

Counseling (MA)

This program is offered by the College of Science and Health. The emphasis in clinical mental health counseling is available at the St. Louis main campus and at select U.S. campuses. It is also available in an Extended Hybrid format that includes Digital Synchronous Coursework, Digital Asynchronous coursework, and an in-person or Digital Intensive. The emphasis in Community Counseling is available only at the Geneva campus. Please see the Campus Locations and Offerings section of this catalog for a list of campuses where this program is offered.

Program Description

The mission of the Webster University graduate professional counseling degree program is to provide high-quality learning experiences to students, helping them become expert professional counselors who strive for individual excellence and contribute to an enhanced quality of life in local, national and global societies. Curriculum is culturally inclusive, training students with a strong base of knowledge and skills to practice effectively in a variety of careers in the field of mental health and human service, educational institutions, private practice, and government, business and industrial settings. It is designed to provide students with the necessary knowledge, practice and skills for working with individuals, couples, children, families and groups in a variety of mental health settings.

The MA in counseling professional degree program offers emphases in clinical mental health counseling and community counseling.

The MA in counseling at Webster University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission.

The MA in Counseling with an Emphasis in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) at the following campuses: St. Louis/Webster Groves, MO; Columbia, SC; Myrtle Beach, SC; and offered Online for applicants from the following states: Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Washington.

Learning Outcomes

The student learning outcomes for the MA in counseling support the development of students as competent counselors in training. The learning outcomes are broadly divided into the following:

Core Counseling Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the program, students will be able to:

- Develop a professional orientation and identity as a counselor by applying sound ethical, legal, advocacy and supervisory practices which lead to success as a mental health counselor.
- Identify the cultural context of relationships, issues and trends in a multicultural society that impact the counseling process.
- Synthesize theories of human growth and development to develop culturally responsive counseling practices.
- Apply theories and models of career development to related life factors in multicultural contexts appropriate to an individual's work, family and lifestyle.
- Develop an empirically based approach to counseling that emphasizes wellness and prevention by integrating theory and best practices.

- Apply theoretical and experiential understandings of group approaches to counseling to develop targeted interventions within a multicultural society.
- Apply individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation in a multicultural society.
- Utilize statistical concepts, research methods, needs assessment and program evaluation skills commonly used in the counseling profession.

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Emphasis Additional Learning Outcomes

- Apply ethical and legal standards as well as knowledge of public mental health policy, financing and regulatory processes to mental health counseling.
- Implement mental health counseling principles and practices associated with education, prevention, consultation and intervention.
- Describe how living in a multicultural society impacts clients and apply effective advocacy strategies to enhance mental health services.
- Employ various assessment techniques associated with professional mental health counseling to appropriately intervene in meeting the needs of diverse clients.
- Apply evidence-based research literature associated with professional mental health counseling to meet the needs of clients living in a diverse society.
- Implement diagnostic tools appropriate for mental health counseling professionals to diagnose disorders in diverse clients.

Community Counseling Emphasis Additional Learning Outcomes

This emphasis is only offered at the Geneva, Switzerland, campus and is not interchangeable with or transferable to counseling program emphases offered at U.S. domestic campuses.

- Apply ethical and legal standards as well as knowledge of public mental health policy, financing and regulatory processes to community counseling.
- Implement community counseling principles and practices associated with education, prevention, consultation and intervention.
- Describe how living in a multicultural society impacts clients and apply effective advocacy strategies to enhance community counseling services.
- Employ various assessment techniques associated with community counseling to appropriately intervene in meeting the needs of diverse clients.
- Apply evidence-based research literature associated with community counseling to meet the needs of clients living in a diverse society.

Program Curriculum

Not all areas of emphasis are offered at all campus locations. Students should verify that the emphasis they seek is offered at the campus they select prior to registration. Note that certain state licensure laws do not allow for courses to be completed through directed study or electronically (online). Summer intensive courses for the Extended Hybrid program may be taught in person at a Webster campus. Certain counseling courses will be taught only in an online format at particular campuses. Some courses may be moved online prior to the start of the term as needed. Please contact your campus for a list of courses that are only offered online or occasionally offered in an online format.

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Emphasis in Clinical Mental Health Counseling

This degree emphasis requires satisfactory completion of 60 credit hours of coursework. Some states require completion of all core courses prior to Internship. Note that successful completion of the program may exceed 60 credit hours for some students.

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling emphasis, available at the home campus in St. Louis, Missouri and the South Carolina campuses in Myrtle Beach and Columbia, is accredited by The Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The Extended Hybrid program is not CACREP accredited.

Required Core Counseling Courses:

- COUN 0200 Comprehensive Counseling Student Development (0 hours)
- COUN 5020 Foundations of Counseling: The Helping Relationship (3 hours)
- COUN 5050 Human Growth and Development (3 hours)
- COUN 5100 Social and Cultural Foundations of Counseling (3 hours)
- COUN 5200 Theories of Counseling (3 hours)
- COUN 5220 Assessment (3 hours)
- COUN 5600 Techniques of Group Counseling (3 hours)
- COUN 5610 Techniques of Counseling (3 hours)
- COUN 5700 Lifestyle and Career Development (3 hours)
- COUN 5800 Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice (3 hours)
- COUN 5850 Research and Program Evaluation (3 hours)

Additional Required Subject Area Courses:

- COUN 5230 Psychodiagnostics (3 hours)
- COUN 5450 Trauma, Crisis, and Emergency Relief Counseling (3 hours)
- COUN 5540 Family Systems Theory (3 hours)
- COUN 5630 Addictions and Substance Abuse Counseling (3 hours)

Required Field Experience Courses:

- COUN 6100 Counseling Learning Practicum I (1.5 hours)
- COUN 6200 Counseling Learning Practicum II (1.5 hours)
- COUN 6500 Internship (1.5 hours per term) (6-9 hours)

(A minimum of 3 credit hours in practicum and 6 credit hours in Internship including 100 clinical supervised hours in practicum and 600 in internship are required. Most states require a total of 700 clinical experience hours. Students are required to know the specific requirements of the state where they plan to seek licensure and communicate this to their faculty advisor.)

Recommended Elective Courses:

- COUN 5140 Psychopharmacology (3 hours)
- COUN 5150 Psychopathology (3 hours)
- COUN 5160 Issues in Counseling (3 hours)
- COUN 5190 Women's Issues in Mental Health (3 hours)
- COUN 5545 Blended Family Counseling (3 hours)
- COUN 5670 Counseling of Children (3 hours)
- COUN 5640 Couples, Marriage, and Family Counseling (3 hours)
- COUN 5580 Human Sexuality Theory and Sexual Counseling (3 hours)
- COUN 5820 Consultation and Supervision (3 hours)

Students wishing to complete their practicum or internship in an elementary and/or secondary school setting must obtain special permission from the Director of the Clinical Program. They will be required to verify that their field experience in a school setting will entail providing clinical mental health counseling services and not as a school counselor.

Students may NOT do in-home counseling.

Students should seek advisement for appropriate selection of electives with the Counseling Program coordinator or faculty advisor when selecting elective courses, as electives may directly relate to the ability to gain licensure as a professional counselor and/or a marriage and family (and child) counselor. Note that certain state licensure boards do not allow for courses to be completed through directed study or electronically (online).

Emphasis in Community Counseling

This emphasis is only offered at the Geneva, Switzerland campus and is not interchangeable with or transferable to counseling program emphases offered at U.S. domestic campuses.

This degree emphasis requires satisfactory completion of 48 credit hours of coursework. Note that successful completion of the program degree may exceed 48 credit hours for some students.

Required Core Counseling Courses:

- COUN 5020 Foundations of Counseling: The Helping Relationship (3 hours)
- COUN 5050 Human Growth and Development (3 hours)
- COUN 5100 Social and Cultural Foundations of Counseling (3 hours)
- COUN 5200 Theories of Counseling (3 hours)
- COUN 5220 Assessment (3 hours)
- COUN 5600 Techniques of Group Counseling (3 hours)
- COUN 5700 Lifestyle and Career Development (3 hours)
- COUN 5800 Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice (3 hours)
- COUN 5850 Research and Program Evaluation (3 hours)
- COUN 5860 MA Counseling Thesis (3 hours)

Required Field Experience Courses:

- COUN 6000 Counseling Learning Practicum (3 hours)
- COUN 6500 Internship (1.5 hours per term) (6 hours)
(A minimum of 3 credit hours in practicum and 6 credit hours in Internship including 100 clinical supervised hours in practicum and 600 in internship are required.)

In addition to the required subject area courses listed above, students work with a faculty advisor to select up to three electives from the counselor education program curriculum to fulfill the 48 credit hours necessary for completion of the degree.

Students planning to seek licensure in the United States should familiarize themselves with the licensing requirements in the state where they plan to seek licensure. Note that certain licensure boards do not allow for courses to be completed through directed study or electronically (online). Majority of states in the U.S. call for educational requirements toward professional counseling licensure to include the completion of a 60 credit hour graduate counseling degree. Therefore, students and/or graduates who select the community counseling 48 credit hour emphasis may be required to complete additional graduate coursework should the

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student/graduate relocate to a state that requires a 60 credit hour counseling master's degree.

General Requirements

The student is subject to the policies and procedures for graduate studies and the specific requirements of the counselor education program found within this catalog. As stated in the Academic Policies guidelines, all emphases in the MA in counseling professional degree program are excluded from dual major and sequential degree options.

Courses in the counseling degree program are available only to those admitted to the MA in counseling professional degree program and specific non-degree-seeking students (see information on non-degree-seeking students below). All non-degree-seeking students must meet specific admissions requirements and seek advisement for appropriate course selection.

Students participating in the MA in counseling professional degree program are required to understand and follow the ACA Code of Ethics (2014) and adhere to applicable state laws, regulatory policies. They must also follow rules and policies governing professional staff behavior at the field placement setting. Students have the same ethical and professional obligation to clients as those required of professional counselors (ACA, 2014). Students are therefore required to conduct themselves in a professional manner, adhering to the professional code of ethics in all communication (written and oral) within all settings (field experience site, classroom, sessions, interactions with colleagues, peers, faculty, staff, and supervisors) and in official and non-official communication (including social media and other cyber activity) as expected of a professional counselor.

Professional Commitment

The American Counseling Association (ACA) *Code of Ethics* (2014) requires that institutions providing counselor education screen students for professional, personal, and academic fit with the counseling profession. Graduation from the counseling program requires successful completion of all graduate courses with appropriate academic success; development of appropriate interpersonal and counseling skills evidencing competency as a counselor; and being deemed fit for the counseling profession by program faculty as determined by development of counseling knowledge and skills, counselor formation, interpersonal relations with others in the program, and openness to supervision and feedback. Students' counseling skill development, interpersonal skills with others in the program, openness to supervision and academic success and standing will be evaluated on a regular basis throughout the program via use of dispositional and skills assessment tools, remediation team discussions, program faculty review of student achievement, and student participation. Students may be required to complete extra coursework and/or personal counseling in order to maintain good standing in the program.

This degree is a professional degree that is regulated by state licensure boards and the ACA *Code of Ethics* (2014). As such, students will be required to commit to the above mentioned academic, interpersonal and counseling skill development various coursework including a minimum of 11 months of clinical field experience. The clinical field experience is intensive, typically requiring a minimum of 15 to 38 hours per week to equate to a total of 700 - 1000 supervised clinical hours. It is imperative that applicants and students understand the time commitment required to develop and evidence counseling and interpersonal skills,

openness to supervision, and academic success related to the clinical field experience and program in general.

It is highly recommended that students become involved in their local and national professional counseling organizations for formation of professional identity and the provision of additional learning, professional networking, and leadership opportunities. Student membership in ACA provides professional liability insurance, legal support, and access to academic and career resources.

Students in the MA in counseling professional degree program will be expected to participate in self-growth and self-disclosure experiences in some coursework as delineated by the ACA *Code of Ethics* (2014). While contents of self-disclosure will not relate to lowered academic evaluations, they may lead to the requirement that a student seek professional help to address any personal concerns that may be affecting development of competent counseling and interpersonal skills, formation of the counselor in training, and openness to supervision (ACA, 2014).

Remediation for Student Success Process

The American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics (2014) requires that all counselor education programs in good standing provide a remediation process for all counselor education students that includes regular and ongoing evaluation of a student's general fit with the counseling profession. Assessment will be based on faculty review of didactic and clinical competencies, attention to ethical code, openness to supervision, self-awareness and formation, professional conduct, and academic competency. When experiencing challenges in demonstrating academic success, development of appropriate interpersonal and/or counseling skills and openness to clinical supervision, and/or knowledge areas students may be initially required to meet with the course instructor to attempt to remediate student challenges. If unresolved, the student or instructor may request the student be referred to a remediation committee, an ad-hoc committee that is appointed by the Department Chair or their designee. The committee will review the reasons for the referral and interview relevant instructors and the student in order to determine the most appropriate path for student success as it relates to a potential future in the counseling profession. The remediation committee uses the information gathered to make recommendations for student success. The recommendations may include but are not limited to: completion of extra coursework and/or field experience, completion of and/or participation in personal counseling, and/or dismissal or time off from the counseling program prior to completion of the degree program in order to resolve student issues related to lack of success. Hence, successful completion of the MA in Counseling degree program may require additional coursework beyond the stated number of degree credit hours (48 or 60) for students requiring remedial coursework and/or personal counseling. Student openness to and cooperation with the remediation committee and adherence to ACA Code of Ethics (2014) is integral to the student's continued success within the program. In cases where remediation is resolved unsuccessfully and leads to a student's dismissal from the program, that dismissal is considered final with no further right of appeal.

Note: While the remediation committee may review cases related to academic and dispositional challenges, it is not intended to mediate grade appeals or dismissals related to academic failure. The remediation committee is in place to work with students in good academic standing who are challenged in one or more areas and are seeking a plan for remediation for student success to remain in good standing or be transitioned out of the program.

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Student Handbook

All students admitted to the MA in counseling professional degree program are required to review and sign the MA in Counseling Student Handbook as a requirement of enrollment and position in the program. Students are required to sign the final page of the handbook stating understanding of/agreement with the personal and professional commitment to the MA in counseling professional degree program. Students are required to read and understand the Clinical Handbook prior to the start of Field Experience and agree to adhere to all standards and procedures described there-in. The Counseling Student Handbook and the Clinical Handbook that is issued each academic year supersedes any previous versions. It is therefore important that students review the Counseling Student Handbook and the Clinical Handbook each year and become familiar with the guidelines contained in these documents.

Background Check

Some states will not issue a professional counseling license to those with a failed background check. If an applicant or student has questions regarding such, it is recommended they check with the state professional counseling licensure board **prior** to applying to the MA in counseling professional degree program. Also note that some field experience sites require completion of a background check prior to accepting students to the field experience. All background checks are at the expense of the student. See the Counseling Program coordinator or faculty supervisor for more information.

Professional Liability Insurance

All students are required to purchase and provide proof of professional liability insurance prior to beginning their field experience and retain coverage through the duration of the field experience. Professional liability insurance is at the expense of the student and may be retained through HPSO (Health Professionals Service Organization) found on the American Counseling Association's website www.counseling.org.

Path to Licensure

To attain licensure in the field of professional counseling (LPC/LMHC/LCPC), graduates must complete further clinical supervised training, pass nationally-normed field related examinations (NCE and/or NCMHCE), pass a jurisprudence exam in some states, and may have to complete additional coursework depending on the state licensure requirements. Required exams, additional focused coursework, and/or number of required clinical supervised training hours following degree completion is dependent on the state/country in which the graduate pursues licensure. For delineation of individual state licensure requirements, consult the following websites and/or your state professional licensure board website:

<https://www.counseling.org/resources/licensure-requirements>

Admission

See the Admission section of this catalog for general admission requirements. Students interested in applying must submit their application online at www.webster.edu/ apply. Transcripts should be sent from your institution electronically to transcripts@webster.edu. If this service is not available, send transcripts to:

Office of Admission
Webster University
470 E. Lockwood Ave.

St. Louis, MO 63119

Additional Requirements

Requirements for admission to the MA in counseling program include:

- Bachelor's degree and strict adherence to a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5 (2.75 for school counseling) or better on a 4.0 scale. *For school counseling applicants, the cumulative GPA is calculated using all college-level coursework, regardless of whether or not the coursework was applied to a degree program.*
- Official transcripts from all universities, colleges and professional schools. Students currently pursuing their baccalaureate degree may submit an official transcript-in-progress for admission consideration.
- Three professional references (not friends or relatives, and one should ideally be a former professor/instructor). References are requested through the application.
- Essay* (minimum of three pages, double-spaced) addressing personal and professional interests in the professional counseling field; personal background and work history related to counseling field; career goals in the field; and aptitude for succeeding in graduate level education.
- A current résumé detailing education, work experiences, leadership activities, volunteer/service work, etc.
- Participation in a personal interview to determine fit with program and profession per ACA *Code of Ethics* (2014).

***These required materials must be electronically uploaded to the application account.**

Students applying to campuses outside of the U.S. may be required to submit additional documentation and/or are subject to other/additional prerequisite educational requirements. Please consult your campus.

Application Process

Applicants can apply to begin the program in either the Fall 1 or Spring 1 terms every year. All applications are reviewed on a rolling basis. For priority consideration, application documents must be post-marked **by July 15th** for the Fall 1 start in that same calendar year or **by December 1st** for the Spring 1 start in the following calendar year.

The faculty and staff reserve the right to render conditional admission to applicants. Students admitted conditionally are limited to taking one course per term until Advancement to Candidacy.

After admission into the counseling program, applicants are required to complete the following steps prior to taking classes:

- Participate in a group orientation event to discuss: a) career-related interests in the field of professional counseling, b) orientation to the field of professional counseling, and c) orientation to the Webster University MA in counseling program. This orientation event will be scheduled through your campus.

Non-Degree Admission Applicants

Applicants with a graduate degree or current graduate program enrollment in the following fields (professional counseling, psychology, social work, school counseling, and pastoral care) may be approved to register for up to four (pre-approved) courses and forgo the full admission process (detailed above under admission requirements). Non-degree applicants can apply to

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take a course in any of Webster's five terms. They are required to submit an online application, official undergraduate transcript, current related graduate transcript, and a brief statement explaining their purpose. Upon approval, non-degree seeking applicants must attend a pre-registration advising meeting with a counseling faculty advisor and get their course plan approved by the department chair or designated counseling program coordinator at their home campus. Non-degree seeking students may not enroll in clinical field coursework (COUN 6000/COUN 6100/COUN 6200/COUN 6500). Students seeking to take more than four courses must go through the full admission process and be fully admitted into the program.

Transfer Policies

Course Transfer

A maximum of eighteen (18) credit hours from a graduate counseling program at a university with acceptable accreditation (see Transfer of Credit in the Academic Policies section of this catalog) may be accepted toward the MA in counseling. There will be no course substitutions once a student has transferred 18 credit hours.

Core counseling classes considered for transfer must be transferred into the counseling program within eight years of completion and must be equivalent to Webster course content and learning outcomes as evidenced by the actual course syllabus for the course requested for transfer. Syllabi samples and/or templates are not sufficient. Core courses include: COUN 5020, COUN 5050, COUN 5100, COUN 5200, COUN 5220, COUN 5230, COUN 5600, COUN 5610, COUN 5700, COUN 5800 and COUN 5850. Best education preparation for the field may include advising applicants/students to not transfer credits as non-core courses. Practicum and Internship hours cannot be transferred to the degree.

Coursework that is older than eight years will not automatically transfer/apply toward the current degree program, even when this coursework was completed at Webster University. Students must petition the department to apply any previous coursework. All transfer petitions are considered on a case by case basis and decisions rendered accordingly.

Non-specialty accredited coursework not completed at Webster University may not adequately prepare students for nationally-normed exams. Students/applicants receiving approval for transfer of counseling coursework transfer the coursework content at their own risk.

Non-Counseling Coursework

Participation and enrollment in the professional counseling degree program takes personal and professional commitment. For this reason, students are strongly discouraged from taking coursework outside of the department while enrolled in any counseling program. Counseling students are required to receive written permission from the department chair, or designee, to register for courses outside of the counseling program while enrolled in the program.

Transfer Between Campuses

Students apply to and gain admission to a specific Webster campus. The admitting campus becomes the student's home campus where a student must complete all their coursework. Students wishing to take courses at a location other than their home campus must obtain approval from the Counseling Coordinator at both their home campus and the campus where

they wish to take the course(s) prior to registration. No more than twelve (12) credit hours can be completed at a location other than the student's home campus without transfer. It should be noted that taking courses in a CACREP accredited program does not imply completion of a CACREP accredited degree.

For transfer to a non-CACREP accredited Webster program:

Current Webster University professional counseling students may request to be considered for inter-program transfer prior to starting field experience coursework.

For transfer to a CACREP accredited Webster program:

Current Webster University professional counseling students wishing to be considered for transfer to a CACREP accredited Webster program from a non-CACREP accredited program may request to apply no more than 12.0 credit hours of previously completed coursework toward their degree. These hours cannot include field experience coursework.

In general:

Students must be in good standing in the program to be considered for transfer (no students on academic probation or in remediation will be considered for transfer). The process for transfer between Webster University campuses shall include:

- Two letters from Webster faculty at the campus of origin regarding the student's counseling and interpersonal skills level.
- A phone or personal interview with the Counseling Program coordinator or designee regarding the student's counseling and interpersonal skills level and reason for transfer.
- Approval for the transfer by the chair of the department.

Additional documentation may be requested at the discretion of the Counseling Program coordinator.

Advancement to Candidacy

Students are admitted to their graduate program upon completion of all admission requirements. Students are advanced to candidacy status after successfully completing 12 credit hours with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. In specialized programs, courses required as prerequisites to the program do not count toward the 12 credit hours required for advancement.