

**Counselor Education Program Frequently Asked Questions**

The following are frequently asked questions and should help orient you as you begin the program:

* *What is the office phone number? Hours?*

The office phone number is 225-578-2197. Office hours are 10:00 to 4:30 Monday through Friday. Professors' office hours are posted on their doors, but it is best to call for an appointment to meet with professors or your faculty advisor.

* *What can I do with a Master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling?*

Graduates of this program may be employed in: public and private mental health settings; private practice; counseling in hospital settings; personal, academic, and career counseling in university settings; substance abuse treatment centers; crisis intervention programs; child protection services; and employee assistance programs. Graduates are trained and gain experience in providing individual, family, and/or group counseling services.

* *What are the differences between a Master's in Counseling and Social Work or Psychology?* There are differences in the course requirements and the practicum/internships for all three programs. They also differ in the program orientation and emphasis. One area of emphasis in the counseling curriculum is the development of clinical counseling skills; whereas an emphasis in social work is on enhancing and coordinating community services to meet individual or family needs. Psychology focuses primarily on abnormality, illness, or disease. Graduates of all three programs often seek the same kinds of employment positions.
* *What can I do with a Master's degree in School Counseling?*

Graduates of this program meet the requirements for certification by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to serve as school counselors in grades K - 12.

* *How much time do I have to complete this program?*

Most students finish within two to three years. You must revalidate courses that are more than five years old.

* *Do I have to maintain a certain grade point average? What happens if I fall below that?* Minimum GPA while in the Graduate School is 3.0. If you fall below this minimum, you are placed on probation by the Graduate School for one semester to bring your GPA back up to a minimum of 3.0.
* *Does it matter in which order I take courses?*

Yes, because courses are only offered one time per year. Your first meeting with your faculty advisor will include an overview of the program and suggestions on how to sequence your courses. It is important to consult with your faculty advisor periodically to remain up to date on changes regarding course offerings and departmental and university policies.

* *How can I specialize in a particular area of counseling?*

There are four elective cognates that are offered: Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC; for School Counseling students; Clinical Mental Health Counseling students automatically meet the academic requirements for licensure by nature of their required coursework), Special Populations (School or Clinical Mental Health Counseling students), Applied Behavioral Analysis (School or Clinical Mental Health Counseling students), and Child and Adolescent Counseling (Clinical Mental Health Counseling students). You may also focus classroom assignments (readings, papers, field experiences) in a special area of interest. Another option is the post master’s Specialist Certificate, which is a planned program (12 hours beyond your Master’s hours) in which you take additional coursework in your area of counseling interest. We also offer special topics courses such as Girls’ and Women’s Issues.

* *Will I be a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) when I graduate?*

Students who complete the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program meet all of the academic course work and supervised experience requirements for licensure. However, there are additional requirements. Following graduation, you will need to apply for licensure through the LPC Board of Examiners, complete a minimum of two years supervised experience, and pass a board exam. Information on licensure is covered in Introduction to Counseling Services (ELRC 4602).

* *Do I have to do a Master’s thesis?*

No, though some students choose to do an independent study, which might involve research in a particular area of interest. These are arranged on an individual basis with a professor and are neither required nor always available to all graduate students.

* *What is a Practicum? An Internship?*

A practicum is a supervised clinical field experience in which you work directly with clients in an agency or school setting. Practicum is only offered in the Fall and is usually scheduled in your third year and typically requires about 10 hours per week on-site. Practicum sites must be approved by your faculty advisor. During practicum, you must complete a minimum of 40 direct client contact hours. You will receive supervision from your faculty supervisor, on-site supervision, and will attend a Practicum class (ELRC 7362 or 7364) once a week for additional supervision. The focus of this class is on the development of counseling skills.

Internship is an additional clinical field experience and is usually taken the last spring semester of your program. Internship is a full time clinical experience, requiring a total of 600 hours on-site, of which 240 must be direct client contact hours. Again, you will receive

on-site supervision and will attend an Internship class (ELRC 7399) once a week for additional supervision. A full time internship is a 6 credit-hour class.

Internship is intended to provide an intensive field experience that reflects the work experiences and responsibilities of a professional counselor. Students are placed at approved school or community counseling sites which allow them to engage in a range of counseling activities relevant to their program of study (i.e., school or mental health counseling). The majority of students find it necessary to adjust their work schedules to accommodate their clinical field experiences.

* *What kind of financial aid is available?*

Scholarships and assistantships are available through Counselor Education and other departments at LSU. Grants, loans, and other sources of assistance are available through the Financial Aid Office. The Graduate School also has information on financial aid specifically for graduate students.

* *What professional and student organizations are available and how do I join?*

Chi Sigma Iota Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society International has an active LSU chapter for counseling students and alumni. Students also are encouraged to join the American Counseling Association and the Louisiana Counseling Association. ACA and LCA offer special student membership and insurance rates. Information regarding these groups is available in the counseling office or through your faculty advisor.

* *Where can I find information regarding student evaluations of the program and faculty?* Summaries of exit interviews, course evaluations, and graduate/employer surveys are kept on file in the Counselor Education office in 122 Peabody Hall.
* *What are "COMPS” or the comprehensive examination? When do I take them? How do I prepare?*

The Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE) is the comprehensive examination required for graduation and is taken in your last semester. This is a 160 question multiple choice exam that assesses the student’s knowledge of core areas of counseling. Your advisor will go over the exam format and procedures with you and provide you with references to relevant study materials. You must apply to take the comprehensive examination by the graduate school deadline. Check with your faculty advisor or look for announcements posted in the counselor education offices to find out the specific date, time, and place. The application form to take the COMPS exam and your application form for graduation should be turned in to the Counselor Education office in a timely manner to allow for processing in order to meet the Graduate School deadline.

Check with your faculty advisor for more information.