Candidate Orientation to the School Counseling Program
Emporia State University

Overview of Candidate Orientation Process
Candidate orientation to the School Counseling Program is provided in three phases and includes the following opportunities for learning about the program: (1) informational meetings conducted at various sites (Overland Park, Kansas City, and Topeka), (2) information provided on-line through the program website, and (3) a face-to-face meeting with each potential candidate. This last step also serves as part of the candidate’s interview. During these opportunities candidates are given information pertaining to each of the topics in the Outline section listed below. The objectives of this Orientation Process include the following:
Candidates will…

1. understand the requirements for successfully completing the program and the necessary steps needed to obtain a professional license as a school counselor in Kansas
2. understand the nature and purpose of the KSDE Standards for School Counselor and how they are used as the basis for program structure and candidate and program assessment
3. understand the nature and purpose of Dispositions and how they are used as the basis for program structure and candidate and program assessment
4. understand the responsibilities of both the candidate and the program faculty in the advising process
5. understand the resources available to assist all candidates in successfully completing the program

In order to ensure that the above objectives for understanding have been acquired, candidates will be required to sign a statement signifying that they have accomplished the stated objectives of the Orientation Process. This statement will be kept in the candidate’s file as evidence of this understanding.

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Introduction and Welcome!

Welcome to the newly created Department of Special Education & School Counseling and more specifically welcome to the School Counseling program! You are embarking on a journey that will hopefully lead you to becoming an outstanding Professional School Counselor (PreK-12). Our program has a rich history of developing some of the very best school counselors in Kansas. Since 1947, Emporia State University has been preparing professional school counselors to work in public schools in Kansas and neighboring states. Our graduates are highly sought after by employers because of the high quality of candidates and the outstanding reputation of the program faculty. The purpose of this orientation is to provide you with the information you will need in order to travel efficiently and effectively down the path towards completion of your program and the attainment of your master’s degree. Our 48-hour graduate program is accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE), and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Currently we offer courses in Emporia (The Earl Center), and in Overland Park (The Metro Learning Center), as well as approximately one-half of the courses on-line through Blackboard.

Our mission is to prepare candidates at the graduate level to develop the skills for critical thinking, creative planning, and effective practice that will allow them to work effectively in meeting the developmental needs of all PreK-12 students in an ever-changing and diverse society. The structure of the program is directly related to the Conceptual Framework of The Teachers College as we prepare candidates in the Best Practices for school counseling.

Best Practices and ASCA National Model

The School Counseling program at ESU prepares candidates within the guidelines of the American School Counseling Association National Model (ASCA, 2003). [http://www.schoolcounselor.org/](http://www.schoolcounselor.org/). This model emphasizes the establishment of comprehensive and developmentally-based guidance programs to serve PreK-12 public school students. Through the three domains (personal-social, academic, and career) school counselors provide activities through responsive services, guidance curriculum, student planning, and system support. Our program adheres to the standards developed by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), which has created a model that encourages comprehensive developmental counseling programs in K-12 schools. The National Model for School Counseling Programs reflects a comprehensive approach to program foundation, delivery, management and accountability. The model provides the opportunity for school counselors and school counseling teams to design, coordinate, implement, manage and evaluate their programs for students’ success. It provides a framework for the program components, the school counselor’s role in implementation, and the underlying philosophies of leadership, advocacy and systematic change. Research has shown that schools employing such programs have demonstrated an increase in student development, including academic, career, and emotional development and academic performance and achievement (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). Current students and recent graduates of the School Counseling program at Emporia State University fully understand the need for counselors switching their emphasis from service-centered for some students to program-centered for every
student. Using this model helps answer the question, “What do school counselors do?” and also, “How are students different as a result of what school counselors do?” ESU graduates are well prepared to enter the profession and to meet the challenges of working with a diverse population of students, teachers, and parents in the 21st century. For more information, or to order a copy of the model, go to the ASCA website http://www.schoolcounselor.org/ and click on “National Model & RAMP.”

**General Information**

Candidates are encouraged to complete a Plan of Study, which is required by the Graduate School, and to follow the plan as closely as possible. Most candidates complete the course work, field experience, and comprehensive exam within a two to four-year period. The Graduate School allows up to seven years for completion of the program beginning with the first semester of course work.

If you choose to take a course out of sequence, realize that it will be difficult (although not impossible) to catch-up with other candidates who are “on track.” For instance, if you are in the MLC cycle and miss taking the SC810: Pre-Practicum: Counseling Skills Development course in the fall, you could drive to Emporia the following semester (if it is offered). However, to stay on course, you will also be taking the course suggested for the MLC cycle during the same semester. So you can see how it becomes complicated. Realize that summer school is a great opportunity to take credit hours; however, it is not advisable that you take more than nine hours during the regular summer six-week period. In order to take more than nine hours, the chair of the department must grant special permission.

The forty-eight hour program is difficult and a lot of work. It will be difficult for you to teach full time and take classes one or two nights per week. Other responsibilities like coaching, sponsoring clubs and activities, or outside jobs will be difficult to maintain during the time you are taking courses. If you are having difficulty keeping up with the program or with a particular course, please let your advisor know. Sometimes it is best to take a semester off or to eliminate some other responsibility in order to continue completing courses successfully.

If someone tells you that “this course will substitute for that course” or that “I took Practicum before I had Counseling Theories,” please check this out with your advisor before assuming it is true for you. There are certain conditions that make for a differential program for some students. Please know that this is an exception rather than a rule. If you are attempting to take a course out of sequence, or plan to do something considered out of the regular order of things, you may write a petition requesting consideration. The members of the school counseling program committee, with the consultation of the department chairperson, will read this petition carefully. We will inform you as soon as possible as to the results of our decision.

It is generally advised that all courses (especially the required ones) be completed in the school program before taking Practicum. There are many reasons for this requirement. It is possible to take an additional course concurrently with Practicum (e.g. SC871: Supervised Practicum and SC860XA: Management of Counseling Programs), but it is not advised since it will already be a very busy semester. The learning that has occurred during the course work should allow you to
be prepared to begin your practice as a professional counselor.

Advising

Be aware that your advisor is co-responsible for your successful completion of the course work and the written comprehensive exam. Once your Plan of Study has been discussed, advisors will do their best to keep you informed about any changes that might affect you (e.g., a previously scheduled course not being offered next semester when you had planned to take it) and to inform you of pre-enrollment dates, etc. As you know, the university has adopted the Banner System that allows candidates to enroll themselves with their PIN. However, it’s a good idea to keep your advisor posted as to the courses you plan to take each semester and make sure to ask if you have any questions.

Transfer of Credits

If you plan to transfer graduate hours from another accredited institution (up to nine hours) please inform your advisor of that as soon as possible. They will need a copy of your official transcript, the course description and syllabus if possible. It is difficult to transfer courses that do not “match up” with the SC courses or courses that represent counseling skills or field experience courses (e.g., SC810: Pre-Practicum: Counseling Skills Development, SC871: Supervised Practicum, SC881: Internship in School Counseling, etc.). Generally these and the core courses need to be completed within our program.

The Candidate’s Portfolio*

Throughout the program you will be assessed on the ten standards for school counselors established by KSDE. These ten standards and the resulting 91 indicators are used to evaluate your readiness to assume the role of a professional school counselor. The School Counseling Portfolio was developed as a way for you to collect documents and materials representing evidence that you have achieved a level of competence on each of the ten standards and related indicators for School Counselor (Kansas State Department of Education, 2001). Candidates will receive their portfolios early in the program at either the Emporia or the Metro Learning Center locations. At that time they are also provided an overview of the purpose and uses of a portfolio (see Portfolio Development for 21st Century School Counselors*). Each candidate should become familiar with the ten standards and related indicators (green sheet) and how these are integrated into specific courses taken within the School Counseling program (see Candidate Report Card). In most cases criteria used to evaluate competence achieved is measured by the use of a rating scale or grading rubric that has been developed for that specific assessment or assignment. Candidates are rated as Target, Acceptable, or Unacceptable depending on the level of competence achieved. Instructors should provide this rating and their initials on each of the Candidate Report Cards at the end of the semester. For example, under Standard # 9: “The school counselor understands how current issues affect students,” four indicators (9K1, 9K2, 9K3, & 9P2) are identified for evaluating the standard. In order to assess these indicators (9K2 & 9K3) candidates in both SC700XA and SC705XA complete “Hot Topics” papers and presentations that are evaluated using the appropriate rating scale. After the evaluation is
complete the instructor records a “T” (Target), an “A” (Acceptable), or a “U” (Unacceptable) along with initials for each report card. Candidates then place a copy of their paper and the grading scale or rubric within the file designated for Standard # 9.

As candidates continue through the program they should collect and save documents and materials that best represent their evidence of accomplishment or achievement. Finally during SC881: School Counseling Internship candidates are required to use their completed portfolio to demonstrate Indicator 10K1: “The counselor has an awareness of the importance of lifelong professional development” as they complete mock job interviews with peers and their faculty instructor. This assignment is evaluated by using the Counselor Interview Assessment Checklist and the Rubric for Assessment of Candidate’s Portfolio. At this time candidates should have their portfolio complete and thus be able to demonstrate it as an indicator of professional development, as well as “real-life” job interviews.


**Dispositions**

As part of our National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) accreditation, the program faculty must evaluate candidates on their knowledge, skills, and dispositions throughout the 48-hour program. Advisors and the chair of the department are required to review with candidates their progress on a regular basis. Instructors in the program will be assessing candidates both during class and outside of class experiences. If an individual instructor believes that there is a concern about a candidate’s performance in some area, the instructor may complete the Evaluation of Dispositions form and submit it to the Department Chair. Dispositions are considered the values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities and affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator’s own professional growth. Dispositions are guided by beliefs and attitudes related to values such as caring, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and social justice. For example, they might include a belief that all students can learn, a vision of high and challenging standards, or a commitment to a safe and supportive learning environment (Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education: 2002 Edition, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, pg. 53). Understand that school counseling candidates will be informed of the importance of this process at the time of their entry into the program as well as evaluated on a periodic basis throughout their program.

The five decision points are as follows: Decision Point # 1: Entry into the program (completed by your instructor during the course-SC810: Counseling Skills Development), Decision Point # 2: Entry into initial Field Experience (completed by the school counseling program committee prior to taking the course-SC871: Practicum), Decision Point # 3: Entry into Advanced Field Experience (completed by your instructor and on-site supervisor at the completion of the course-SC881: Internship), Decision Point # 4: Completion of the Program (completed by the school counseling program committee after you complete and pass the Comprehensive Exam), and Decision Point # 5: In-service/Follow-up (completed by employer once you have been working
as a school counselor). Along the way, instructors in the SESC department will be assessing candidates both during class and outside of class experiences.

**Field Experience in School Counseling**

Practicum: Candidates in the School Counseling program are required to complete core concentration courses before becoming eligible to apply for SC871: Supervised Practicum in School Counseling (3 credit hours). The practicum, which requires 100 clock hours, is completed through the Community Counseling Services clinic at Emporia State University or through the Metro Learning Center in Overland Park. Candidates receive weekly supervision (individual and group) from a School Counseling program faculty member. Candidates are evaluated on their ability to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the areas of **Critical Thinking**, **Creative Planning**, and **Effective Practice** as they work with clients in a clinical setting.

Internship: Candidates in the School Counseling program are eligible to take SC881: School Counseling Internship (6 credit hours) after successful completion of SC871: Supervised Practicum in School Counseling. Counseling internship consists of 600 clock hours and is carried out at school internship sites and supervised by a certified school counselor. Candidates receive weekly individual supervision through their on-site supervisor as well as weekly group supervision with a School Counseling program faculty member. Candidates are evaluated on their ability to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the areas of **Critical Thinking**, **Creative Planning**, and **Effective Practice** as they work with students, teachers, and parents in an educational environment.

**Diversity in School Counseling**

During their course work, candidates in the School Counseling program are exposed to a variety of experiences designed to equip them to work effectively with students in a multicultural, ethnically diverse, and global society. Candidates are required to take a prescribed set of courses (48 hours) from a diverse faculty through the Department of Special Education and School Counseling. Faculty members all have extensive professional experience and are highly considered as leaders in their major fields both nationally and throughout the State of Kansas.

Candidates, some of whom come from rather non-diverse settings, are required to complete course work that is multicultural sensitive. All candidates must participate and complete SC710: Multicultural Counseling, a core course, in which they are challenged to participate in a variety of activities both in-class and out of class. These assignments expose candidates to a variety of differences in students from those physically challenged to those from social and cultural diverse backgrounds. Throughout all other required courses candidates are continually challenged to apply the course specific content and skills necessary to work effectively with a variety of client populations and settings.

After completion of core and concentration courses, candidates are eligible to apply for SC871: Supervised Practicum in School Counseling (3 credit hours). This field experience course requires 100 clock hours and is completed in the Community Counseling Services clinic at Emporia State University or through the Metro Learning Center in Overland Park. Candidates
receive supervision in their work with clients from diverse backgrounds across the spectrum of age and development.

In their final field experience, candidates are required to complete SC881: School Counseling Internship (6 credit hours). Counseling internship consists of 600 clock hours and is carried out at school internship sites and supervised by a certified school counselor. They also receive weekly group supervision from the School Counseling program faculty member. During this time, candidates are required to work at three different grade levels, elementary, middle school, and high school as they participate in a variety of service delivery methods. They are required to provide individual, small, and large group counseling with all students, as well as consult with teachers, parents, and other professionals in this educational community. Depending on their placement, candidates are encouraged to seek out additional experiences, both paid and voluntary, in other settings as they continue to expand their ability to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and dispositions in this area.

**Comprehensive Exam**

This written exam requires candidates to use the content knowledge gained during the program in an integrative fashion as they begin their preparation for the actual practice of professional school counseling. The exam is given three times during the academic year: fall semester (typically the first Saturday in November), spring semester (typically the first Saturday in April), and summer semester (typically the third Friday in June). The exam is scheduled for three and one-half hours with a 25-30 minute break between the first and second parts of the exam. The comprehensive exam is composed of eight essay questions. Each candidate must answer a total of six questions with four relating to the following areas: Management of Counseling Programs (Std # 2), Career Counseling (Std # 6), Consultation, Collaboration, and Coordination (Std # 7) and Issues Affecting Students (Std # 9). Candidates’ responses are rated by at least two program faculty members on a 0, 1, or 2 point scale (0-Unacceptable (Rewrite), 1-Acceptable, or 2-Target). In terms of the criterion of success for this assessment, candidates must pass all six areas (questions) before they are considered successful in passing the exam. If candidates are scored a “0” or unacceptable in an area, they are required to successfully rewrite the question or defend orally at a later date before passing the exam.

**Licensure**

The Licensure information is currently being updated.

**PRAXIS II**

The PRAXIS II: School Guidance and Counseling test (ETS) is designed for prospective counselors grades PreK-12. The test is intended primarily for persons who are completing masters-level programs who intend to become counselors in public schools. The PRAXIS II measures knowledge and skills required of the professional school counselor in relation to those developmental areas that constitute most of the work of the counselor. The test is designed to measure counselor functions and skills related to both the primary and secondary school levels. The content of the test is focused on questions that relate to the following four major categories:
counseling and guidance, consulting, coordinating, and professional issues. Questions posed provide candidates the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge of counseling theories and their use in individual and small group counseling as well as career counseling, and the development and management of a comprehensive guidance program. Additional questions cover such areas as consulting with parents and teachers’ uses of assessment, multicultural counseling, and professional and ethical issues in counseling practice. The two-hour exam includes 120 multiple-choice questions and a taped portion (approximately 40 questions or 1/3 of the questions) in which the examinee is required to answer questions as they relate to an actual counseling session and client/counselor interaction. All questions are offered in a multiple-choice format and are scored as either correct or incorrect. Raw scores for each subsection are provided as well as a total score. The established cut off score for Kansas has been set at 600 total points. For more information about the PRAXIS exam or to sign up to take it go to www.ets.org. 

Program Faculty and Staff

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Important Organizations

American Counseling Association (ACA) [www.counseling.org/]

American School Counseling Association (ASCA) [www.schoolcounselor.org/]

Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board (BSRB-Kansas) [www.ksbsrb.org/]

Chi Sigma Iota (International) [www.csi-net.org/]

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) [www.cacrep.org/]

Kansas Counseling Association (KCA) [www.kscounseling.org/]

Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) [www.ksde.org/]

National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) [www.nbcc.org/]

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) [www.ncate.org]

*A video/podcast will be created and available to help candidates in further understanding this topic or area.

**Now that you have read the above information you need to complete the Orientation Quiz and Candidate Attestation of Acquired Objectives form.** Please mail both items to:

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