Academic Program Plan Guidelines

The development of the academic program plan is one of the first challenges facing each new learner. This plan is designed to serve as the academic “blueprint” for each learner’s program, as it identifies the specific coursework that will need to be completed and the sequence of those courses. Although the Master of Arts in Psychology and Counseling offers a traditional curriculum for all learners by concentration, the academic program plan provides an essential opportunity for dialogue and communication to occur between the learner and his/her faculty and advisors regarding professional goals, prior learning, preliminary thesis or final presentation ideas, etc.

Academic Program Plan Guidelines:

1) **Concentration**: The academic field in which you plan to get your degree.

2) **Focus**: The particular area within this field that you are plan on examining in more detail through the course of your program.

3.) **Professional Goals/Objectives**: Indicate clearly what, if any, professional reasons you have for pursuing this degree. Do you, for example, plan on pursuing a state and/or national certification or license to practice? If so, please indicate clearly which ones you hope to earn.

4.) **Background**: In brief, what relevant experiences or formal education do you bring to your graduate studies?

5.) **Courses**: In this section, list the required courses you will complete followed by their descriptions (refer to Department literature for specifics descriptions and required readings) and assigned readings (using the APA bibliographic format).

6.) **Internship**: In this section, describe the internship experiences that will be included in your study.

   - Where
   - What your purpose to do there
   - What supervision you will have
   - Plan to accumulate required hours (refer to track specific information for guidelines)

7. **Thesis (M.A. students) or Final Professional Presentation (CAGS students) Ideas (tentative ideas only)**:

   A. What is the topic you plan to investigate?
   B. What is the major question or questions you propose to investigate?
   C. What methods might you use to investigate this question or questions?
   D. What kinds of evidence might you use in support of your investigation?

8. **Timetable**: What do you do when? Please provide a month-by-month account of your planned studies, including submissions of required comprehensive final exam papers and attendance at required residencies.
9. **Credit Distribution**: Create the final transcript of your academic program plan by listing your courses by semester (and providing the dates for each semester) and assigning the appropriate number of credits to each. As courses are sequenced, consult your advisor before completing this section.

**Academic Program Plan Approval Process**

The development of a solid academic program plan is a rigorous part of our academic process, and you should anticipate numerous revisions in the course of its development. As you learn more and receive suggestions from your advisors, the plan will become more detailed and comprehensive.

Once you and your advisors agree that the academic program plan is complete, submit two copies of your plan to your first core faculty advisor and one to your second core faculty advisor. Your first core faculty advisor will then send your document to a consultant for a final review. This consultant is also a member of the graduate faculty.

Your two core faculty advisors will share the consultant’s comments with you. You and your advisors will discuss the consultant’s comments and decide what, if any, additional modifications to the academic program plan are needed before it can be forwarded to the Graduate Division Head for final approval. The academic program plan needs to be completed and submitted for final approval with the first 90 days of enrollment.

**Amending the Academic Program Plan**

Although the academic program plan does form a “contract” for fulfilling the degree or certificate requirements, with the support of your advisors, this document can be modified. Changes in your internship plan, thesis or final presentation ideas do not necessitate changing your academic program plan, as those activities require independent faculty approval.

Whenever you believe that your plan should be modified, consult your team of advisors. Attaching a typed page, signed by your advisors, to your academic program plan detailing all changes, is all that is necessary to finalize such modifications.