

Master of Arts in Counseling

The Counselor Education Program within the College of Education at the University of New Mexico offers both Master's and Doctoral degrees in Counseling that are accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The Master's degree requires a minimum of 54 semester credit hours of course work and is designed for students to develop the requisite competencies for a career as a professional counselor. Specialties in Community/Agency Counseling and School Counseling are currently available. The Master's degree program currently meets the preparatory standards for eligibility for licensure as a counselor in New Mexico and State Board of Education certification as a school counselor.

The Counselor Education Program Purpose and Aspirations

Consistent with the goals and visions of the College of Education, the Counselor Education Program is committed to promoting excellence and diversity in teaching, scholarship, and community service. The program features an integration of theory, research, and practice and interdisciplinary collaboration that is intended to prepare counselors who are informed, who will be sensitive to the diversity and uniqueness of individuals, families, and communities, and who will value and promote the dignity, potential and well-being of all people.

The program seeks to graduate competent counselors who have a firm grasp of the foundation and theory of counseling practice, skills in appraisal and intervention, an appreciation for diversity and the needs of a multicultural society, and an understanding of the variety of social and ecological factors that advance people's mental health. In particular, our aspiration is for our students to acquire knowledge and skills in the 8 core competency areas that include: human growth and development, social and cultural foundations of counseling practice, helping relationships, working with groups, career and lifestyle development, appraisal, research and program evaluation, and professional issues.

Courses Offered

The Counselor Education Program offers a variety of required and elective courses. Many of our students take many more than the required 54 hours of course work. Our core courses are those courses that comprise the basic skills and professional knowledge necessary to function as a professional counselor. We offer four prerequisite courses that must be taken before you take other counseling courses. They should be taken in the following order:

COUN 520 Foundations of Counseling
COUN 530 Dynamics of Human Behavior
COUN 517 Theories of Counseling
COUN 518 Group Counseling

The remainder of the core required courses are:

COUN 522 Communication Skills in Counseling¹
COUN 545 School Counseling² and/or
COUN 593/521 Community/Agency Counseling³
COUN 584 Multicultural Issues in the Helping Professions
COUN 590 Practicum in Counseling
COUN 519 Practicum in Group Counseling
COUN 595 Field Practicum (Internship)
COUN 576 Diagnosis of Mental Disorders

COUN 610 Professional Issues and Ethics

Other required courses:

COUN 513 Career Counseling
COUN 515 Testing and Assessment in Counseling
EdPy 503 Principles of Human Development **OR**
FS 503 Human Growth and Development

EdPy 500 Survey of Research Methods in Education **OR**
EdPy 505 Conducting Quantitative Educational Research
EdPy 502 Survey of Statistics in Education **OR**
EdPy 511 Introduction to Educational Statistics

Our elective courses include:

COUN 525 Experiential Counseling
COUN 541 Counseling Children & Adolescents
COUN 560 Family Counseling
COUN Sexuality in Counseling and Psychotherapy

¹ Prerequisite for Practicum, Group Practicum, and Field Practicum (Internship)

² Required for those seeking school counseling credentials and intending to do a school internship

³ Required for those seeking community/agency counseling credentials and intending to do a community/agency internship

Taking Courses as a Non-Degree Student

Qualified students are permitted to take graduate counseling courses as a non-degree student with permission of the instructor. Up to four courses taken as a non-degree student can be applied to the Master's degree if a student is subsequently accepted into the program. We recommend that non-degree students take 520, 530, 517, 518 sequence of prerequisites.

Application and Admission Procedures

To apply to the Master's of Arts in Counseling program contact the Counselor Education Program by calling (505) 277-4535, or email a request for application materials to divbse@unm.edu. An application packet will be sent to you that includes an instruction sheet from the Office of Admissions which instructs you how to apply to Graduate Studies. Please carefully follow the instructions contained on the information sheet. The application packet will also include a Counselor Education Program application form. This application form requires a description of previous college course work, employment history, three references, and a personal statement/letter of intent. The Master's degree application does not require the GREs/ Application deadlines are **September 15th** for students planning to matriculate in the Spring, and **February 15th** for those wishing to matriculate in the Fall semester. Students are admitted for the semester for which they are accepted. Deferring admissions requires entire program faculty approval. **Application deadlines are firm. Only those applications that are complete will be reviewed. No Exceptions. We recommend you submit both Admissions and Program application materials at least two weeks before the deadline dates to ensure the processing of your application.**

It is your responsibility to ensure that all application materials have been received and are on file in Simpson Hall. You may check on the status of your application by calling or emailing the program office.

How your Application is Evaluated

Six criteria are applied in evaluating your application. Applications that address each of these issues receive more consideration.

1. Academic Record and Potential

The Graduate School and the Counselor Education Program seek students who have an undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 (B). Students must have a bachelors degree or be in their last semester of their undergraduate program. If your undergraduate grades are not representative of the academic work you are currently capable of, you can indicate that your last two years of undergraduate work are more representative of your academic potential or present grades you achieved as a non-degree graduate student.

2. Academic Background

We are seeking students who have 18 credit hours of upper division (300-400 level course) undergraduate and/or graduate course work in the behavioral sciences. Courses that can be used to satisfy this requirement may include, for example, Education, Psychology, Family Studies, Sociology, Anthropology, Nursing, and Social Work, depending on the course content.

3. Relevant Work Experience

We will assess the quality of your work/volunteer experience and its relevance to your development as a counselor. It is to your advantage to tell us about your work/volunteer training including experiences teaching, working in human service settings, providing counseling services, etc.

4. Letters of Recommendation

You **MUST** submit three letters of recommendation for your application to be considered complete. One recommendation letter must be from a professor and the other two may be either academic or from work supervisors, each of whom can attest to your motivation and potential. Although we provide forms for the referee to complete, many referees prefer to write letters on their own stationary. This is fine but they **MUST still complete** the numerical ratings on our reference form. Personal or character references from friends, clergy, politicians, or family members are usually not rated as highly as detailed letters from individuals who know about the counseling profession and are in a position to judge your professional and academic potential.

5. Personal Statement (3 pages maximum)

Please tell us about your goals, your motivation for becoming a counselor, and what you can accomplish by studying at UNM's Counselor Education Program. Describe personal and professional experiences and characteristics that you believe support your candidacy. We consider your statement a "sample" of what we can expect from you as a student. Preference is given to applicants who present an organized and well written rationale for pursuing graduate studies in Counseling.

6. Multi-Cultural Competence

In your personal statement describe your understanding or cultural pluralism. Tell us about your experiences or studies of people from cultures, backgrounds, or beliefs different from your own.

Interview with the Faculty

Typically about half of the applicants (selected from an initial screening based on the aforementioned criteria) are invited to interview with the faculty. This provides us with the opportunity to meet potential students and for you to expand on your qualifications for admission to the Counselor Education Program. These interviews are **only** done in person.