
$90 -One-Time per student system license for Typhon Group

REHB 690
$36 -Typhon maintenance fees, professional liability insurance.
$410 -Certified Rehabilitation Counselor Examination fee
$75 -Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination

REHB 694:
$40 -Typhon maintenance fees, professional liability insurance
Practicum and Internship Information Sessions

Practicum and Internship information sessions will be conducted by the Practicum and Internship Coordinator. While it’s ultimately the student’s responsibility to locate a site, the program is responsible for providing students with necessary information related to CACREP and program requirements. The purpose of these information sessions is to provide those details so the planning phase can commence, including locating a practicum and/or internship site. Students are responsible for the information presented during the information sessions. Students should contact the Practicum and Internship Coordinator early with questions about the information sessions. Relevant CACREP standards are presented in the practicum and internship sections of this manual and can also be found on the CACREP website https://www.cacrep.org/section-3-professional-practice/

Securing a Practicum and Internship Site

Students are ultimately responsible for securing a practicum and internship site. The Practicum and Internship Coordinator will communicate deadlines for submitting the required paperwork. Only students who meet the published paperwork deadline will be permitted to start as scheduled. Please note that individual sites may have earlier deadlines than what the program requires. Students should consult the information provided at the information session when securing a site. Students should also consult with their faculty mentor early and often to explore potential sites in relation to individual preferences and training needs. The process of securing a site can take several months so students must plan accordingly. Students must obtain the approval of the practicum and internship coordinator to enroll in the practicum and/or internship course.

Goal Setting for Clinical Experiences

At the onset of any practicum or internship experience, students are responsible for consulting with both the practicum and internship coordinator and the external site supervisor to define goals which the student hopes to achieve and which are agreed upon by all concerned. Goals need to be included on the agreement form. The practicum and internship coordinator may mandate specific goals for individual students as strengths and areas of growth are noted. Students are expected to take initiative in the goal setting process. With the agreement of all parties, goals may be modified. Copies of current forms can be obtained from the Practicum and Internship Coordinator.

Issues with Professional Competence

Program faculty are obligated to observe, evaluate, and address issues that may impede the student’s ability to perform their clinical responsibilities. This responsibility is
referred to as gatekeeping. This section outlines procedures for addressing ethical misconduct, incompetence, impairment, and other problematic behaviors related to practicum and internship.

Ethical misconduct occurs when a student does not follow the Code of Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors and/or the American Rehabilitation Counseling Code of Ethics. It is expected that all students aspire to the highest possible standard of conduct for rehabilitation counselors. Serious ethical violations can result in dismissal from the practicum, internship, and/or the program. Examples include, but are not limited to, sexual misconduct with clients, fabrication of written or verbal information, and/or breach of confidentiality.

Impairment is defined as a significantly diminished capacity to perform professional functions (ACA Code of Ethics, p. 20). Impairment can occur in multiple ways including, but not limited to, inability or unwilling to acquire professional skills at the accepted level of competency; inability to control personal stress or emotional reactions that impact professional functioning; and/or inability or unwilling to integrate standards of the profession into one’s professional behavior.

Problematic behaviors refer to student’s behaviors or attitudes that may require attention but are not perceived as excessive or unexpected for students in (rehabilitation) counseling training programs. For example, lack of experience handling professional conflicts or lack of appreciation for agency norms are examples of problematic behaviors that are usually remediated (using the program’s remediation policies) and not likely to progress to impairment.

Identification of Problems
Conduct and performance of students affects the public perception of the profession as well as client care, so faculty are required to monitor and, when necessary, respond to issues with professional competence.

When the students’ ability to deliver services is impacted, the student must take reasonable action to ensure clients receive the best possible services per the code of ethics and agency policies. This is a responsibility of the student even if faculty and/or supervisors have not noticed any problems. Program faculty encourage self-awareness of problems related to professional competence. Examples could be related to biases held by the student or limited exploration of personal problems that perhaps were present even at the time of entering the program. Students are expected to have self-awareness of problems and take appropriate action to address the problems impacting their clinical work, including speaking with the practicum/internship faculty supervisor. Faculty supervisors can offer support such as information and referral for personal counseling, reassigning clinical responsibilities, and/or referral to faculty mentor. Faculty and supervisors are obligated to report if there is risk of harm to self or others. Additionally, faculty and supervisors are obligated to follow program retention and remediation policies, even when the problem is self-identified by the practicum or internship student.
Self-identification is just one way a problem can be identified. Any faculty member, supervisor, student, client, or other party can alert program faculty to concerns regarding students in the program. Supervisors who are currently supervising a student from the program should discuss concerns about that student with the faculty member currently supervising the practicum or internship. Clients, faculty mentors, or other parties should discuss concerns with the Practicum and Internship Coordinator. Students who have concerns about other students should consult with their faculty mentor. As appropriate, faculty will address the concern with program faculty.

Regardless of how the problem is identified, program faculty are committed to ensuring the student involved is provided with privacy (as possible), up-to-date information, and due process. Any remediation will be completed using program remediation policies outlined in this manual. Further, problems with professional competence may result in a disruption of practicum or internship as planned.

Finally, grades also need to be maintained. Students must maintain an overall class grade in pre-practicum, practicum and internship of a C or higher to move onto the next course or graduate from the program. Failure to maintain a C or higher in any of the course will result in the student engaging in remedial training outlined in the manual. Students who earn two grades of C in clinical practicum courses (i.e., REHB 686, REHB 690, or REHB 694) will be dismissed from the graduate program.

Policy on Employment with Practicum and Internship Site

To avoid conflicts of interest and impact on clinical training, students are not permitted to be an employee at the same site where they are completing practicum or internship. Students may accept offers of employment during internship that will begin after the completion of the practicum or internship but must disclose such offers to program faculty. Students who pursue formalized paid internship programs through state agencies will be exempt from this policy.

Policy on Completing Practicum or Internship Over Multiple Semesters

Students must be registered for practicum and internship while completing practicum requirements. If students are unable to complete practicum or internship requirements in one semester, for whatever reason, students must register for the course in a future semester. Incompletes may not be used unless an unexpected or unanticipated event occurs after the schedule change deadline (usually week 14 of the semester). A new agreement form must be submitted by the student and approved by the course instructor and Practicum and Internship Coordinator for each semester of practicum and internship. Faculty supervision is not routinely available May 16-August 15, between semesters, and when the university is closed so students need to plan accordingly and not expect to complete practicum and internship during those times. Students must complete the appropriate number of clock hours for which they are enrolled in a given semester. Specifically, 1 credit hour of internship is equivalent to approximately 50 clock hours of internship and 1 credit hour of practicum is equivalent to approximately 25

2021-2022 Rehab Counseling Student Handbook
clock hours of practicum. For example, if a student registers for 12 credits of internship in spring 2022 but can only complete 300 clock, they must work with the course instructor to submit a schedule change form to the course instructor to reduce their credit hours to 6. Fail to follow these policies will result in a non-passing grade.

Clinical Tracking System

The Rehabilitation Counseling program utilizes the Student Tracking System for Allied Health Programs by Typhon Group. Students use this system to report on clinical experience and professional development hours. Site and university supervisors also use this system to approve student time logs and update their contact information. Students will receive an email with individual username and password information to access the system. Students will attend a mandatory training on the clinical tracking system before starting the 100-hour supervised practicum. Students are responsible for maintaining accurate and up-to-date records in Typhon, as directed by the course instructor. Failure to do so is considered to be an issue with professional competence.
100-Hour Supervised Practicum

The practicum required by the Rehabilitation Counseling Program at NIU is designed to provide practicum students with an opportunity to practice basic rehabilitation skills. The practicum also provides students with supervision designed to develop skills, knowledge and decision-making so the student is prepared for entrance into internship. All students are required to complete at least 100 clock hours of supervised rehabilitation counseling practicum (including at least 40 hours of direct service to persons with disabilities).

Goals of the Practicum

1) To facilitate the development of basic counseling skills. Specific skills include ethics, multicultural competence, wellness, attending behavior (culturally and individually appropriate visuals, vocal qualities, verbal tracking skills, body language), open and closed questions, client observation skills, encouraging, paraphrasing, summarizing, reflection of feelings, interviewing (rapport/structure, gathering data, mutual goal setting, working/exploring alternatives, terminating/generalizing to daily living), confrontation, focusing, reflection of meaning, self-disclosure, sequencing skills in different theories, and work toward determining personal style and theory.

2) To increase student awareness and understanding of the differences in values, beliefs and behaviors of individuals who are different from themselves. Specifically, students should gain exposure to various disabilities, ethnicities, sexual orientation, gender, age groups and other groups.

3) To provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate ethical behavior.

4) To provide an opportunity to engage in critical thinking (applying, analyzing, evaluating, creating).

5) To provide students with an opportunity for career exploration and the possible selection of an internship site.

6) To provide a method of assessing students’ readiness for internship.

7) To serve the university and surrounding community by providing rehabilitation counseling services.

8) To serve persons with disabilities.

CACREP Standards for Practicum

Section 3: The Professional Practice Section of the CACREP Standards specifically, state:

1. Students are covered by individual professional counseling liability insurance policies while enrolled in practicum and internship.

2. Supervision of practicum and internship students includes program-appropriate audio/video recordings and/or live supervision of students’ interactions with clients.
3. Formative and summative evaluations of the student’s counseling performance and ability to integrate and apply knowledge are conducted as part of the student’s practicum and internship.

4. Students have the opportunity to become familiar with a variety of professional activities and resources, including technological resources, during their practicum and internship.

5. In addition to the development of individual counseling skills, during either the practicum or internship, students must lead or co-lead a counseling or psychoeducational group.

6. Students complete supervised counseling practicum experiences that total a minimum of 100 clock hours over a full academic term that is a minimum of 10 weeks.

7. Practicum students complete at least 40 clock hours of direct service with actual clients that contributes to the development of counseling skills.

8. Practicum students have weekly interaction with supervisors that averages one hour per week of individual and/or triadic supervision throughout the practicum by, 1) A counselor education program faculty member; 2) A student supervisor who is under the supervision of a counselor education program faculty member; or 3) A site supervisor who is working in consultation on a regular schedule with a counselor education program faculty member in accordance with the supervision agreement.

9. Practicum students participate in an average of 1½ hours per week of group supervision on a regular schedule throughout the practicum. Group supervision must be provided by a counselor education program faculty member or a student supervisor who is under the supervision of a counselor education program faculty member.

10. Counselor education program faculty members serving as individual/triadic or group practicum/internship supervisors for students in entry-level programs have (1) relevant experience, (2) professional credentials, and (3) counseling supervision training and experience.

11. Site supervisors have (1) a minimum of a master’s degree, preferably in counseling, or a related profession; (2) relevant certifications and/or licenses; (3) a minimum of two years of pertinent professional experience in the specialty area in which the student is enrolled; (4) knowledge of the program’s expectations, requirements, and evaluation procedures for students; and (5) relevant training in counseling supervision.

12. Orientation, consultation, and professional development opportunities are provided by counselor education program faculty to site supervisors.

13. Written supervision agreements define the roles and responsibilities of the faculty supervisor, site supervisor, and student during practicum and internship. When individual/triadic practicum supervision is conducted by a site supervisor in consultation with counselor education program faculty, the supervision agreement must detail the format and frequency of consultation to monitor student learning.

2021-2022 Rehab Counseling Student Handbook
Enrollment in Practicum

Prior to beginning practicum, each student must have the approval of the Practicum and Internship Coordinator, and must have completed, or be currently completing at least one year of coursework including: REHB 605x Counseling Skills and Strategies, COUN 510 Counseling Interventions Across the Lifespan, COUN 565 Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling, REHB 627 Medical Aspects of Disability, REHB 628 Psychosocial Aspects of Disability, REHB 660 Foundations of Vocational Rehabilitation, REHB 662 Vocational Analysis and Job Placement, REHB 682 Theories and Techniques of Counseling People with Disabilities, REHB 683 Psychological and Vocational Assessment with Rehabilitation Populations, and REHB 686 Pre-Practicum in Rehabilitation Counseling. Exceptions may be granted by approval of the Practicum and Internship Coordinator and Program Coordinator. Students are allowed to enroll in practicum when an approved Practicum Agreement is on file with the Practicum and Internship Coordinator. Students must be in good academic standing and free from unaddressed professional competence issues to enroll in practicum.

Selecting a Practicum Site

All practicum sites must be approved by the practicum and internship coordinator. Students may not acquire practicum hours at a site that has not been approved. Currently, practicum is offered each fall semester.

Students are responsible for taking the initiative to find a practicum site that meets program and accreditation requirements. This typically involves becoming familiar with program requirements, visiting prospective agencies and having discussions with prospective site supervisors. The agreement form outlines all requirements. A current copy of the agreement form is available from the Practicum and Internship Coordinator. Students must provide the university with all information requested on the agreement form before a practicum site can be approved. If a site is not arranged before the third week of the semester, the student will need to take practicum the next semester it is offered. Students are encouraged to consult with their faculty mentor early and often regarding the practicum selection process.

General guidelines and minimum requirements for practicum sites are as follows:

1) The site/site supervisor needs to offer experiences that will facilitate the development of basic rehabilitation counseling skills. Specifically, the student should have an opportunity to demonstrate minimum competency with most, if not all, basic counseling skills including: ethics; multicultural competence; wellness; attending behavior (culturally and individually appropriate visuals, vocal qualities, verbal tracking skills, body language); open and closed questions; client observation skills; encouraging, paraphrasing, summarizing, reflection of feelings; interviewing (rapport/structure, gathering data, mutual goal setting, working/exploring alternatives, terminating/generalizing to daily living); confrontation; focusing; reflection of meaning; self-disclosure; sequencing skills in different theories; and work toward determining personal style and theory.
2) The site must allow the student to video record client sessions and provide that recording to the faculty supervisor for supervision. If the site does not allow video recording, the student needs to notify the faculty supervisor immediately so that other arrangements can be made. Failure to notify the instructor by the end of the second week of classes will result in the student needing to find another site.
3) The site supervisor must have a master’s degree in rehabilitation counseling or a closely related field and at least two years of professional experience.
4) The site supervisor must spend an average of at least one hour per week providing the practicum student with supervision focused on assisting the practicum student to develop rehabilitation counseling skills.
5) The site supervisor must communicate with the faculty supervisor regarding progress, concerns and performance evaluations.

Issues with Professional Competency

Students must be provided with adequate time and information to address issues with professional competency. For example, if issues are noted at the mid-term evaluation, students are expected to address those issues prior to the completion of the final evaluation. In the case where student counseling competency continues to be deficient after due process, program remediation policies will be followed. If the behavior is egregious (i.e., fabrication, etc) due process is not guaranteed. Students who are not completing the practicum coursework (e.g., missing appointments with clients on site, missing supervision meetings, otherwise not making an effort to improve) will be assigned a grade reflective of the work demonstrated. Students must complete practicum with at least a C.

Supervisor Responsibilities

Practicum students shall engage in an average of one hour per week of individual and 1.5 hours per week of group supervision by a university faculty member. Students are required to fully participate in all supervision activities as directed by the university supervisor and on-site supervisor.

University Supervisor

The Rehabilitation Counseling faculty supervisor is responsible for monitoring the student’s progress in practicum; review of all audio or video recordings; answering questions or concerns of the student or of site supervisor or agency involving the student’s practicum; collect student and agency evaluations; and assigning the final practicum grade.

Site Supervisor

They should be familiar with the Rehabilitation Counseling Program requirements and counseling competencies expected of students. The site supervisor should report any problems with the student to the faculty supervisor. Responsibilities of the site supervisor include being available to the student when they are on-site to answer
questions, and orientation of the student to the agency policies and procedures. The student should regularly discuss clients with whom they are working with the site supervisor so that the site supervisor can monitor client progress or identify specific problems. Prior to beginning practicum, an Agreement Form must be signed by the student, site supervisor and faculty supervisor. The site supervisor is also responsible at midterm and end of the semester for providing the student and faculty supervisor with an evaluation of the student’s performance.

Recording Guidelines

Students are required to record at minimum six client sessions per semester of practicum. The video and audio on these recordings must be easily understood by the university supervisor. Students are required to provide their own device for the purpose of recording client sessions. Client confidentiality must be maintained with handling client recordings. Furthermore, students are required to fully delete all audio and visual recordings by the conclusion of practicum. The practicum instructor will outline specific policies related to video recordings.

Practicum Evaluation Process

Individual university supervisors provide students a syllabus at the start of practicum outlining how final letter grades will be calculated. Generally, students are formally evaluated by site supervisors two times during each practicum experience; once at midterm and once at the end of the semester. Practicum students shall receive periodic progress reviews from university supervisors. This may be in written or verbal form. Students are expected to complete regular self-evaluations.

Receiving a Passing Grade for Practicum

Before students can receive a passing grade in practicum they must, A) Submit a student evaluation of practicum experience; B) Have completed self-evaluation on file (midterm and final); C) Have completed site supervisor evaluations (midterm and final) of student in practicum on file; D) Completed all course assignments and client documentation as outline in course syllabus; E) All completed and signed time logs documenting at least 100 hours of supervised practicum, including 40 direct hours of service to people with disabilities; (F) met all professional practicum standards and required remediation.

Practicum Documentation

Copies of the following forms can be obtained from the Practicum and Internship Coordinator and/or practicum course instructor.
**Practicum Agreement Form**

This form outlines the requirements and responsibilities for practicum. This form is completed by the practicum student (in collaboration with the university supervisor and site supervisor) and signed by all parties prior to completing any practicum clock hours. A separate form is required for each individual practicum site.

**Consent for Audio and Video Recording**

This form must be signed by each new client prior to audio and/or video recording.

**Practicum Student Weekly Self-Evaluation Form**

A copy of this form needs to be completed and brought to each supervision session for at least one client session.

**Evaluation of Student Counseling Skills**

This evaluation is completed by the university supervisor at minimum midway through the practicum and at the end of the practicum.

**Self-Evaluation of Counseling Skills**

This evaluation is completed by the practicum student at minimum midway through the practicum and at the end of the practicum.

**Site Supervisor Evaluation of Student in Practicum**

This evaluation is completed by the site supervisor at minimum midway through the practicum and at the end of practicum.

**Student Evaluation of Practicum Experience**

This evaluation is completed by the practicum student at the end of practicum.
600-Hour Supervised Internship

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) requires that each student complete a rehabilitation counseling clinical internship which includes a minimum of 600 clock hours of applied experience (240 hours of direct service to people with disabilities) in a rehabilitation counseling agency/program. Students must successfully complete a 100-hour practicum prior to being admitted into internship. Internship is offered each spring semester.

Goals of the Internship:

1) To provide an opportunity for synthesis of classroom instruction as applied to actual counseling experiences within an agency and develop high-level critical thinking skills (creating, evaluating).

2) To increase student awareness and understanding of the differences in values, beliefs and behaviors of individuals who are different from themselves. Specifically, students should gain exposure to various disabilities, ethnicities, sexual orientation, gender, age groups and other groups.

3) To provide the intern with counseling situations in which the student can gain confidence in their abilities and apply new learning and techniques.

4) To permit the student to obtain experiences and develop skills in personal, social, education and/or vocational counseling.

5) To provide the student with an in-depth understanding of the requirements and problems related to working as a rehabilitation counselor in an agency setting.

6) To provide the students with an understanding of the role expectations of the professional in the field and allow them to begin to develop their own role concept.

7) To provide students with contact and the opportunity to network with other professionals in the field.

8) To provide for the intern a smooth transition between the role of the student and that of a professional working with individuals with disabilities.

CACREP Standards for Internship

CACREP outlines standards for internship. Students, faculty, and supervisors are expected to follow these standards in all aspects of the internship. Specifically, Section 3: Professional Practice of the CACREP Standards specifically state:

1. After successful completion of the practicum, students complete 600 clock hours of supervised counseling internship in roles and settings with clients relevant to their specialty area.

2. Internship students complete at least 240 clock hours of direct service.

3. Internship students have weekly interaction with supervisors that averages one hour per week of individual and/or triadic supervision throughout the internship provided by, 1) The site supervisor; 2) Counselor education program faculty; or 3) A student supervisor who is under the supervision of a counselor education program faculty member.

4. Internship students participate in an average of 1.5 hours per week of group supervision on a regular schedule throughout the internship. Group supervision
must be provided by a counselor education program faculty member or a student supervisor who is under the supervision of a counselor education program faculty member.

5. Students are covered by individual professional counseling liability insurance policies while enrolled in practicum and internship.

6. Supervision of practicum and internship students includes program-appropriate audio/video recordings and/or live supervision of students’ interactions with clients.

7. Formative and summative evaluations of the student’s counseling performance and ability to integrate and apply knowledge are conducted as part of the student’s practicum and internship.

8. Students have the opportunity to become familiar with a variety of professional activities and resources, including technological resources, during their practicum and internship.

9. In addition to the development of individual counseling skills, during either the practicum or internship, students must lead or co-lead a counseling or psychoeducational group.

10. Counselor education program faculty members serving as individual/triadic or group practicum/internship supervisors for students in entry-level programs have (1) relevant experience, (2) professional credentials, and (3) counseling supervision training and experience.

11. Site supervisors have (1) a minimum of a master’s degree, preferably in counseling, or a related profession; (2) relevant certifications and/or licenses; (3) a minimum of two years of pertinent professional experience in the specialty area in which the student is enrolled; (4) knowledge of the program’s expectations, requirements, and evaluation procedures for students; and (5) relevant training in counseling supervision.

12. Orientation, consultation, and professional development opportunities are provided by counselor education program faculty to site supervisors.

13. Written supervision agreements define the roles and responsibilities of the faculty supervisor, site supervisor, and student during practicum and internship. When individual/triadic practicum supervision is conducted by a site supervisor in consultation with counselor education program faculty, the supervision agreement must detail the format and frequency of consultation to monitor student learning.

**Recording Guidelines**

Students are required to record at minimum four client sessions per semester of internship. The video and audio on these recordings must be easily understood by the university supervisor. Students are required to provide their own device for the purpose of recording client sessions. Client confidentiality must be maintained with handling client recordings. Furthermore, students are required to fully delete all audio and visual recordings by the conclusion of practicum. The internship instructor will outline specific policies related to video recordings.
Internship Evaluation Process

The internship faculty supervisor will provide a syllabus to students at the start of internship outlining how final letter grades will be calculated. Generally, students are formally evaluated by site supervisors two times during each internship experience, once at midsemester and once at the end of the semester. Internship students shall receive periodic progress reviews from university supervisors. This may be in written or verbal form.

Receiving a Passing Grade for Internship

The internship faculty supervisor must have the following completed forms/documents by their respective deadlines before a student can receive a grade for internship: A) case notes of weekly activity; B) case study report; C) Student evaluation of internship experience; D) Site supervisor evaluations of student in internship (both midterm and final); E) All time logs reflecting at least 600 hours of internship, at least 240 of those hours providing direct services, an average of at least one hour of weekly site supervision and 1 ½ hours of group supervision.

Internship Documentation

Copies of the following forms can be obtained from the Practicum and Internship Coordinator and/or practicum course instructor.

Agreement Form

This form outlines the requirements and responsibilities for internship. This form is completed by the internship student (in collaboration with the university supervisor and site supervisor) and signed by all parties prior to completing any practicum clock hours. A separate form is required for each individual internship site.

Site Supervisor Evaluation of Student in Internship

This evaluation is completed by the site supervisor at both the midterm and the end of the internship.

Student Evaluation of Internship

This evaluation is completed by the student at the end of the internship.

Internship Student Self-Evaluation

This evaluation is completed periodically throughout the internship.
Time Log

Time logs are to be completed after each day of internship. Students must identify the date of the time log as well as the site supervisor, course and amount of time spent performing each major activity. Students need to explain (in the comments box) anything on time logs that would be necessary for the site and/or university supervisor to fully understand the hours being documented.
Professional Development Hours
All students in the Rehabilitation Counseling Program are required to complete and document 100 clock hours of professional development while enrolled in the program, including the semester in which the student is enrolled in internship.

Professional Development Hour Objectives

The purpose of the professional development hours is to supplement the experiences provided through coursework and clinical experiences, and to promote the development of well-rounded rehabilitation counselors. Specifically, professional development hours shall assist students to:

1) Develop multicultural awareness.
2) Enhance knowledge and/or skills to improve the psychological, social and vocational health of persons with disabilities.
3) Practice ethical behavior consistent with the Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors.
4) Develop advanced level critical thinking skills such as analyzing, evaluating and creating.
5) Promote the need for continual assessment of personal strengths and limitations, and the need to identify experiences to address utilize strengths and address those limitations.

Hours of professional development may be completed in a variety of categories including:

1) Attendance at professional conferences, workshops or lectures.
2) Service to rehabilitation counseling professional associations.
3) Observation of rehabilitation counseling clinical services.
4) Provision of rehabilitation counseling clinical hours.
5) Completion of agency visits that are related to rehabilitation counseling.
6) Participation in rehabilitation counseling research.

Hours must be documented in the Typhon system within one week after the activity occurs. Instructions for logging professional development hours in the Typhon System are as follows:

From the Main Menu, click on “My Conference Logs,” located under the Other Activities & Reports section. Then, click on the blue “Add a Conference” link located on the left side of the screen.

You will be prompted to enter the following information:

A) The date of the event. This is the date you completed the professional development hours you are claiming.
B) Topic. Enter the general topic or category of the professional development hours you are claiming using the possible categories listed above. For example, if you attended the American Counseling Association conference you could list the topic as attended professional conference.
C) Speaker. This would be the name of the speaker, supervisor or your main contact when completing the hours.
D) **Description.** Students shall provide detailed and accurate information about the event in this box including a description of the specific activity completed and a justification for how the activity contributed to professional development (see “Professional Development Hour Objectives” section above).

E) **Hours.** Enter the number of hours you spent completing this activity. Please be mindful that, similar to continuing education for professional certifications and licensures, travel time does not count toward professional development hours. Further, class assignments do not count toward the professional development requirement.

F) **CEU Credit.** Select No.

G) **Associated Course.** Select Professional Development Hours.

Students must complete professional development opportunities that are related to one of the objectives outlined in this manual for professional development. Students should make reasonable effort to acquire some hours from each category. Students must seek out professional development opportunities on their own time.
Thesis

A thesis is both a systematic process and written document where the student conducts and disseminates a scholarly research project on an approved topic of interest within the area of study. The thesis represents original research but is performed under the guidance of a thesis committee. Students are encouraged to consider the thesis option as early as possible in their program because research activities generally require a persistent dedication and motivation to coordinate multiple endeavors such as, but not limited to:

- Reviewing, analyzing and synthesizing published literature.
- Meetings with committee members.
- Scheduling and completing formal reviews of proposed research methods.
- Securing approval from NIU’s Institutional Review Board when conducting a research with human subjects.
- Gathering and analyzing data from informed participants.
- Documenting the entire research process.
- Scheduling and completing an oral defense of the research.

Additional information on the thesis process and the critical dates and deadlines can be found in the NIU’s Graduate School website.

Thesis Guidelines

1) The student’s thesis committee shall consist of three faculty members:

   a. The committee chair (thesis advisor) and an additional committee member must be selected from the rehabilitation counseling graduate faculty.

   b. The other committee member will be selected by the student and thesis advisor.

2) The student must submit a written prospectus and obtain approval for the use of human subjects from the NIU Institutional Review Board prior to engaging in data collection.

3) Students will schedule a prospectus meeting with the committee. This meeting will be open for attendance to any interested student or faculty member. The following information must be submitted to the committee a minimum of two weeks prior to the prospectus meeting.

   a. Chapter 1 — Introduction: Outlines significance of the study and statement of the problem.

   b. Chapter 2 — Review of the literature: Outlines lack of and/or extent of present knowledge.

   c. Chapter 3 — Methods: Outlines research questions, subjects, methods of data collection and analysis procedures.
4) Students will schedule an oral defense meeting with the committee. This oral defense will be open to all faculty and students. The entire thesis (chapters 1-3) as well as chapter 4 (Results and Discussion) and chapter 5 (Summary and Conclusions) must be provided to the committee a minimum of two weeks prior to the defense date.

5) Determination of a student’s successful or unsuccessful completion of the thesis option shall be made by the thesis committee immediately after the student’s oral examination. The student will be notified of the committee’s decision immediately.

6) DEADLINES

   a. The thesis process will be a minimum two semester commitment. If you plan to graduate in May, you will need committee approval of your thesis proposal no later than Dec. 1.

   b. If you plan to graduate in May, the thesis should be in final draft form no later than March 1. Because the thesis committee recommendations for final changes may take several weeks, an early deadline is essential. Papers approved after March 1 may not be finished in time for May commencement.

   c. In addition to the successful completion of other program requirements, completion of the thesis and passing the oral defense signifies the end of the degree requirements.
Faculty Approval for Thesis permit courses

Student name ___________________ Z-ID ________________ has my permission to register for _____ hours of

Circle One: UHHS 697 REHB 699
Independent Study Thesis

I agree to provide the faculty supervision for this student.

__________________________________________  Faculty signature

__________________________________________  Printed name of faculty
APPROVAL OF THESIS PROPOSAL

School of Interdisciplinary Health Professions
Northern Illinois University

Student’s Name

Student’s Signature

Student’s Address       Telephone Number

Title

Date of Completion

PROPOSAL APPROVED

AREA

DATE

Signature of Thesis Director

Signature of Committee Member

Signature of Committee Member

Signature of School Chair

Thesis proposal attached.
The Rehabilitation Counseling Student Association (RCSA) is a student association organization recognized at NIU. RCSA’s mission is to create awareness of individuals with disabilities and the discipline of rehabilitation counseling. Under faculty advisement, RCSA gives back to the community in many ways including participating in fundraising events and advocating for disability rights. For example, RCSA members have organized campus lectures, volunteered for community improvement events and held bake sales to enhance campus awareness of the rehabilitation counseling program. Membership in the RCSA is open to both undergraduate students in rehabilitation services and graduate students in rehabilitation counseling. To join and see current leadership, please use Huskie Link.

Communications

NIU Student Email

All graduate students enrolled in the rehabilitation counseling program are expected to use their NIU email address for all email communication related to the program. Information about student email can be found on the Division of Information Technology webpage.

All students are responsible for regularly checking their email while enrolled in the program. Most, if not all email communication from faculty and staff will be sent to NIU student email addresses. Students who are employed at NIU may have multiple email addresses and need to check all NIU email accounts.

Student and Faculty Email Listserv

Upon admission to the program, students are added to the official Listserv for the rehabilitation counseling program. The email address that is added to the Listserv is the student’s official NIU email address. Critical and time-sensitive information is communicated through the Listserv (e.g., requests for student self-evaluation, deadlines for completing program requirements, etc.) as well as professional development opportunities and job openings. Students should add the Listserv address (rehabcounsel@lists.niu.edu) to their list of contacts to ensure messages are received. Students and faculty are authorized to post on the Listserv but are reminded to exercise caution when considering posting material that could be deemed offensive or inappropriate by others. To post to the Listserv, send an email to the Listserv address (rehabcounsel@lists.niu.edu). Upon exiting or graduating from the program, students will be removed from the Listserv.
Professional Organizations

As a graduate student, you will have the opportunity to join professional organizations of your choice based on your individual needs or interests. Often, professional organizations offer student memberships at highly discounted and affordable fees. Benefits to joining professional organizations include: professional networking opportunities, access to scholarly materials and opportunities to attend conferences and present rehabilitation-based information to other professionals.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of organizations or resources (in alphabetical order) that are specific to rehabilitation counseling students and professionals. Some of these are organizations that you can join while other are accrediting bodies relevant to our program.

- **American Counseling Association (ACA):** The American Counseling Association (ACA) is an educational, scientific and professional organization whose members work in a variety of settings and service in multiple capacities.

- **American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association (ADARA):** The American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association (ADARA) is a national organization that brings together professionals from vocational rehabilitation, mental health, chemical health, education, interpreting and related fields to share best practices in working with individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing, to address policy and program concerns, and to network. Our goal is to improve the lives of those we serve while growing professionally.

- **American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA):** ARCA is an organization of rehabilitation counseling practitioners, educators and students who are concerned with improving the lives of people with disabilities. Rehabilitation counselors are counselors with specialized training and expertise in providing counseling and other services to persons with disability. Its mission is to enhance the development of people with disabilities throughout their life span and to promote excellence in the rehabilitation counseling profession.

- **Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD):** AHEAD is the leading professional membership association for individuals committed to equity for persons with disabilities in higher education.

- **Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC):** CRCC is the world’s largest rehabilitation counseling organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals with disabilities, and sets the standard for competent delivery of quality rehabilitation counseling services through its nationally accredited and internationally recognized Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification program. Please Note: CRCC is an organization that sets standards and certifications for the rehabilitation counseling profession.

- **Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP):** The vision of CACREP is to provide leadership and to promote excellence in professional preparation through the accreditation of counseling and related educational programs. As an accrediting body, CACREP is committed to the development of standards and procedures that reflect the needs of a dynamic, diverse and complex society. Please Note: CACREP is an accreditation organization that oversees rehabilitation and other types of counseling programs.
• **Illinois Counseling Association (ICA):** The ICA mission is to enhance the quality of life in society by promoting the development of professional counselors, advancing the counseling profession and using the profession and practice of counseling to promote respect for human dignity and diversity.

• **IARP Illinois Chapter:** The Illinois Chapter of the International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals is committed to expanding the knowledge base and expertise of its members to benefit the return to work and inclusion of persons with disabilities.

• **International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals (IARP):** The vision of IARP is to become the leading international rehabilitation professional association and its mission is to strengthen the community of rehabilitation professionals over the course of a lifetime. Please Note: This organization is usually affiliated with private-sector rehabilitation professionals.

• **National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns (NAMRC):** Today, NAMRC has representation on the Commission on Rehabilitation Counseling Certification, CORE Commission on Standards and Accreditation for Undergraduates, and CORE Commission on Standards and Accreditation for Graduates. NAMRC also took a leadership role in the formation of the NCRE Council on Diversity and Equity and has been an active partner in inter-organizational planning groups such as the CORE Summit and Rehabilitation Mega Conference and other organizations essential to the profession of rehabilitation.

• **National Council on Rehabilitation Education (NCRE):** The National Council on Rehabilitation Education (NCRE) is the premier professional organization of educators dedicated to quality services for persons with disabilities through education and research. NCRE advocates up-to-date education and training and the maintenance of professional standards in the field of rehabilitation.

• **National Rehabilitation Association:** The National Rehabilitation Association is committed to advancing the professional practices of rehabilitation driven by culturally competent, ethical, evidence-based and accountable practices so that individuals with disabilities would be regarded and valued as full members of our society. These individuals deserve equal access, expression of choice, and security of freedom within our communities when engaging in all aspects of life.

• **National Rehabilitation Counseling Association (NRCA):** The National Rehabilitation Counseling Association was founded in 1958 and supports rehabilitation counselors, rehabilitation practitioners, community rehabilitation workers, educators, students, and researchers in their efforts to assist people with disabilities to overcome functional and social barriers to employment and independent living. NRCA sponsors professional conferences and publishes the Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling.

• **Vocational Evaluation & Career Assessment Professionals (VECAP):** VECAP is a nonprofit 501(c)(6) organization originally founded in 1967 to promote the professions and services of vocational evaluation and work adjustment.
Formerly known as the Vocational Evaluation and Work Adjustment Association (VEWAA), the name was changed in 2003 to better-reflect the focus of the organization as well as emphasize the independent status of the organization. This group has no affiliation with the National Rehabilitation Association or the VEWAA.
University Resources

Many resources are available to NIU students to help meet academic and personal goals. Some of those resources are listed below. Additional resources can be located by searching the NIU website.

**Academic Support**
- Blackboard Assistance.
- Information Technology.
- University Libraries.
- University Writing Center.

**Arts and Culture**
- Graduate Colloquium Program.
- Colloquium Speakers Calendar.

**Career Services**
- NIU Career Services.

**Counseling Resources**
- Counseling and Consultation Services.
- The Couple and Family Therapy Clinic of NIU.
- Community Counseling Training Center.

**Disability Services**
- Disability Resource Center.

**Diversity**
- Asian American Resource Center.
- Division of Student Affairs.
- Center for Black Studies.
- International Student and Scholar Services.
- Latino Resource Center.
- Gender and Sexuality Resource Center.

**Finances**
- Office of the Bursar.
- Graduate Assistantships.
- Financial Aid and Scholarship Office.

**Legal**
- Students’ Legal Assistance.

**Medical Services**
- Health Services.

**Post-Traditional Students**
- Child Development and Family Center.
- Military and Post-Traditional Student Services.

**Sports and Recreation**
- Recreation and Wellness.
- Intramural Sports.
- Students Recreation Center.
Ethical Codes of Conduct

A. NIU Student Code of Conduct

*From the NIU Student Conduct Website:*

The [Northern Illinois University Student Code of Conduct](#) outlines the student conduct process at Northern Illinois University. It provides many of the rules that students are required to abide by. The document outlines the process the Student Conduct office follows when charging students with an alleged violation of the Student Code of Conduct. The Student Code of Conduct outlines sanction options for those students who admit or are found responsible for violating the Student Code of Conduct. Please contact the Student Conduct office at 815-753-1571 for any questions you have about the Student Code of Conduct.

B. Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors

Rehabilitation counseling graduate students should also be familiar with and abide by the [Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors](#). Students will learn about the code throughout their graduate program as it provides guidance on ethical practice for the rehabilitation counseling profession. The code was written based on six principles of ethical behavior:

- **Autonomy**: Respect the rights and choices of clients.
- **Beneficence**: Always do good.
- **Fidelity**: Be faithful and keep promises.
- **Justice**: Be fair in the treatment of clients.
- **Nonmaleficence**: Do no harm.
- **Veracity**: Be honest.

Students should also note that other ethical codes exist throughout the rehabilitation counseling profession based on specialty areas (e.g., disability management) or sectors in the field (e.g., private sector). Please note that all students are required to adhere to the ethical principles as outlined within the CRCC Code of Ethics and any other ethical code(s) as indicated within their respective credential or profession.
Academic Misconduct
From the NIU Student Conduct website:
Academic misconduct definition: The receipt or transmission of unauthorized aid on assignments or examinations, plagiarism, unauthorized use of examination materials, cheating or other forms of dishonesty in academic matters. The term “cheating” includes but is not limited to the following:

- Use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests or examinations or on academic assignments.
- Use of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems or carrying out other assignments.
- Acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the university faculty or staff.
- Engagement in any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion.

The term “plagiarism” includes but is not limited to the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. Plagiarism also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

A faculty member has original jurisdiction over any instances of academic misconduct that occur in a course that the faculty member is teaching. The student shall be given the opportunity to resolve the matter in meetings with the faculty member and the school chair. If the facts of the incident are not disputed by the student, the faculty member may elect to resolve the matter at that level by levying a sanction no greater than an F for that course. The faculty member shall notify the student in writing whenever such action is taken, and the Student Conduct office shall receive a copy of the Academic Misconduct Incident Report indicating final disposition of the case that will be placed in the student’s conduct file. The Academic Misconduct Incident Report Form is available online from the Student Conduct office website.

In all matters where the charge of academic misconduct is disputed by the student or if the faculty member believes a sanction greater than an F in the course is appropriate (such as repeat offenders or flagrant violations), the faculty member shall refer the matter to the Student Conduct office making use of the Academic Misconduct Incident Report. Sanctions greater than an F in a course can be levied only through the University Student Conduct System. The referral must contain all relevant evidence or information related to the allegation and the grade that would have been assigned to the student’s work had the alleged academic misconduct not occurred.

If during its investigation of the facts relevant to the charges, an issue surfaces that is not in the purview of the Student Conduct office, it shall be referred back to the appropriate academic area. The individuals involved shall receive written notification of such action.
Acknowledgment of Receipt of the RC Student Handbook
Each student must acknowledge receipt of the handbook and that acknowledgement will be completed electronically. Within 10 days of completing new student orientation, students should notify the program coordinator that they received a copy of the handbook by e-mailing the following directly to the program coordinator along with student name and ZID:

“I acknowledge that I have received an electronic copy of the 2021-2022 Rehabilitation Counseling Student Handbook and that I am responsible for making myself aware of its content including all policies and procedures.”