

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN COUNSELING
GRADUATE CANDIDATE GUIDE

MS IN COUNSELING WITH SCHOOL COUNSELOR CERTIFICATION

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MS IN COUNSELING WITH LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR PREPARATION

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SCHOOL COUNSELOR CERTIFICATION

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LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR PREPARATION

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The Counseling Program is structured upon the realization that preparation as a professional counselor requires a continuous blend of three types of learning: academic learning, experiential learning and learning about self. The curriculum is designed to help candidates gain knowledge, understanding and skills in a planned sequence that builds toward more advanced concepts.

ACADEMIC LEARNING OVERVIEW

Completion of initial coursework ensures that beginning candidates have fundamental knowledge of the range of normal human growth and development. The professional education core extends knowledge to include an understanding of the range of exceptionalities among young people and/or adults and a sensitive understanding of the nature of our pluralistic society. Within the professional education core, candidates also learn to conduct and evaluate research, become informed consumers of the research in their professional field and possess basic computer utilization skills. In the counseling core, candidates are introduced to the counseling profession and through subsequent core coursework; candidates acquire specialized knowledge, skills and understanding about career development and counseling, appraisal and assessment techniques, group process in counseling, counseling theory and legal, ethical and professional issues in counseling.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OVERVIEW

Laboratory or experiential learning is provided early in the program and opportunities to advance and refine counseling skills continue throughout the program. One of the introductory counseling core courses systematically teaches basic counseling skills and provides candidates an opportunity to assess their comfort with the role of the counselor. The Pre-Practicum course builds upon this foundation and presents an opportunity for advanced skill development. The group counseling course, also taught by laboratory method, enables candidates to learn group leadership and facilitation skills. Other courses in the counseling core contain experiential components to ensure the continuous blend of the three types of learning. The laboratory learning sequence culminates in the Practicum and Internship. The entire sequence provides opportunities for candidates to observe counseling activities, develop counseling skills and interact with clients with continuous feedback and supervision and assists each candidate to develop a unique and effective personal counseling style.

LEARNING ABOUT SELF OVERVIEW

The faculty believes that it is essential for candidates to examine their own values, personal characteristics, motivations and relationships with others. Candidates are expected to extend their personal philosophies and become sensitive to their outlooks and ways of dealing with others. Opportunities are provided throughout the program for candidates to maximize their self-awareness and self-understanding. The faculty supports the American Counseling Association's position that self-understanding contributes to personal and professional maturity as well as to the capacity for good judgment.

Sometimes unresolved personal issues pose potential hurdles for counselors. As the candidate and the professors work closely together, these issues often come to the surface. Professors may ask the candidate to attend personal counseling sessions, do additional reflective journaling, or attend personal growth seminars in order to resolve these issues. If a professor believes a candidate's unresolved issues are so pressing as to interfere in the candidate's progress or could potentially cause harm to clients or other candidates, the candidate could be administratively withdrawn or withheld from further registration until a plan is developed that will address these issues.

Finally, the faculty believes that personal and professional development are enhanced when close, cooperative relationships exist between candidates, between candidates and professors and among the professors. This need to maintain close relationships, to provide quality clinical or laboratory training and to enhance self-understanding combine to require that class size and program size be limited to the number of candidates that can be adequately served.

ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES

There are 2 separate applications necessary for acceptance into the Counseling Program. One is for admittance into the university and the other is for admittance into the Counseling Program.

Admission into the university requires a submitted application (available online at www.uhcl.edu/admissions) and a submitted application fee of \$35. Transcripts from all institutions attended must be submitted as well as a recent (less than 5 years old) Graduate Record Examination (GRE) score.

Admission into the Counseling Program requires a complete application packet. The packet materials are available online at www.uhcl.edu/soe, click on "programs" and then "COUN" or they can be obtained in person on campus in room B1231. Packet materials include the application form, resume, essay, GRE scores, transcripts, 3 professional recommendations and a self-rating sheet.

The Counseling Program admits new cohorts in the fall and spring semesters of each year. The application deadline for fall admittance is June 1 and the application deadline for spring admittance is October 1. If these deadlines fall on a weekend or holiday, the deadline is the close of business on the following business day. Completed application packets are forwarded to the admissions committee after each deadline. Selected applicants are contacted for an on-campus faculty interview. Admission decisions are made following these interviews and the applicants are notified by letter and email.

Late applications are not accepted.

Incomplete applications are not forwarded to the admissions committee.

PROGRAM PARAMETERS

Candidates seeking the Master of Science degree in Counseling may, depending on their career goals, select degree plans that meet the academic qualifications for the Texas School Counselor Certificate or for the Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). To be eligible for the School Counselor Certificate, candidates must hold a valid Texas teaching certificate, obtain a passing score on the School Counselor State Assessment Exam (TExES test) and document 2 years of successful teaching experience in a TEA approved public school.

Candidates who wish to pursue the LPC after graduation must hold a Master's degree in counseling or a counseling-related field with a minimum of 48 hours, document 3 years or 3000 clock hours of post-master's degree supervised counseling experience and pass the National Counselor Examination and the Texas Jurisprudence Exam.

Candidates, who hold a master's degree already, may apply to the program and pursue only certification.

Course work used to fulfill degree requirements must be 5 years old or less at the time of graduation.

COURSE SEQUENCE

Candidates entering the counseling program will be placed in a cohort and given a sequential schedule for completion of their plan of study. A cohort is determined by program entry date along with course delivery location. There are 3 possible locations which are UHCL campus, Pearland and Alief. Candidates must remain within their cohort throughout their program or request to transfer into a different cohort. Candidates will be given the schedule for their cohort as a reference point for progress towards completion of their degree. Candidates are strongly discouraged from taking coursework outside their cohort.

The Practicum/Internship sequence is designed to provide a capstone or culminating experience and therefore taken in the last 2 semesters of the program. This sequence

provides an opportunity for candidates to apply the skills, knowledge and understanding they have acquired during their course of study, under direct supervision with bona fide clients. All Practicum and Internship candidates must submit a separate application by the appropriate deadline allowing for an audit process prior to enrollment in these courses. Practicum candidates counsel with clients under close, direct supervision in the field placement. Candidates are expected to enroll in Internship during the semester immediately following the Practicum enrollment. Under no circumstances will the Practicum and Internship courses be taken in the same semester. These courses are offered in the fall and spring semesters only.

CANDIDATE PLAN OF STUDY

Candidates will receive a degree plan from the faculty at the program orientation meeting. The candidate will be contacted by the Academic Advising Office when it is ready for the candidate signature.

GRADUATION PROCEDURES FOR DEGREE-SEEKING CANDIDATES

In order to graduate, candidates must submit an application for graduation online at www.uhcl.edu, click on "students" and then "academic records". The graduation application fee must also be submitted. These items must be received prior to published deadlines for that semester. Late applications will not be accepted.

Graduation applications must be submitted in order for a degree to be conferred in that semester. Application submission does not guarantee degree conferral.

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

For more information on the **School Counselor** certification please visit the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) website at www.sbec.state.tx.us.

For more information about the **Licensed Professional Counselor** certification process after graduation, please visit http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/counselor/lpc_apply.shtm. A written request for applications and information can be sent to

Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors
1100 W. 49th Street
Austin, TX 78756-3183