



**TheChicagoSchool**<sup>®</sup>  
of Professional Psychology

**2012-2013 Program Guidebook**

**M.A. Forensic Psychology**

**Los Angeles/Chicago/  
Washington D.C./Online-Blend**

## Table of Contents

Department Educational Model and Goals .....	3
TCSPP Individual and Cultural Differences .....	3
Program Competencies .....	3
Department Policies and Procedures .....	4
Course Grading and Performance Feedback.....	4
Student Performance Evaluation and Student Review Process .....	4
Professional Development Group .....	4
Academic Advisor Assignment .....	4
Change in Enrollment/Concentration Status.....	4
Independent Study .....	5
Auditing Courses .....	5
Academic Development Plans .....	5
Departmental Academic Standards (DAS) Policy (3C/2F) .....	5
DAS Outcomes and Actions .....	5
Other .....	6
Student absences .....	6
Class cancellations .....	6
Professional behavior/Academic integrity .....	7
Practicum (licensure students only).....	7
Permission to Apply to Practica (If applicable).....	8
The following prerequisites are required to be eligible for a MAFO practicum: .....	8
First Year Capstone .....	8
Forensic Competency Examination (FCE).....	9

## Department Educational Model and Goals

The Master of Arts in Forensic Psychology operates under the framework of the practitioner-scholar model and the National Council of Schools and Programs of Professional Psychology (NCSPP) Core Competency model of training in clinical psychology. These models are predicated on the belief that a competent practitioner must have both a broad knowledge of the scientific and theoretical principles in the clinical practice of psychology and the ability to apply that knowledge to specific clinical situations. Additionally, the program incorporates the eight content areas outlined by the National Board of Certified Counselors to prepare those students seeking Professional Counselor licensure and desiring to begin professional practice at the master's level. Furthermore, the program reflects the educational goals and competencies adopted by the National Invitational Conference on Education and Training in Law and Psychology: the Villanova Conference. The curriculum exposes students to the theoretical principles, scientific research, and practice skills of clinical psychology that enable students to apply the science and practice of psychology to issues of law and the legal system and to assume professional responsibilities in a variety of forensic settings. The master's program emphasizes critical thinking, sensitivity to ethical principles, the role of personal values, and cultural diversity and endeavors to be flexible in order to adapt course content to reflect developments in the field. In addition, The Chicago School Forensic Center offers service-learning opportunities to educate students to become competent and civically engaged forensic mental health practitioners.

### ***TCSPP Individual and Cultural Differences***

The Chicago School is committed to preparing professionals for practice in a multicultural and diverse society. In keeping with this commitment, the content of all courses is informed, where appropriate, by knowledge of individual and cultural differences (e.g., age, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status), so that students develop the skills that enable them to provide professional services to individuals of diverse backgrounds. Faculty conveys attitudes respectful of these individual and cultural differences.

### ***Program Competencies***

#### Scholarship:

*Research:* Students will demonstrate an understanding of the research methods in the social and behavioral sciences, the benefits and limitations of research, and the scientific and professional literature relevant to the field of forensic psychology.

#### Diversity:

*Diversity:* Students will recognize and respect individual and group differences as well as practice with cultural competence.

#### Professional Behavior:

*Ethics:* Students will organize professional activities by ethical and professional codes, standards, and guidelines; statutes, rules, and regulations; and relevant case law.

#### Professional Practice:

*Relationship:* Students will develop and maintain effective professional relationships with clients, peers, supervisors, faculty, and other professionals.

*Assessment:* Students will demonstrate fundamental knowledge of psychometric theory, assessment techniques, and forensic literature to evaluate various dimensions of human experience, outcomes of interventions, and psych legal issues.

*Intervention:* Students will integrate a basic knowledge of theory, research, and professional literature to guide interventions and promote optimal mental health and well-being.

## **Department Policies and Procedures**

### ***Course Grading and Performance Feedback***

Grades are assigned in all courses, and students can review course grades online. Course grades assist the school, the student, and the student's academic advisor to monitor the student's progress and mastery of material deemed necessary by the department faculty to become proficient and competent clinicians.

### ***Student Performance Evaluation and Student Review Process***

Once each semester, the department faculty meets to review student progress at a student review meeting. During the student reviews, the student's academic advisor summarizes a student's (advisee) progress in the program to date. Student grades, Student Performance Evaluations (SPE), practica feedback, and Academic Development Plans (if applicable) are a part of the review of the student's progress. Other department faculty can elaborate on their contact with the student, expressing concerns or articulating areas of strength and weaknesses. The student review also involves determining a student's readiness to proceed in the program and any conditions that are necessary to support the student's learning and progression. The student's advisor forwards a copy of the Student Review Process Plan, which provides a student with a current status of their performance in the program to the student within two weeks of the student review meeting.

### **Professional Development Group**

Licensure track students are required to enroll in Professional Development Group during their first semester in the program. This course orients students to The Chicago School's policies and procedures. Students also explore issues of professional and career development in forensic psychology, as well as develop skills in evaluation and self-reflection. By the end of the course, students will have identified which concentration they will pursue. This course must be taken during the first semester of enrollment.

### ***Academic Advisor Assignment***

Licensure track student's Professional Development Group instructor serves as his/her academic advisor throughout their duration in the program. Since some programs are lockstep, students should consult with their advisor prior to taking a course out of sequence.

Change of Advisor: In the event that a student wants to change advisors, the student will schedule a meeting with the current advisor to discuss his/her rationale for the request. If approved by the current advisor, the advisor will obtain the Request for Advisor Change form. Next, the student will select a new advisor and meet with him/her to obtain his/her approval. If the new advisor agrees to serve as the student's advisor, the student will acquire the new advisor's signature on the Request for Advisor Change form. The Request for Advisor Change form with both former and current/new advisor signatures will be submitted to the FO Department Manager/Administrative Assistant. The Department Manager/ Administrative Assistant will notify by email both the former and new advisor that the advisor change has been finalized. If the request for a new advisor is denied, the student has the right to appeal the decision in writing to the Department Chair within 10 business days of notification of denial. The Department Chair has final decision-making authority. The request for the advisor change will not be implemented without signatures from both current and new advisor.

### ***Change in Enrollment/Concentration Status***

Students who wish to change concentrations must fill out a Student Data Sheet, available from the

Department Manager or Administrative Assistant. A Student Data Sheet must be completed and signed by the student's academic advisor any time there is a change in the course of study or enrollment status.

### ***Independent Study***

Students may undertake a faculty supervised independent study project (FO651, 652, or 653) in an area not covered by courses in the curriculum. Requests for independent study must be approved by the Department Chair. A maximum of two credit hours of independent study can be applied towards degree requirements as elective hours.

### ***Auditing Courses***

A student who wishes to audit a course must register for the course in the same manner as courses taken for credit (by the add/drop deadline of a semester) as long as all credit-seeking students have been accommodated. Students must contact the registrar in writing and identify the course(s) for which they have registered and wish to take as an auditor. The appropriate faculty member or dean of academic affairs approves all audit classes. The course instructor determines the participation requirements for audit students. Failure to follow these steps will result in a course grade and regular tuition charges. After the Add/Drop Period, any course that a student has previously identified as an audit course may not be changed to a credit course. Conversely, any course identified as a credit course may not be identified as an audit course following the Add/Drop period. Study abroad classes are not audit eligible.

### ***Academic Development Plans***

Students experiencing difficulty meeting department requirements may be placed on an Academic Development Plan (ADP) by their academic advisor, ADP Manager, Director of Professional Practice, or by the Department Chair on behalf of the department faculty. An ADP is not punitive, but rather aims to identify and address weaknesses in a student's behaviors, skills, and academic performance. The ADP Manager works collaboratively with the faculty and academic advisor to create a plan that addresses the student's identified weaknesses. The development of an ADP requires involvement of the student to ensure s/he feels they are receiving the support they need. When the identified concerns are specifically related to a student's training site, a Clinical Training ADP is written in collaboration with the site supervisor. When an ADP plan ameliorates the identified concerns, no further action is required. If an ADP is unsuccessful or unlikely to remedy the presenting problem or concern, the ADP could be modified or a student may be referred to the Student Affairs Committee (SAC) for disciplinary action up to, and including, dismissal from school. Additionally, should a student refuse to participate in academic development planning, the student may be referred to the SAC for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the school. Please reference your Student Handbook for more information regarding ADPs and SAC referrals.

### ***Departmental Academic Standards (DAS) Policy (3C/2F)***

In addition to meeting the institutional Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirements as outlined in the Student Handbook, Chicago School students must meet additional academic standards as set forth by their academic department, Departmental Academic Standards (DAS). Students are evaluated against DAS by their academic department at the end of each grading period. Students are expected to evaluate their own records and contact the department upon receipt of a grade below B- or NP. The academic department will notify students affected by DAS in writing.

#### **DAS Outcomes and Actions**

1. If a student earns 1 "C" grade, the student may be placed on an ADP if standards are not met in the subsequent term
2. If a student earns ANY of the following, the student contacts the academic department and is placed on an ADP:
  - a. 1 "F" grade

- b. 1 “NP” grade
  - c. 2 “C” grades
  - d. A “C” grade plus one “F” grade or one “NP” grade
3. If a student earns ANY of the following, the student receives written notification from the academic department and is academically dismissed:
- a. Any combination of two of these designations: “F” grade/“NP” grade
  - b. 3 “C” grades
  - c. A combination of three of these designations: “C” grades/“F” grades/“NP” grades

### ***Other***

Instructors will adhere to the grading scale with no exception; this pertains to the final grade as well as individual assignments. Final grades may not be changed without the appropriate appeal process, which is explained in The Chicago School Student Handbook. The grading scale is designed to clearly demarcate superior, satisfactory, and unacceptable academic performance. The grading scale is as follows: A: 93 – 100; A-: 90 – 92; B+: 87 – 89; B: 83 – 86; B-: 80 – 82; C: 70 – 79; F: 69 and below.

No assignment may be redone. All assignments must be done to the best of the student’s ability the first time. Allowing assignments to be redone encourages students to turn in less than their best work the first time and creates inconsistency across courses and course sections. Note that this does not include drafts submitted to a professor as part of an assignment.

No extra credit assignments may be given to students to raise a poor or failing grade. However, it remains acceptable for faculty to include extra credit questions on an examination if so desired.

Group work may account for only 20% or less of a student’s final grade.

### ***Student absences***

- Regular attendance is required.
- In the case of an absence, professional practice requires that the student must inform the course instructor at least 24 hours prior to or following the absence. Failure to notify the instructor may result in placement on an academic development plan.
- Two absences will result in one-half final course letter grade reduction (e.g., a “B” would become a “B-”). Three absences will result in failure of the course (i.e., a letter grade of “F”). Note that missing one four-hour or one six-hour class meeting equals two absences.
- Faculty discretion and judgment is reserved for emergencies/illnesses, and will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Appropriate documentation may be required.
- For religious accommodation, it is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor of the accommodation request in advance.
- For any absence (excused or unexcused), the student must demonstrate mastery of the material covered during the missed class through an additional assignment at the discretion of the instructor.
- The instructor has the right to reduce the participation grade for tardiness.
- For blended and online courses, the application of this policy may be modified at the discretion of the instructor.

### ***Class cancellations***

- Students will also receive notification from the professor as to how the content of that missed class session will be addressed.

### ***Professional behavior/Academic integrity***

- Per TCS Student Handbook, all suspected incidents of academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, and fabrication) will be referred to the Student Affairs Committee.
- Classroom behavior that is disruptive to the learning process or demonstrates a level of disrespect or disregard to instructor or students will result in repercussions which can include:
  - Being asked to leave class
  - Being placed on an Academic Development Plan
  - Being referred to the Student Affairs Committee

## **Practicum (licensure students only)**

The Forensic Master's Program at The Chicago School is committed to training highly competent and ethical clinicians who will ultimately contribute to the interface of law and psychology. Toward that end, licensure track students are required to complete relevant coursework in combination with clinical training for successful completion of their master's degree. Full-time students traditionally complete their practicum/internship experience during the second year of the academic program. Part-time students work closely with their academic advisors to determine the most appropriate year to complete training requirements. Students must receive and accept an official offer from a prospective practicum site by the end of the first week of classes in the fall semester to complete their training within that academic year.

Forensic practicum/internships are closely supervised educational experiences in which the knowledge, skills, and attitudes developed in the classroom can be directly applied to forensic and/or clinical populations. All sites are approved by the TCS Department of Applied Professional Practice (APP) and allow students the opportunity to work with high-risk populations in an array of settings such as prisons, jails, detention centers, police departments, special treatment units, state psychiatric hospitals, substance abuse facilities, and community-based programs for victims and offenders. These formative experiences integrate the science and practice of forensic psychology in real world situations. Through close supervision and mentorship, students begin to develop their professional identities, clarify their professional strengths and weaknesses, and understand their roles as clinicians and/or providers of forensic services within a variety of settings and with a variety of people.

Licensure track students must accrue a minimum of 700 hours of clinical training over the course of a 9 to 12 month practicum/internship under the supervision of a master's level licensed clinician or psychologist (e.g., LCSW, LCPC, LMFT, or licensed psychologist). Students are expected to attend practicum between 16 to 24 hours per week and must participate in one hour of weekly, individual supervision. In addition, students should dedicate at least 40 to 60% of their time on site to direct client contact, which could include a variety of clinical activities such as diagnostic interviewing, individual, group, or family therapy, crisis intervention, intake interviews, and milieu therapy. Students are typically responsible for administrative and case management tasks as well including, but not limited to, victim advocacy, consultation, applied research, and/or court attendance.

Licensure students are concurrently enrolled in a three-hour, weekly practicum seminar class, which serves as a forum for peer consultation and support. Students may not transfer credits in lieu of the practicum/internship and seminar, nor may they petition to waive these requirements. APP awards grades for the practicum/internship based on the evaluation of the site supervisor, the evaluation from the practicum seminar leader, the completion of requisite practicum/internship hours, and the submission of all required forms to APP. Students must receive passing grades from both their seminar leaders and site supervisors to pass the course. Additional information regarding the prerequisites, policies, and evaluation procedures for practicum/internship can be found in the MAFO Practicum/Internship Manual disseminated by APP.

It is required that students obtain verification that clients consent to therapy conducted by the student. If the site permits taping of therapy sessions, the student is required to complete the taping form. Students should complete a non-taping form for those sites that do not permit taping of sessions.

Students are permitted to begin their practicum experience on July 1. In cases where the student's training site requires the completion of orientation and/or trainings prior to July 1, those students may begin before the July 1 start date, however they are not permitted to engage in clinical work. In cases where a site requires students to begin clinical work prior to July 1, students must gain approval on a case by case basis from the Director of APP.

The practicum is an integral component of clinical training. It provides a closely supervised clinical experience in which students use the knowledge obtained in the classroom to understand their clients and to develop skills in assessment, psychotherapy, and other discipline related areas. As such, the practicum serves to integrate the theoretical and practical aspects of the education of the professional psychologist. It allows students to become familiar with professional collaboration and consultation in a clinical setting. All students are required to register for Practicum (3 credits) in the Fall and Internship (3 credits) in the Spring.

The department's Director of Applied Professional Practice (APP) awards grades for practicum based on the evaluation of the site supervisor, the student's performance in practicum/internship seminar, the completion of the requisite practicum hours, and the submission of all required forms to the department's Office of APP. Complete adherence to ethical standards of the field is required of all students, especially those on practicum. Should a student show unprofessional or unethical behavior, or signs that he or she lacks suitability for the profession, he or she may be dismissed from a training practicum. Dismissal or student-initiated termination from a practicum is considered extremely serious and will result in automatic referral to the Student Affairs Committee – Professional Comportment Subcommittee for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the school.

### ***Permission to Apply to Practica (If applicable)***

The following prerequisites are required to be eligible for a MAFO practicum:

- 1) A cumulative GPA  $\geq$  3.0
- 2) Approval of program faculty and Directors of Training in APP
- 3) A grade of B- or better in the following four prerequisite courses, which must be completed prior to beginning practicum/internship:
  - FO 611 Ethics & Professional Issues
  - FO 613 Psychopathology
  - FO 617 Clinical & Diagnostic Interviewing
  - FO 627 Forensic Documentation, Report Writing, and Testifying
  - \*Please note summer courses and the start of practicum may overlap

## **First Year Capstone**

Students in the licensure track are required to pass the first year capstone, which is typically completed during the spring term of the first year, in order to fulfill program requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in Forensic Psychology. It is the responsibility of the Forensic Documentation, Report Writing, and Testifying course instructor to evaluate the first year capstone, which is the paper submitted for the midterm. The objective of the capstone is for the student to demonstrate the ability to write a thorough mental status examination and social history, summarize and synthesize relevant case data, accurately explain and describe mental health symptoms, provide clinically sound diagnostic impressions, accurately assess risk of harm to self and others, and clearly articulate treatment recommendations.

Students in the non-licensure track will complete an Applied Research Project (ARP) that integrates and applies program learning to an authentic workplace situation. Each student will work with an ARP instructor who will assist them in the ten half credit courses that are required in the process of working toward the completion of their ARP. Each of these courses will be graded, and are subject to the same retake policy as the other courses in the program. Specifically, any student receiving non passing grade (C or F) twice on an ARP course will be dismissed from the program.

## **Forensic Competency Examination (FCE)**

Students completing a practicum are required to pass a Forensic Competency Examination (FCE). The FCE consists of a written case conceptualization paper or a program development paper, and an oral defense. The objective of the FCE is for students to demonstrate the ability to apply psychological theory, empirical literature, assessment, and intervention to a case formulation, program proposal, or program project. In addition, the aim of the FCE is for students to demonstrate an understanding of professional practice (e.g., ethical behavior), clinical dynamics (e.g., client/therapist relationship), broader systems (e.g., family, school, community, court, political, other treatment professionals/programs), and areas of diversity and difference (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status) as contextual variables. Each student must successfully pass both the written and oral components of the FCE in order to fulfill the requirements of the Practicum and Internship Seminars. The seminar leaders will provide additional information about specific guidelines and requirements in the course syllabus.