

Master of Arts in Couple & Family Counseling

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 Couple & Family Counseling, M.A., offered through the Department of Counselor Education, fulfills the educational requirements for the two levels of licensure as a Professional Counselor and Marriage and Family Therapist in the State of Illinois: Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC), and Associate Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (ALMFT) and the Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT). Graduates of this program also meet the educational requirements for Clinical Membership in the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. The Couple and Family Counseling program is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) through the year 2024. In addition, the program's graduate students are eligible to sit for the National Counselor Examination (NCE) during their last year of study. A passing score on the NCE is one of the requirements for the LPC or LCPC. Graduates from the Couple and Family Counseling Program are eligible to sit for the AMFTRB National Marriage and Family Therapist Exam upon application for the ALMFT credential, a requirement for the Illinois LMFT.

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 and applying for licensure directly through ISBE or a Regional Office of Education. To request approval to take a course as a non-degree seeking student, please click on the following link and complete: form (<https://www.neiu.edu/academics/daniel-l-goodwin-college-of-education/departments/counselor-education/permission-take-courses-counselor-education-non-degree-seeking-student/>)

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.

Minimum Standards for 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 unless their overall application suggests areas of exceptionalism. Applicants who have earned M.A. degrees are exempt from this requirement:

- Problematic or poor performance during the PAW will make an applicant ineligible for admission.
- Meeting the minimum 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.
- Applicants with undergraduate GPA below 2.75 may consider submitting GRE scores with a verbal reasoning and analytical writing scores within the 50th percentile as a measure of exceptionalism.

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/>).

Curriculum in Couple & Family Counseling

Couple & Family Counseling requires a minimum of 60-credit hours (20 courses):

| 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-415 | Children And Youth In School And Family Systems | 3 |
| COUN-420 | Introduction To Family Counseling | 3 |
| COUN-421 | Advanced Couple And Family Counseling | 3 |
| COUN-425 | Diagnosis And Treatment Of Addictive Disorders | 3 |
| COUN-427 | Diagnostic Systems For Counseling | 3 |
| COUN-430 | Social & Cultural Diversity In Counseling | 3 |

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| COUN-431 | Couple And Family Systems Study | 3 |
| COUN-432 | Couples Counseling And Human Sexuality | 3 |
| COUN-445 | Practicum I:Group Supervision In Couple And Family Counseling | 3 |
| COUN-465 | Internship I:Group Supervision In Couple And Family Counseling | 3 |
| COUN-475 | Internship II:Group Supervision In Couple And Family Counseling | 3 |
| Elective #1 (Consult with faculty advisor) | | 3 |

Total Hours **60**

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.

Applications for Practicum/Internship are due each fall for placements in fall 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 approved by the student's advisor. Applications are then reviewed by the Coordinator of Clinical Experiences.

Practicum and Internship consist of 700 hours of documented field-related experience, during which a cumulative 300 hours of face-to-face counseling is required. COUN 445 Practicum: Family Counseling is a 100-hour, field-based experience requiring a minimum of 40 hours of direct contact with clients. COUN 465 Internship I: Family Counseling and COUN 475 Internship II: Family Counseling together consist of a 600-hour, field-based experience requiring a minimum of 240 hours of clinical contact with clients. A minimum of 150 of these clinical contact hours must be counseling couples and/or families.

Departmental Proficiency Examination (DPE)

Prior to graduation, 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 the Family Counseling program may take the examination after completion of 36 credit hours of the following coursework:

| 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-415 | Children And Youth In School And Family Systems | 3 |
| COUN-420 | Introduction To Family Counseling | 3 |
| COUN-421 | Advanced Couple And Family Counseling | 3 |
| COUN-430 | Social & Cultural Diversity In Counseling | 3 |
| Total Hours | | 36 |

PROGRAM TRANSITION LEVELS:

Students must successfully complete all the program transition levels. Students are required to earn a grade of "B" or better in their clinical courses (e.g., COUN 405, COUN 406, Practicum and Internship).

Students are also required to maintain good academic standing, in accordance with university graduate policies (<http://catalog.neiu.edu/graduate-studies-research/graduate-policies/>), which can be found in the Academic Catalog in the section of the College of Graduate Studies and Research.

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

Please make note of this important change: The DPE is offered once each semester: Fall, Spring, and Summer. The dates are subject to change. All degree-seeking counselor education students are required to successfully pass the DPE to graduate. See the Counselor Education Current Student Resources Webpage (<https://www.neiu.edu/academics/daniel-l-goodwin-college-of-education/departments/counselor-education/current-student-resources/>) for the most recent and accurate dates and instructions.

This sample curricular map is provided to guide program planning for graduate students in the Family Counseling program. 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 Family 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.

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|-------------------|---|-------------------|
| First Year | | |
| Term 1 | | |
| COUN-401 | Professional Orientation Legal/Ethical Practices | 3 |
| COUN-402 | Developmental Counseling | 3 |
| COUN-403 | Theories Of Counseling | 3 |
| | | Term Hours |
| | | 9 |
| Term 2 | | |
| COUN-405 | Individual Counseling Skills | 3 |
| COUN-420 | Introduction To Family Counseling | 3 |

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|--|---|-----------|
| COUN-430 | Social Cultural Diversity In Counseling | 3 |
| Term Hours | | 9 |
| Term 3 | | |
| COUN-406 | Group Counseling | 3 |
| COUN-427 | Diagnostic Systems For Counseling | 3 |
| COUN-432 | Couples Counseling And Human Sexuality | 3 |
| Term Hours | | 9 |
| Second Year | | |
| Term 1 | | |
| COUN-409 | Career Development | 3 |
| COUN-415 | Children And Youth In School And Family Systems | 3 |
| COUN-431 | Couple And Family Systems Study | 3 |
| Term Hours | | 9 |
| Term 2 | | |
| COUN-421 | Advanced Couple And Family Counseling | 3 |
| COUN-404 | Assessment And Evaluation In Counseling | 3 |
| Elective #1 (Consult with faculty advisor) | | 3 |
| Term Hours | | 9 |
| Term 3 | | |
| COUN-425 | Diagnosis And Treatment Of Addictive Disorders | 3 |
| COUN-408 | Research Seminar | 3 |
| Term Hours | | 6 |
| Third Year | | |
| Term 1 | | |
| COUN-445 | Practicum I:Group Supervision In Couple And Family Counseling | 3 |
| Term Hours | | 3 |
| Term 2 | | |
| COUN-465 | Internship I:Group Supervision In Couple And Family Counseling | 3 |
| Term Hours | | 3 |
| Term 3 | | |
| COUN-475 | Internship II:Group Supervision In Couple And Family Counseling | 3 |
| Term Hours | | 3 |
| Total Hours: | | 60 |