

# Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling

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NEIU's Counseling Department strives to remain committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout our scholarship, service, advocacy, leadership, mentorship, and teaching. Therefore, we seek candidates who advocate for social justice and antiracist policies, and utilize culturally relevant teaching, clinical practice, research, and service. We are dedicated to preparing counselors who are leaders and advocates in social justice and who will provide professional counseling services to adults, children, youth, individuals, couples, groups, and families.

The Department of Counselor Education offers a 60-credit hour program (20 courses) leading to the Master of Arts in Counseling: Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC). This degree fulfills the educational requirements for the two levels of licensure as professional counselors in the State of Illinois: Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC).

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program at NEIU delivers a comprehensive academic curriculum and supervised clinical experiences that integrate the standards of CACREP. CMHC students will demonstrate understanding of foundational knowledge, contextual dimensions, and competence in clinical mental health counseling practice with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds who seek counseling for a wide array of clinical issues. The NEIU CMHC program emphasizes social justice, advocacy, and structural competence, particularly to affect systemic change and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling program is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Find out more information at Counselor Education accreditation, licensures, and credentialing (<https://www.neiu.edu/academics/college-of-education/departments/counselor-education/accreditation-licensure-and-credentialing/>).

## Admission Requirements

Counselor Education admits students twice a year, in January and August. The deadline to submit a complete application for the program for the spring term is Aug. 15. The deadline to apply for the fall term is March 15. Counselor Education deadline dates differ from other Northeastern M.A. program deadline dates.

Applicants can apply to the program through NEIU's online application system (<https://apply.neiu.edu/apply/>). The online application requires submission of the following:

- Application form
- Application fee
- Official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended
- Two recommenders (applicants will be prompted to enter contact information for 2 professional recommenders)
- Current resume
- Signed informed consent
- An Essay (500-700 words or less), typed and double-spaced (instructions provided in the application).

Application materials will be evaluated in regard to an applicant's academic aptitude, relevance of career goals, cultural competence, and potential for fostering therapeutic relationships. Applicants who meet the minimum requirements in their specific program (i.e., Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Couple and Family Counseling, School Counseling, Rehabilitation Counseling) will be invited to attend a Pre-admission Workshop (PAW). The PAW involves applicants participating in a series of group discussions facilitated by Counselor Education faculty. Dates and times to attend a PAW session are available on Slate.

## MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM

- Graduate Admissions and Records has established a minimum grade point average of 2.75 for undergraduate degrees. Applicants with undergraduate GPAs below 2.75 will not be admitted. Applicants who have earned a graduate degree from an accredited university are exempt from this requirement.
- Problematic or poor performance during the PAW will make an applicant ineligible for admission.
- Meeting the minimum academic requirements is no guarantee of admission.
- Admission to the Counselor Education Department is competitive. It is possible for an otherwise acceptable applicant to be denied admission due to the competitive strength of the applicant pool. The number of applicants that can be admitted to the program is limited. Those not selected for admission may reapply only once.

## ADMISSION DECISIONS

Admission decisions are based on the following:

- Relevance of career goals
- Aptitude for graduate-level study

- Potential success in forming effective counseling relationships
- Respect for cultural differences

## Eligibility to Enroll in Classes

Once applicants are officially admitted to a program, they may register for classes during online registration periods. Those who have not yet been reviewed for selection may take only one course before being admitted: COUN 401 Professional Orientation and Legal/Ethical Practices. If an applicant is formally accepted into the program, the credits for the course will count towards their degree requirements. However, taking a course as a student-at-large does not guarantee admission to the program. Applicants admitted to the fall semester may begin taking classes in the summer semester.

The Department of Counselor Education allows non-degree-seeking students to take courses as a student-at-large under certain circumstances, such as completing deficiencies for licensure. To request approval to take a course as a non-degree seeking student, please click on the following link and complete the form: <https://www.neiu.edu/academics/college-of-education/content/permission-take-courses-counselor-education-student-large>. We will contact you with an answer within five working days of receiving your form.

Authorization to enroll in courses as a non-degree seeking student in Counselor Education does not constitute admission to any of the Department's programs. Students who wish to pursue a master's degree in counseling must submit a formal application to Graduate Admissions. Non-degree seeking students can enroll only in courses for which they have been authorized by this Department. Some of the courses in the Department are not open to non-degree seeking students.

## Clinical Mental Health Counseling

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program requires completion of 60-credit hours (20 courses):

| Code   | Title   | Hours     |
|--|---|-----------|
| <b>Clinical Mental Health Counseling required courses:</b> |   |           |
| COUN-401   | Professional Orientation & Legal/Ethical Practices                | 3         |
| COUN-402   | Developmental Counseling  | 3         |
| COUN-403   | Theories Of Counseling  | 3         |
| COUN-404   | Assessment And Evaluation In Counseling                           | 3         |
| COUN-405   | Individual Counseling Skills                                      | 3         |
| COUN-406   | Group Counseling  | 3         |
| COUN-407   | Advanced Clinical Mental Health Counseling                        | 3         |
| COUN-408   | Research Seminar  | 3         |
| COUN-409   | Career Development  | 3         |
| COUN-415   | Children And Youth In School And Family Systems                   | 3         |
| COUN-420   | Introduction To Family Counseling                                 | 3         |
| COUN-425   | Diagnosis And Treatment Of Addictive Disorders                    | 3         |
| COUN-427   | Diagnostic Systems For Counseling                                 | 3         |
| COUN-429   | Psychopharmacology  | 3         |
| COUN-430   | Social & Cultural Diversity In Counseling                         | 3         |
| COUN-438   | Trauma And Crisis Counseling                                      | 3         |
| COUN-439   | Case Conceptualization & Treatment Planning                       | 3         |
| COUN-444   | Practicum: Group Supervision In Clinical Mental Health Counseling | 3         |
| COUN-464   | Internship I: Clinical Mental Health Counseling                   | 3         |
| COUN-474   | Internship II: Clinical Mental Health Counseling                  | 3         |
| <b>Total Hours</b>   |   | <b>60</b> |

## PROGRAM COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

Clinical Mental Health Counseling students must complete all course requirements, successfully pass each transition level, and meet the graduation requirements.

### PROGRAM TRANSITION LEVELS:

Students must successfully complete all the program transition levels. Students cannot obtain more than two grades of "C" in graduate work as per the College of Graduate Studies and Research Policy. Students are required to earn a grade of "B" or better in their clinical courses (e.g., COUN 405, COUN 406, Practicum and Internship).

## TRANSITION LEVEL I

- Successful completion of prerequisites for clinical skills training courses
- Completion of first-semester student survey
- Demonstration of appropriate professional and ethical behaviors and dispositions
- Minimum GPA of 3.00
- Passing key program assessments for level I

## TRANSITION LEVEL II

- Successful completion of clinical skills training coursework
- Demonstration of appropriate professional and ethical behaviors and dispositions
- Minimum GPA of 3.00
- Satisfactory rating on professional disposition evaluation
- Complete the Practicum application and submit to the Coordinator for Clinical Experiences
- Passing key program assessments for level II

## TRANSITION LEVEL III

- Successful completion of clinical experiences including Practicum and Internship
- Completion of minimum of 100 hours of Practicum
- Completion of minimum 600 hours of Internship
- Satisfactory ratings on all evaluations from site and university supervisors
- Demonstration of appropriate professional and ethical behaviors and dispositions
- Minimum GPA of 3.00
- Passing key program assessments for level III

## TRANSITION LEVEL IV

- Completion of student exit survey
- Passing of the departmental proficiency examination (DPE) prior to graduation

## EXIT REQUIREMENTS FOR DEGREE COMPLETION:

- Successful completion of all transition levels and required credit hours
- Minimum GPA of 3.00

## Clinical Experience

During the fall semester of the year before planning to do Practicum/Internship, students meet with their advisor to review readiness for Practicum and to sign the application form. Applications for clinical experience are distributed at the mandatory Practicum Orientation meeting or may be printed from the forms tab of the Department website. Applications for Practicum/Internship are due November 1 for fall placements of the following year. Students must attend a mandatory orientation meeting before submitting the application form. The date and the place of the orientation meeting are posted on the Department website, listserv, and Departmental bulletin boards. All applications must be reviewed and signed by the student's advisor. The student may then submit the signed application and the student's resume to the Coordinator of Clinical Experiences.

Practicum and Internship consists of 700 hours of documented field-related experience, of which 280 hours of face-to-face counseling is required. COUN 444 Practicum: Ethical/Legal Issues in Mental Health Counseling is a 100-hour, field-based experience requiring a minimum of 40 hours of direct contact with clients. COUN 464 Internship I: Mental Health Counseling and COUN 474 Internship II: Mental Health Counseling together consist of a 600-hour, field-based experience requiring a minimum of 240 hours of clinical contact with clients.

## Departmental Proficiency Examination (DPE)

Prior to graduation, all students are required to pass a comprehensive examination. The DPE application (<https://www.neiu.edu/sites/neiu.edu/files/migrated-education-body/documents/2014/11/DPE-application-11-2014.pdf>) must be completed and signed by the student and their advisor and submitted to the Department of Counselor Education no later than two weeks prior to the exam date. Students in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program may take the examination after completion of 30 credit hours of coursework including, but not limited to:

| Code     | Title  | Hours |
|----------|--|-------|
| COUN-401 | Professional Orientation & Legal/Ethical Practices | 3     |
| COUN-402 | Developmental Counseling                           | 3     |
| COUN-403 | Theories Of Counseling                             | 3     |
| COUN-404 | Assessment And Evaluation In Counseling            | 3     |

|          |   |   |
|----------|---|---|
| COUN-405 | Individual Counseling Skills              | 3 |
| COUN-406 | Group Counseling                          | 3 |
| COUN-408 | Research Seminar                          | 3 |
| COUN-409 | Career Development                        | 3 |
| COUN-427 | Diagnostic Systems For Counseling         | 3 |
| COUN-430 | Social & Cultural Diversity In Counseling | 3 |

**Total Hours** **30**

## Notification of Student Recess

Once having begun the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program, if a student does not attend classes for more than two consecutive semesters (Fall, Spring, Summer), the student must notify the College of Graduate Studies and Research and their program advisor regarding intent to continue in the program. The Department reserves the right to review the student's course work upon reentry by the student and to require that certain courses be repeated if necessary. Students have a maximum of six years in which to complete their degree programs.

*This sample curricular map is provided to guide program planning for graduate students who plan to attend as full-time students. This guide should not replace regular consultations with your program advisor. For specific recommendations of courses not identified, please consult your program advisor. Please note that students may choose to attend either full-time or part-time, depending on their need.*

*The Plans of Study for the programs in Counselor Education should be used as general guidelines for the completion of courses. These plans suggest how a student might complete a program in two calendar years by beginning in the fall semester and attending through two summer semesters. There are many factors that affect how students complete their programs, including whether they begin in the fall or spring semesters and whether they attend full-time or part-time.*

*All students in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program have a mandatory orientation at the beginning of their program and have a faculty advisor who will help in the planning of each student's course of study.*

### First Year

| Term 1            |   | Hours    |
|-------------------|---|----------|
| COUN-401          | Professional Orientation<br>Legal/Ethical Practices | 3        |
| COUN-403          | Theories Of Counseling                              | 3        |
| COUN-430          | Social Cultural Diversity<br>In Counseling          | 3        |
| <b>Term Hours</b> |   | <b>9</b> |
| <b>Term 2</b>     |   |          |
| COUN-402          | Developmental<br>Counseling                         | 3        |
| COUN-404          | Assessment And<br>Evaluation In Counseling          | 3        |
| COUN-405          | Individual Counseling<br>Skills                     | 3        |
| <b>Term Hours</b> |   | <b>9</b> |
| <b>Term 3</b>     |   |          |
| COUN-409          | Career Development                                  | 3        |
| COUN-420          | Introduction To Family<br>Counseling                | 3        |
| <b>Term Hours</b> |   | <b>6</b> |

### Second Year

| Term 1            |   | Hours    |
|-------------------|---|----------|
| COUN-406          | Group Counseling                                      | 3        |
| COUN-427          | Diagnostic Systems For<br>Counseling                  | 3        |
| COUN-438          | Trauma And Crisis<br>Counseling                       | 3        |
| <b>Term Hours</b> |   | <b>9</b> |
| <b>Term 2</b>     |   |          |
| COUN-407          | Advanced Clinical Mental<br>Health Counseling         | 3        |
| COUN-415          | Children And Youth<br>In School And Family<br>Systems | 3        |

|                     |  |           |
|---------------------|--|-----------|
| COUN-439            | Case Conceptualization<br>Treatment Planning                               | 3         |
| <b>Term Hours</b>   |  | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>Term 3</b>       |  |           |
| COUN-425            | Diagnosis And Treatment<br>Of Addictive Disorders                          | 3         |
| COUN-429            | Psychopharmacology   | 3         |
| <b>Term Hours</b>   |  | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Third Year</b>   |  |           |
| <b>Term 1</b>       |  |           |
| COUN-408            | Research Seminar   | 3         |
| COUN-444            | Practicum: Group<br>Supervision In<br>Clinical Mental Health<br>Counseling | 3         |
| <b>Term Hours</b>   |  | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Term 2</b>       |  |           |
| COUN-464            | Internship I: Clinical<br>Mental Health<br>Counseling                      | 3         |
| <b>Term Hours</b>   |  | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Term 3</b>       |  |           |
| COUN-474            | Internship II: Clinical<br>Mental Health<br>Counseling                     | 3         |
| <b>Term Hours</b>   |  | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Total Hours:</b> |  | <b>60</b> |