**Services and Operating Policy for the SS/PPS No. 07.01**

**Counseling Center Issue No. 6**

**Revised Date: 03/22/2024**

**Effective Date: 12/01/2022**

**Next Review Date: 12/01/2025 (E3Y)**

**Sr. Reviewer: Director, Counseling Center**

**POLICY STATEMENT**

*Texas State University is committed to ensuring the well-being of its students.*

1. **SCOPE**

01.01 The primary purpose of this policy and procedure statement is to define the services of the Counseling Center and to specify eligibility for and limitations of counseling services provided.

1. **PROCEDURES FOR PROVIDING SERVICES**

02.01 Personal, psychological, and adjustment counseling will be provided, on a short-term basis, by professional counselors, psychologists, or trainees for students who are experiencing personal, emotional, or adjustment problems, which interfere with their ability to perform effectively in their academic courses, or with their ability to live, work, and thrive in a university setting. Counseling will be provided individually, in couples, or in groups depending upon the nature of the student’s presenting concerns, availability of services, and staff determination of appropriate services.

02.02 Prior to receiving services, students will be provided a written explanation of Counseling Center policies regarding the provision of services, confidentiality of services and records, and the student’s rights and responsibilities in the counseling process. The student must sign an informed consent for treatment. This form acknowledges that the student has been informed about the services to be provided and has been afforded the opportunity to give willing consent to participate in these services, in compliance with [Section 465.11 of the Acts and Rules of the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=22&pt=21&ch=465&rl=11) (TSBEP). In urgent or emergent situations, when the client must be seen immediately, a verbal explanation of services should be provided and documented. Informed consent for treatment should be signed as soon as possible and preferably before the student’s next counseling contact with the Counseling Center.

02.03 Students who are under the age of 18 and who are unable to consent to their own services (see [Texas Family Code Section 32.003](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/FA/htm/FA.32.htm)) may be provided crisis services or an initial assessment. However, prior to any additional counseling services, a signed Parental/Guardian Consent form must be submitted to the Counseling Center.

02.04 Psychological, educational, and career assessment services may be provided on a limited basis to:

1. assist students in enhancing self-awareness and to facilitate student growth and development;
2. provide training opportunities in assessment for doctoral interns and post-doctoral residents under supervision;
3. provide testing support for career counseling services provided in the Counseling Center; and
4. support the individual and group counseling process.

02.05 Educational and training workshops and programming dealing with student psychological and emotional concerns, transition issues, and student growth and development issues will be provided on request to academic classes, student groups, and university staff, depending upon the availability of time and professional staff.

02.06 Consultation and training services dealing with managing student psychological and emotional concerns within the academic and university environment are generally provided upon request; however, some training may be limited by the availability of professional staff resources**.**

02.07 In support of the State of Texas’ stated goal of increasing the number of qualified mental health professionals in the workforce, the Counseling Center serves as an internship and practicum site for graduate trainees in psychology, counseling, and related fields. It also provides supervised experience for postdoctoral psychology residents. A designated training director in the Counseling Center will coordinate supervision of postdoctoral residents, doctoral interns, and doctoral- and masters-level practicum students. The training director, with approval of the director, may designate a coordinator of practicum training and coordinator of post-doctoral training.

1. **ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICES**

03.01 Any registered student may be eligible for the services of the Counseling Center during the student’s period of enrollment at Texas State. Eligibility may be subject to policies enforced at the time of the request and may include university fee payments, continued registration at the university, and previous Counseling Center use history. Typically, at minimum, a registered student is eligible to receive an initial assessment, as well as access to crisis services, referral services, and self-help resources.

03.02 Forcouples counseling, both partners must be enrolled at Texas State and registered for classes during the semester in which services are requested. Spouses, family members, and significant others who are not enrolled at Texas State are not eligible for services of the Counseling Center. Courtesy referral assistance may be provided to these individuals upon request of the student and pending available staff resources.

03.03 Texas State faculty and staff who are not enrolled as students at the university are not eligible for clinical services of the Counseling Center. Unless program attendance is limited**,** faculty and staff may be permitted to attend some educational and outreach programs provided by the Counseling Center.

03.04 Eligibility for counseling services begins the first-class day of the student’s first semester of enrollment and registration. Students new to Texas State who have not yet registered for class but who have completed high school and who have a letter of acceptance to the university may be provided limited consultation and referral as staff time permits.

03.05 Former Texas State students who are on suspension from the university are not eligible for the services of the Counseling Center. Consultation will be provided to assist the suspended student in preparing to return to the university on an as time permits basis. Courtesy referral assistance will be provided to suspended students upon request, pending available staff resources.

03.06 Texas State alumni who are not currently enrolled are not eligible for services of the Counseling Center. Courtesy referral assistance will be provided to these individuals upon request, pending available staff resources.

03.07 Any exceptions to eligibility for services must be approved by the director of the Counseling Center, or designee, on a case-by-case basis.

1. **RANGE OF SERVICES**

04.01 The Counseling Center provides short-term counseling to help students deal with personal or psychological concerns so that they may succeed academically at the university. Counseling services are not intended to provide long-term therapy for students with chronic and serious emotional or psychological problems. In accordance with the Center’s [Scope of Practice](https://www.counseling.txst.edu/about-the-counseling-center/scope-of-practice.html), students whose concerns or counseling needs are determined by the clinical staff to be beyond the scope of services provided by the Counseling Center will be referred to appropriate licensed or certified professionals or agencies in the community.

04.02 Students requesting couples counseling who are determined by professional staff to require long-term therapy will be referred to appropriate licensed or certified professionals or in the community.

04.03 Counseling session limits may be established for individual or group counseling services depending upon the Counseling Center’s ability to meet the student demand for services.

1. **CONFIDENTIALITY**

05.01 All aspects of the student’s participation in the counseling process at the Counseling Center, including the scheduling of appointments, content of counseling sessions, content of counseling records, and outcomes of counseling are considered confidential. Confidentiality of counseling will be protected according to the requirements of [Rule 465.38 of the TSBEP Rules and Regulations](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=22&pt=21&ch=465&rl=38) and [Chapter 611, Mental Health Records, 611.001-611.008 of the Texas Health and Safety Code](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/HS/htm/HS.611.htm).

05.02 Faculty and staff who refer students to the Counseling Center by direct communication with the Counseling Center may be notified about whether contact with the referred student has been made; however, this information is shared only with client consent in accordance with confidentiality requirements.

05.03 When a student client poses a clear or potential danger to self or others, law enforcement and medical personnel may be notified about the student’s situation for additional assistance, as needed, without the student’s consent.

1. **PROCEDURES FOR MAINTENANCE OF STUDENT COUNSELING RECORDS**

06.01 Accurate and current records of all psychological services provided directly to students individually or in groups will be maintained in accordance with [Section 465.22 of the TSBEP Rules and Regulations](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=22&pt=21&ch=465&rl=22).

06.02 Official student counseling records consist of clinical information generated by the Counseling Center staff in the course of providing services to a student. These records are typically maintained electronically. The records may include contact and demographic information; mental health history data; test data or profiles obtained as part of the assessment or treatment process; case notes; notes, exercises, or other communications made by the student that the student wishes to have as a part of the record; any completed release of information authorization forms; reports received from other medical, health, or mental health professionals at the consent of the student; and other information related to services received from and the student’s interactions with the Counseling Center. Also available to the Counseling Center staff would be any third-party information and communications from various referral or consultation sources or case records received from other providers.

06.03 Student counseling records will be maintained and disposed of in accordance with the [Texas State Records Retention Schedule](https://www.univarchives.txstate.edu/records/rm-rrs.html).

06.04 Student counseling records are considered confidential. All paper-based records and clinical materials will be maintained in a locked file cabinet in a secure file room when not in use. The file room will always be locked and secured when no staff is in the Counseling Center. Electronic records will be accessed through a restricted access ‘shares’ folder, and information will be housed in a HIPAA compliant MS SQL database. Access to these records will be double password protected. Data are encrypted in transit between the record application and SQL database.

06.05 Student counseling records may only be accessed by students or appropriate third parties in accordance with the requirements of [Chapter 611, Mental Health Records 611.001-611.008](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/HS/htm/HS.611.htm) and [Chapter 181, Medical Records Privacy, of the Texas Health and Safety Code](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/HS/htm/HS.181.htm).

06.06 In general, a student’s counseling record may be released to a third party or accessed by the student upon completion of an authorization to release confidential information form signed by the student or upon receipt of a valid subpoena as reviewed by the university’s Office of General Counsel.

1. On some occasions, a student may request that their counseling record, or a part thereof, be made accessible to a third party who is not a practicing mental health professional (e.g., parent, attorney, or medical practitioner). An authorization form to release, obtain, or exchange confidential information that specifies the third party to whom the record will be made accessible must be signed by the student. Raw test and assessment data as well as references to other persons or personal identities will be redacted prior to giving access to the third party (non-mental health professional). The counselor or director may deny access to any psychotherapy notes portion of the record which are determined as potentially harmful to the client’s physical, mental, or emotional health. In these instances, the Counseling Center will follow the steps outlined in the relevant statute ([Section 611.0045, Texas Health and Safety Code](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/HS/htm/HS.611.htm)).
2. A student counseling record is considered a professional record to be used by the counselor in treatment of the student. A student who wishes access to their counseling record must make a formal request preferably three full working days in advance of when access to the record is desired. Unless the student declines, it is the practice of the Counseling Center that the counselor or a designated clinical staff person meet with the student to review the records and to answer any questions prior to releasing a copy to the student.
   1. Student raw test or assessment data are not considered a part of the student’s counseling record. In accordance with state law, raw test data, including completed answer forms, profiles, and symptom checklists or inventories will not be released as part of the student’s counseling records. Test data and protocols generated by the Counseling Center will be released only to another qualified and licensed mental health professional as requested by the client or in response to a court order or valid subpoena as reviewed by the university’s Office of General Counsel. A counselor may provide a student, at the counselor’s discretion, with a profile for tests measuring career or personality characteristics considered part of the normal range of functioning, for the purpose of career or self-awareness counseling. No test profiles will be released to a student without a counselor providing a test interpretation session prior to the release.
3. **PROCEDURES FOR MAINTENANCE AND STORAGE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS**

07.01 Psychological assessment instruments will be used in accordance with the [Ethical Principles of Psychologists](https://www.apa.org/ethics/code/principles.pdf) published by the American Psychological Association (APA) and the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing published by the American Educational Research Association, APA, and the National Council on Measurement in Education.

07.02 The content of psychological assessment instruments is confidential. Psychological instruments and special testing equipment and components will be stored in a secure storage area.

07.03 Psychological assessments will be administered in the Counseling Center or other university rooms under the supervision of a Counseling Center staff member. Assessments may not be self-administered by students away from the Counseling Center or without professional supervision unless specific approval is given by the director or an associate or assistant director.

1. **PROCEDURES FOR GRADUATE AND POST-GRADUATE TRAINING**

08.01 The Counseling Center will provide internship and practicum opportunities for graduate students in psychology, counseling, or related fields.

08.02 Graduate students must have completed all internship or practicum prerequisite courses in order to be eligible to compete for internships or *practica* at the Texas State Counseling Center.

08.03 Interns, practicum students, and post-doctoral residents will be selected by the Counseling Center staff following established procedures.

08.04 An academic year doctoral or master’s practicum consists of 12-16 hours per week of supervised experience which includes a minimum of one hour per week of individual clinical supervision. Experiences may include individual, group, or couples counseling; career or psychological assessment; training and supervision; and outreach and consultation.

08.05 A doctoral internship consists of one year of full-time supervised experience that includes a minimum of two hours per week of individual clinical supervision by a licensed psychologist and a minimum of two hours of additional training. Experiences may include individual, group, and couples counseling; career and psychological assessment; consultation and outreach; intake and crisis intervention; supervision of practicum students; and training and supervision.

08.06 A post-doctoral psychology residency consists of one year of full-time supervised experience that includes a minimum of two hours per week of individual clinical supervision by a licensed psychologist and additional training experiences tailored to the resident’s needs and interests. Experiences may include individual, group, and couples counseling; career and psychological assessment; consultation and outreach; intake and crisis intervention; supervision of practicum students; and training and supervision of interns.

**09. REVIEWER OF THIS PPS**

09.01 Reviewer of this PPS includes the following:

Position Date

Director, Counseling Center December 1 E3Y

**10. CERTIFICATION STATEMENT**

This PPS has been approved by the following individuals in their official capacities and represents Texas State Student Success policy and procedure from the date of this document until superseded.

Director, Counseling Center; senior reviewer of this PPS

Vice President for Student Success