



Master of Clinical/Counseling Psychology Professional Paper Guidelines

The professional paper in clinical psychology involves a theoretically driven conceptualization and critical investigation of a clinical case study. The written product resulting from this effort is a professionally written manuscript providing a comprehensive discussion of a selected case study. To successfully pass the Professional Paper requirement students must receive passing evaluations in both fall and spring semester. To be eligible to complete the Professional Paper, students must have completed 30 hours of coursework and be enrolled in PSYC 6590 fall semester and PSYC 6591 spring semester concurrently. Students must have a minimum GPA of 3.0.

Chair Selection:

Professional Paper is designed to be a mentored project. Students will be randomly assigned to work with a full-time Clinical Faculty Member. It is the student's responsibility to define the contents of the final manuscript with her/his chair. Students should discuss their ideas for the professional paper with their chairperson in advance of preparing the paper. The role of the chair is to provide guidance and clarification regarding the content areas and organization of the paper.

Case Selection:

Students will select the case for which they will complete their professional paper by no later than the first day of classes, spring semester of their second year. Selected cases should include individual clients who students have seen a minimum of three (3) sessions. One of the sessions can be the clinical intake (if applicable).

Written Paper:

In consultation with their chair, students will prepare a written document. The written manuscript will provide a case summary which addresses the chief complaint and pertinent history of their client. The written manuscript should include, but is not limited to, information concerning etiology, differential diagnosis, diagnostic impression using the DSM 5 system, ethical considerations, and multicultural issues. Further the paper should discuss the primary and secondary treatment issues and goals as well as treatment strategies and prognosis based upon a critical analysis and implementation of their personal theoretical orientation and conceptualization of the case taking into consideration any identified ethical

and multicultural issues. The rationale for treatment should be explained within the context of the theoretical framework, and empirical comparisons of treatment approaches/strategies should be addressed.

The professional paper requires students to demonstrate their skills in case conceptualization using either their personal theoretical framework or the framework being used at their practicum site. Also, students are expected to demonstrate their knowledge and application of advanced psychopathology as it pertains to etiology and diagnosis, and their ability to critically use their theoretical perspective pertaining to the issues presented in the case and justify their proposed treatment approach/strategies based upon their appraisal and synthesis of the relevant information.

Students are required to identify their preferred case and submit a written case summary to their chair no later than January 1st of their second year. It is in the best interest of the student to submit as many drafts as possible; however, the chairperson will review and comment on drafts, often resulting in the student having to make revisions as appropriate.

The range of topics addressed in the cases that will be covered by the professional papers is diverse. The length of the manuscript will vary and does not have to conform to any specific requirement, but as a guideline the professional paper will normally range from 25-30 pages, including references. The paper must be typed with double-spaced text lines, one-inch margins all around, and 12-point font. The paper should be properly numbered and written using the guidelines provided in the latest edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.

MCCP Professional Paper Student Timeline

Fall Semester (1 credit hour):

- A. Professional Paper Meeting with assigned Faculty Chair
 - a. Students should reach out to chair to setup a meeting.
 - b. Minimum of 2 meetings required for the semester
- B. Case Summary due November 9th to Chair
 - a. Must be based on a client from practicum site
 - i. Student is not required to have seen this client 3x
 - ii. Client is not required to be the student's final case selection
 - b. Summary Requirements
 - i. Approximately 2-3 pages in length

- ii. Summarize clinical information such as (demographic information, medical and mental health history, current treatment considerations, and conceptualization of a treatment plan.
- iii. Chair will determine any additional expectations for Case Summary content

Spring Semester (3 credit hours):

- A. Case Selection
 - a. Send confirmation to chair no later than January 15th
- B. Students should reach out to chair to setup a meeting.
- C. Minimum of 4 meetings and 2 drafts required for the semester

Paper Components:

- D. Case Conceptualization (2-5 pages)
 - a. This can be an extension of the case summary submitted in fall semester, but it is not required to be the same case
- E. Diagnostic Impression (2-4 pages total)
 - a. Differential Diagnosis (1-2 pages)
- F. Etiology- all students must have a minimum of two etiological factors in reference to their case leading to justification of diagnosis. (3-5 pages)
- G. Therapeutic Framework (5-7 pages)
 - a. Multicultural Considerations specific to case (2 pages as part of Therapeutic Framework)
- H. Primary/Secondary Treatment Issues & Goals (1-2 pages)
- I. Treatment Strategies and Prognosis (6-8 pages)
 - a. Ethical Considerations specific to case (2 pages as part of Treatment Strategies)
- J. Future Considerations (2 pages)
- K. Due by April 20th**
 - a. Submission must be made to chair.
 - b. Scheduled as a full semester course (3-credit hours)
 - c. Students are expected to meet with the chair throughout the semester.
 - d. Number of drafts and due dates will be set by chair

Grading Criteria:

The Professional Paper grading scale is Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory for both semesters. The chair will utilize a faculty reader to provide a critical review of APA formatting and areas where information could be expounded upon to add depth to

the student's final document. The chair, however, is responsible for student grading for both semesters.

In fall semester, students are required to meet with their chair a minimum of two (2) times and provide a minimum of one (1) draft of the case summary. In spring semester, students are required to meet with their chair a minimum of four (4) times throughout the semester and submit a minimum of two (2) drafts prior to the final iteration of the paper. The chair will determine, in conjunction with the student, what sections of the paper count as drafts and the deadlines for submitting drafts. In addition, the chair can request more than two drafts and more than 4 meetings should the student require more faculty input for successful completion.

During the required meetings and review of drafts, the chair will provide substantive feedback to the student, that the student should take into consideration while revising their paper. Requirements for meetings and drafts are mandatory. Failure to participate in meetings and/or provide drafts can negatively impact the student's academic progression in the course.

Students who earn a grade of Unsatisfactory in fall semester (Professional Paper I) will not be allowed to enroll in the spring semester Professional Paper II course. Students who earn a grade of U in either semester will be required to enroll in a professional paper completion course summer semester. Students who do not pass both sections of Professional Paper will not be cleared for graduation. This is considered a Capstone Project and therefore students are required to earn a passing grade to successfully complete the graduate program.

Student Concerns:

If the student has concerns regarding his/her professional paper progress or grade, this should first be brought to the attention of the paper chair. If the student and chair cannot come to a resolution, the next step is to report the concerns to the Graduate Program Director. If a resolution still cannot be reached, the Department Chair and possibly the Dean of Arts of Sciences are next to become involved in finding a solution for the student.