

School Counseling (MA)

This program is offered by the College of Arts & Sciences. It is available online and at the Rolla Metropolitan campus.

Program Description

The mission of the Webster University graduate school counseling degree program is to provide high-quality learning experiences to students, helping them become expert professional school 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, children, families and groups in a variety of mental health and educational settings.

Students who require prerequisite courses may have to complete more credit hours.

Learning Outcomes

The student learning outcomes for the MA in school counseling support the development of students as competent counselors in training. 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 school 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.
- Utilize skills and knowledge of student development and behavior to promote the mental health and well-being of all students by facilitating their academic, career and personal/social development.
- Collaborate with school and community members to plan, design, implement, evaluate and enhance the school and district-wide school counseling program to advance the academic, career and personal/social development of all students.
- Develop collaborative professional relationships throughout the school and community which support the school counseling program as well as the overall mission and improvement plans of the school and district.
- Serve as a change agent, demonstrating leadership, vision, collaboration and advocacy for the on-going development of self, students, the school counseling program and the school district.

(Adopted from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education standards for School Counseling students.)

Prerequisites

Students who do not possess a bachelor's degree in education from a state-approved educator preparation program will be required to show proof of satisfactory coursework in teaching methods and practice, classroom management, and psychology of the exceptional child. Alternatively, students may add the following coursework to their plan of study:

- CMAT 5020 Inquiry Methods for STEM and Social Studies (3 hours)
- COMM 5187 Secondary Techniques and Curriculum (3 hours)
- EPSY 5170 Behavioral Management (3 hours)
- SPED 5860 Psychology of the Exceptional Student (3 hours)

Program Curriculum

This degree requires satisfactory completion of 48 credit hours of coursework. Note that successful completion of the program may exceed 48 credit hours for some students. Completion of the degree will provide students with the required educational credentials for both K-8 and 7-12 school counselor certifications in Missouri.

Required Core 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 5110 Foundations of School Counseling (3 hours)
- COUN 5200 Theories of Counseling (3 hours)
- COUN 5220 Assessment (3 hours)
- COUN 5600 Techniques of Group Counseling (3 hours)
- COUN 5685 Program Development for School Counselors (3 hours)
- COUN 5700 Lifestyle and Career Development (3 hours)
- COUN 5800 Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice (3 hours)
- COUN 5840 School Counseling Methods and Skills (3 hours)
- COUN 5850 Research and Program Evaluation (3 hours)

Required Field Experience Courses:

- EPSY 6105 School Counseling Practicum (1.5 hours per term) (3 hours total)
- EPSY 6503 Elementary School Counseling Internship (1.5 hours per term) (3 hours total)
- EPSY 6502 Secondary School Counseling Internship (1.5 hours per term) (3 hours total)

Required Elective:

Students will work with their advisor to select an appropriate elective from COUN, SPED or EPSY

- Elective (3 hours)

General Requirements

The student is subject to the policies and procedures for graduate studies and the specific requirements of the school counselor education program found within this catalog. As stated in the

School Counseling (MA)

Academic Policies guidelines, the MA in counseling professional degree program is excluded from dual major and sequential degree options.

Courses in the counseling degree program are available only to those admitted to the MA in school counseling or 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 school counseling professional degree program are required to understand and follow the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) *Ethical Standards for School Counselor* (2016) and the American Counseling Association (ACA) *Code of Ethics* (2014), as well as adhere to applicable state laws, regulatory policies, and 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 (ASCA, 2016).

Professional Commitment

The 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 school 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, the ACA *Code of Ethics* (2014) and the ASCA *Ethical Standards for School Counselors* (2016). As such, students will be required to commit to the above mentioned academic, interpersonal and counseling skill development various coursework including a minimum of 6 terms of clinical field experience. The clinical field experience is intensive, requiring a total of 700 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 ASCA provides professional liability insurance, legal support, and access to academic and career resources.

Students in the MA in school 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 ACA *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. Appraisal will occur with faculty review of didactic and clinical competencies, attention to ethical code, openness to supervision, self-awareness and formation, and academic competency. When experiencing challenges in demonstrating academic success, development of appropriate interpersonal and/or counseling skills and openness to clinical supervision, students may be initially required to meet with the course instructor to attempt to remediate student challenges. If unresolved, the instructor may request that the student be referred to the campus Counseling Program Advisory Committee. This Committee will review the reasons for student lack of success and will interview relevant instructors and the student to determine the most appropriate path for student success related to a potential future in the counseling profession. The most appropriate path may include but is 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 counselor education program prior to completion of the degree program. Hence, successful completion of the MA in school counseling professional degree program may require additional coursework beyond the stated number of degree credit hours for those students requiring remedial coursework. Student openness to and cooperation with the campus Counseling Program Advisory Committee and adherence to both the ASCA *Ethical Standards for School Counselors* (2016) and the ACA *Code of Ethics* (2014) will be integral to the student's continued success within the program. Note: While the campus Counseling Program Advisory Committee may review cases related to academic challenge, it is not intended to mediate grade appeals or dismissals related to academic failure. The committee is in place to work with students who are challenged in one or more areas and are seeking a plan for remediation to remain in good standing or be transitioned out of the program.

Student Handbook

All students admitted to the MA in school counseling professional degree program are required to review and sign the 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 and agreement with the personal and professional commitment to the MA in school counseling degree program. The Counseling Student Handbook that is issued each academic year supersedes all previous versions. It is therefore important that students review the Counseling Student Handbook each year and become familiar with the guidelines contained therein.

Background Check

Some states, such as Missouri, will not issue a professional school counseling certificate or 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 school counseling licensure/certification board **prior**

School Counseling (MA)

to applying to the MA in school counseling professional degree program. See the counseling program coordinator or faculty supervisor for further information. Also note that all students will be required to successfully pass a background check for substitute teacher certification as part of the field experience application process. All background checks are at the expense of the student. See the counseling program coordinator or faculty supervisor for more information.

Field Experience

All students will complete a school-based field experience as part of their degree. Students outside of the St. Louis metropolitan area will be responsible for finding a school placement in coordination with their advisor. Students in the St. Louis metropolitan area will go through the School of Education's placement process.

All field experience students are required to have a substitute teacher certification in their state of practice. Alternatively, students may provide another active school personal certification for their state of practice.

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 School Counselor Association's website www.schoolcounselor.org.

Path to Certification

To attain certification or licensure in the field of professional school counseling in Missouri, graduates must pass both the Missouri School Counselor Content Exam and School Counselor Performance Evaluation. Students wishing to get certified/licensed in another state should consult that state's professional school counseling board.

Admission

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

Admission Requirements

Applicants are required to go through the University admissions process as outlined in the Admission section of this catalog. In addition, applicants for the MA in school counseling program are required to meet the following requirements:

- Strict adherence to a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.75 or better on a 4.0 scale. The cumulative GPA is calculated using all college-level coursework, regardless of whether or not the coursework was applied to a degree program.
- Submission of official transcript(s) noting conferral of baccalaureate degree(s) and transcripts from all institutions where college coursework has been completed (undergraduate and graduate level). Students currently pursuing their baccalaureate degree may submit an official-in-progress for admission consideration.

- Submission of a short written essay (minimum of three pages) addressing personal and professional interests in the school counseling field; personal background and work history related to counseling field; career goals in the field; and aptitude for succeeding in graduate level education.
- Submission of three completed professional references (not friends or relatives, one of which should ideally be from a former professor/instructor) using the Graduate Applicant Recommendation Form. Forms are to be sent directly to Webster University by the recommender. Instructions are included on the form.
- Submission of a résumé including: 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).

Students applying for this program must send the required essay, résumé, recommendations and transcripts to:

Office of Admission
Webster University
470 East Lockwood Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63119

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 school 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 school counseling program.
- Sign on the appropriate page in the Counseling Student Handbook provided by the first night of the first class or before.

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 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. Non-degree seeking students may not enroll in clinical field coursework. 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 twelve (12) credit hours from a graduate school counseling program at a university with acceptable accreditation

School Counseling (MA)

(see Transfer of Credit in the Academic Policies section of this catalog) may be accepted toward the MA in school counseling. There will be no course substitutions once a student has transferred 12 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 5110, COUN 5200, COUN 5220, COUN 5600, COUN 5700, COUN 5800 and COUN 5850. Non-core counseling courses considered for transfer can be transferred within ten years of completion. Best education preparation for the field may include advising applicants/students to not transfer related but unsubstantial 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, counseling 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.

Current Webster University professional counseling students may request to be considered for inter-campus transfer prior to starting field experience coursework. 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). Non-Webster students shall follow the aforementioned admission process for consideration for admittance into the program. 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 of graduate credit, with grades of B- or better. In the MBA program and other specialized programs, courses required as prerequisites to the program do not count toward the 12 credit hours required for advancement.