

Master's of Education Degree in School Counseling and Community Counseling: A handbook for students

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Full-time Faculty

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Introduction

The *Master's of Education in School and Community Counseling program student handbook* is intended to be used in conjunction with the University of Houston-Victoria's *Student Handbook*. Copies of the *Student Handbook* may be obtained at www.uhv.edu. The purpose of this guide is to provide information to assist students as they pursue the master's degree in Counseling.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

1. Apply to the Graduate School of the University of Houston-Victoria. This includes:
2. Completed application for graduate admission.
3. Official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work must be sent from each college attended (mailed directly from each institution to UHV).
4. GRE (aptitude: verbal and quantitative sections only) or MAT exam scores must be mailed directly from the Educational Testing Service to UHV.
5. Submit additional documents to the Counseling Program. These include:
6. Three academic or professional recommendation letters. At least one of these must

come from a person able to speak to your academic aptitude and achievement.

7. A brief personal statement of no more than 3, double-spaced pages describing your motivation and goals for becoming a professional counselor in a community agency or school setting.

8. After receiving notification that your materials are deemed acceptable, arrange to interview with the UHV Counselor Education program admissions committee. This committee is formed each semester on an as-needed basis, and will always comprise at least two faculty from the UHV Counselor Education program and one current UHV Counselor Education student.

Mission

The mission of the Counselor Education program at the University of Houston-Victoria is to educate, train, and mentor students from diverse backgrounds to earn a master's degree in School Counseling or Community Counseling. UHV students are primarily drawn from urban and rural areas close to the Victoria Texas or Greater Houston region. The UHV Counselor Education faculty members expect our students to engage in academic and experiential learning, and to develop a strong professional identity and multicultural sensitivity. The faculty members are committed to promoting the development of student competence in the provision of counseling, professional advocacy, and community outreach.

Objectives

In keeping with the mission statement and as a result of matriculation through the program, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate academic and professional excellence via performance in coursework and field-based experiences (e.g., practicum).
2. Apply and integrate awareness of socio-cultural context and diversity into daily practice in a variety of settings, including community agencies, schools, and college counseling centers.
3. Provide for the mental health, academic achievement, human growth, and community development needs of the Victoria and Greater Houston regions.
4. Demonstrate competency in a variety of counseling modalities and frameworks, including provision of consultation, individual, group, couple and family systems, and substance abuse counseling.
5. Advocate for the counseling profession, including activity in professional associations and interpersonal education about the roles and functions of counselors in society.
6. Successfully pass requisite national and state exams for licensure or certification as a professional counselor or professional school counselor
7. Seek gainful employment in K-12 schools, college counseling and career development centers, community mental health and addiction services agencies, and entry-level clinical staff in private practice and hospital settings.

8. Define and pursue a counseling specialty above and beyond entry-level competence in counseling, including addiction counseling, couple & family counseling, or work with special populations.

Program Description

The program in Counselor Education faculty offer coursework requisite to completing a 48 credit hour Master's of Education degree in either School Counseling or Community Counseling. Students in both the School Counseling and Community Counseling tracks must complete applied field experience in CED 6303: Counseling Practicum (100 clock hours) and CED 6348: Counseling Internship (600 clock hours over two semesters).

Students with 2 years of teaching experience in a k-12 setting that successfully matriculate through the School Counseling track meet the minimum requirements for certification as a school counselor in Texas. Students that successfully matriculate through the either the School or Community Counseling track meet the minimum requirements to apply for the Licensed Professional Counselor – Intern (LPC-I) credential.

Prospective and current students should note that full licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor in the state of Texas requires 3,000 hours of work experience beyond the Master's degree. For further information on certification and licensure requirements see:

For LPC:

Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors
www.dshs.state.tx.us/counselor/default.shtm

For School Counselor Certification:

Texas Education Agency
www.tea.state.tx.us

State Board of Educator Certification
www.sbec.state.tx.us/SBECOnline/certinfo/certreq.asp

Program Locations

The counseling program offers a full master's program in sugar land. The program is offered at a campus shared by all institutions in the University of Houston System. Through travel and the online courses the same faculty provide classes, advising, and all other program services at both classes.

Contact Information:

Victoria: 3007 N. Ben Wilson, TX 77901, phone (361) 570-4848,

Secretary Dianna Farrell

Sugar Land: 14000 University Boulevard, TX 77479, phone (281) 275-3700

Secretary Kathi Rich

Program Web-site: www.uhv.edu/edu

Orientation

At the beginning of each semester, all faculty provide a student orientation to the program which includes: a review of the counseling program handbook, the academic appeal process for the School of Education and Human Development and the Counseling Program, the student retention policy, the policy on written endorsements, information on professional associations and organizations, and the comprehensive mission statement and program objectives.

Admissions

Admission to Graduate Studies

Prior to full admission to the Counseling Program, students will be admitted to the School of Education and Human Development. Students may take up to 12 hours of coursework before being formally admitted to the Counseling Program.

Admission to the Master's of Education degree program in counselor education

Applicants for admission to the Counseling Program must first satisfy requirements for admission to graduate studies at UHV. Students may take up to 12 hours of coursework prior to being formally admitted to the program.

Above and beyond these requirements, students must submit additional application materials that satisfy the following requirements for admission to the Master's degree program in Counseling:

1. Students must submit scores on either the Graduate Record Examination or Miller Analogues Test.
2. Based on GRE or MAT scores and the applicant's previous cumulative undergraduate GPA, an admission's index score is calculated. Applicants must have an index score of 1400.
3. Students must submit 3 professional or academic reference letters that speak to the students' academic achievement, their potential to successfully complete graduate work, and their professional characteristics.
4. Students must complete and submit a personal statement that describes why they want to pursue professional counseling as a career. The statement should include what the student thinks his or her strengths are for counseling, and should limit the statement to no more than 3 pages double-spaced.

Students whose application materials are deemed satisfactory will be invited to interview with the admissions interview committee. The admissions interview committee will always be composed of at least 2 faculty members and one current student.

The purpose of the interview will be to further assess the applicant's personal qualities that are useful for graduate and eventual professional work as a counselor, to clarify any questions that the committee members have about the applicant's materials, to determine

if the applicant's professional goals are in alignment with the objectives of the program, and to share more information about the program with the applicant.

Applicants will be notified in writing of the committee's decision. Admissions decisions occur in the Spring, Summer, and Fall semesters.

The faculty members of the Counseling Program at UHV share a commitment to diversity and to pluralistic education and training, and therefore do not discriminate against applicants on the basis of ethno-racial descent, gender identity or sex, sexuality, age, religious or spiritual beliefs and practices, veteran's status, or ability.

Faculty members welcome inquiries into the Program. Prospective students interested in the program should contact:

Located in Victoria (phone (361) 570-4361)
Mary Natividad, Ed.D., Counseling Program Coordinator
Mary Mayorga, Ph.D., Clinical Coordinator

Located in Sugar Land (phone (281) 275-3700)
Jeffry Moe, Ph.D., Community Counseling Coordinator
Elsa Legett, Ph.D., School Counseling Coordinator

Advisement and Transfer Credit

Once students are fully admitted to the program, they are assigned a faculty advisor. Students should meet with their faculty advisor within the semester that they are formally admitted to complete a plan of study.

The advisor evaluates any transfer credit for course substitutions on the student's plan of study. Students transferring from a graduate program from outside of the University of Houston system, or students that already possess a master's degree in a closely related field (e.g., teaching, psychology, human development, etc.) may substitute up to 12 credits of classes for coursework necessary to complete the degree requirements of UHV's Counseling Program. Students transferring from another University of Houston System school may count up to 24 credits.

Students will be assigned to the same faculty advisor for the duration of their involvement in the Counseling Program unless they request a change of advisor. Information about sequencing of courses, electives, practicum or internship placement, and other relevant information may be obtained via communication with faculty advisors. Students who have temporary admission status for Graduate Studies are not eligible to file a degree plan.

Master's Comprehensive Examination

All Master's degree seeking students in the UHV School of Education and Human Development are required to pass a comprehensive examination consisting of written

responses to three questions that focus on their course content.

Students in the Counselor Education Master's Degree Program must respond to questions derived from: The content of one non-Counselor Education major course (FED 6321 or FED 6331), one Counselor Education course devoted to Counseling Theories (CED 6327, CED 6317, and CED 6329), and one other Counselor Education major course.

One of the authors of a student's comprehensive examination questions must be that student's faculty advisor, and one author must be a faculty member who is not one of the Counselor Education faculty.

Students must register to take the comprehensive examination either the semester before or during the semester that they plan to graduate. Students must receive a favorable disposition (i.e., pass) to their responses for each question in order to be eligible to graduate.

Students may retake their comprehensive examination beginning in the semester immediately following their first failed attempt. Students may take their comprehensive examination up to 3 times before being required to take additional coursework.

Curriculum

The didactic and experiential curricular requirements necessary to successfully matriculate through the Counseling Program are based on the training standards set forth in the policies of: Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP; Note, the UHV Counseling Program is currently *seeking* CACREP-Accreditation and is NOT currently accredited by that organization); the American Counseling Association (ACA; see the ACA 2005 *Code of Ethics*); the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors (TSBEPC); and the Texas Education Agency (TEA; for both TSBEPC and TEA see the Texas Administration Code).

Degree Requirements:

12 semester credit hours from the core courses; 33 semester credit hours from the plan; and 3 semester credit hours of elective coursework as approved by the faculty advisor.

Core Curricular Requirements:

The following courses represent subjects viewed as essential to all graduate students in the School of Education and Human Development as well as foundational courses in counselor preparation:

CED 6311 Multicultural Counseling*	3 credits
CED 6318 Assessment in Counseling*	3 credits
FED 6321 Foundations of Educational Research	3 credits
<u>FED 6331 Human Growth and Development</u>	<u>3 credits</u>
	12 credits

The **School Counseling** plan of study prepares students for the TExES exam and the Texas School Counselor certificate:

CED 6310 Counseling in the Schools*	3 credits
CED 6317 Couples and Family Counseling	3 credits
CED 6321 Professional Orientation to Counseling*	3 credits
CED 6322 Abnormal Human Behavior	3 credits
CED 6325 Career Education: The Counselor's Role	3 credits
CED 6327 Theories of Counseling*	3 credits
CED 6329 Group Counseling: Theories and Techniques*	3 credits
CED 6333 Counseling Techniques*	3 credits
CED 6303 Practicum in Counseling	3 credits
CED Elective	3 credits
CED 6348 Internship I	3 credits
CED 6348 Internship II	3 credits
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	36 credits

*These courses are required to be completed before the school counseling student can begin CED 6303: Counseling Practicum. A grade of B or better is required in these courses before a school counseling student may begin her or his practicum. Every student is advised to begin planning to identify and choose a practicum placement, with help from their faculty advisor, at least two semesters prior to the semester to when the student is planning on taking her or his practicum

The **Community Counseling** plan of study prepares students for counseling positions in various community agencies such as mental health centers, private counseling agencies, drug abuse centers, centers for counseling the elderly, child protective services, family counseling centers, business and industry.

CED 6350 Community Agency Counseling*	3 credits
CED 6317 Couples and Family Counseling	3 credits
CED 6321 Professional Orientation to Counseling*	3 credits
CED 6322 Abnormal Human Behavior*	3 credits
CED 6325 Career Education: The Counselor's Role	3 credits
CED 6327 Theories of Counseling*	3 credits
CED 6329 Group Counseling: Theories and Techniques*	3 credits
CED 6333 Counseling Techniques*	3 credits
CED 6303 Practicum in Counseling	3 credits
CED Elective	3 credits
CED 6348 Internship I	3 credits
CED 6348 Internship II	3 credits
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	36 credits

*These courses are required to be completed before the community counseling student can begin CED 6303: Counseling Practicum. A grade of B or better is required in these courses before a community counseling student may begin her or his practicum. Every student is advised to begin planning to identify and choose a practicum placement, with help from their faculty advisor, at least two semesters prior to the semester to when the student is planning on taking her or his practicum

Note: Both the Community Counseling option and the School Counseling option meet the academic specifications for **Texas licensure as a Professional Counselor (LPC)**.

Elective Counseling Courses (3 credits required):

CED 6300 Select Topics in Counseling
CED 6302 Independent Study in Counseling
CED 6316 Addictions Counseling Theory and Techniques
CED 6319 Death and Dying
CED 6335 Introduction to Consultation
CED 6336 Counseling Children in Crisis
CED 6340 Advanced Counseling Techniques

Supervised Experiences

In keeping with national standards for the preparation of professional counselors, the UHV Counselor Education Program requires that students complete CED 6303: Counseling Practicum and two sections of CED 6348: Counseling Internship.

Students must earn 100 hours of counseling experience (40 directly with clients, 10 of which must be in some form of group work) in CED 6303: Counseling Practicum to receive a satisfactory grade. Students must also be available to meet with their instructor for 1 hour per week outside of the regular class time, and for 1 hour per week with their practicum supervisor.

Students must earn 600 hours of counseling experience (240 directly with clients) over the course of two semesters in order to complete both sections of CED 6348: Counseling Internship. Students must meet for 1 hour per week with their internship supervisor, but do not need to meet for individual supervision with their instructor. For more information, please review the Practicum and Internship manuals for students.

Evaluation, Remediation, and Retention Policy

The Counselor Education faculty members participate in an ongoing review of student progress in order to make decisions about student retention in the program. This review process helps to ensure that students a) are completing program requirements successfully and making reasonable progress towards graduation, and b) have achieved an adequate level of professional and personal development in keeping with their future role as professional counselors. Faculty recourse to a student's failure to meet

the academic or professional expectations may be either remediation or removal from the program.

Academic minimums for retention:

In tandem with the general academic standards for graduate students at UHV, Students in the UHV Counseling Program are expected to maintain a minimum of a 3.0 grade point average for all coursework. Students that demonstrate persistent difficulty with meeting the GPA standard must devise a remediation plan with their advisor that focuses on the enhancement of the students, abilities to succeed in graduate school and specifically to meet their remaining graduation requirements.

Personal and professional development minimums for retention:

The professional and personal behaviors and competencies related to counseling that students are expected to demonstrate proficiency in are:

1. The ability to express empathy and to establish rapport with clients and students
2. The ability to utilize basic micro-skills to help facilitate client and student change
3. Appropriate professional responsibility and work ethic in both academic and field placement settings. This includes activities such as being on time for appointments, abiding policies and procedures of the field placement site, and communicating difficulties to the site-supervisors and instructors in a timely manner.
4. Sound judgment when sharing personal experiences and values.
5. Appropriate communication skills, including the ability to engage in concrete and focused communications.
6. Effective and non-aggressive conflict resolution skills
7. Self-awareness, defined as the ability to recognize one's own values, perspective, attitudes, how these are related to one's behavior, and to distinguish between these and the values and perspective of other people.
8. Self-awareness includes the ability to engage in Self-care in order to address areas of individual and interpersonal difficulty, and being able to accept personal responsibility for change and growth in these areas.
9. The ability to give and receive constructive feedback
10. Openness to differing viewpoints

When a faculty member becomes aware that a student demonstrates interpersonal and professional difficulty that may impede a student's ability to function as a professional counselor, the faculty member will consult with other department faculty and seek to explain to the student what concerns the faculty have.

Faculty members pay special attention to the grades and conduct of students in the following courses: CED 6333: Counseling Techniques, CED 6311: Multicultural Counseling, CED 6303: Counseling Practicum, and CED 6348: Counseling Internship. If a student earns a grade of C or below in CED 6333 or CED 6311, or an unsatisfactory

grade in CED 6303 or CED 6348, this will prompt an immediate review of the student's progress and of their appropriateness for continued matriculation in the program.

Remediation of academic, personal, and professional deficiencies:

In accordance with each student's right to due process, faculty members are committed to working with students who experience academic, interpersonal, or professional development difficulties. If a student's appropriateness for continued matriculation in the program is in question, then it is that student's right to know what specific areas he or she is identified as being deficient in and to expect that a faculty member will work that student to create a plan for remediation of any deficiency areas. Students can expect any remediation plan to:

1. Detail the specific deficiency areas and concrete steps for correcting or improving the student's competency in those areas;
2. Have a timeline in which the student is expected to demonstrate that the remediation attempt has been successful, including intermediary benchmarks for feedback along the way to completing the plan;
3. Include a list of the student's rights and responsibilities;
4. Indicate clearly what constitutes successful remediation of student's deficiency areas
5. Indicate clearly what the consequences of failing to complete the remediation plan in the agreed upon timeline are, up to and including dismissal from the program.

If the student's deficiencies are primarily interpersonal or professional in nature, then the faculty members may request that the student receive personal counseling and that the student provides documentation of having received this service. Faculty members may decide that students that refuse to engage in this or any other type of remediation are unfit academically, interpersonally, or professionally to become a counselor and therefore decide to remove said students from the program.

Academic Grievance Procedure

In tandem with the procedure outlines in the UHV Student Handbook, students are permitted to appeal any grade that they deem is unfair or that does not reflect their work in a course. Students may also appeal any decision made by faculty members regarding a student's fitness to continue to matriculate through the program.

Students that feel that either a grade or feedback regarding their fitness for the program is unjust need to engage in this sequence to address their concerns:

1. Contact the faculty member who gave them the grade or feedback;
2. Seek to come to a consensus with the faculty member about the rationale for the grade or feedback;

3. If agreement regarding the appropriateness of the grade or feedback can not be reached between the student and faculty member, then the student should contact her or his program advisor
4. If agreement can not be reached regarding the appropriateness of the grade or feedback after contacting their advisor, student have the right to appeal to the Dean of the School of Education and Human Development.
5. If students are still unsatisfied with the determination of the Dean of the School of Education and Human Development, then the student has the right to appeal to the Provost for Student Affairs. See the UHV handbook for details regarding appeals to the Provost.

Career Placement Services

Students who wish to use the university's placement service should contact the Career Planning and Placement office for information regarding activating a placement file. Services provided by the Career Planning and Placement office are available at <http://www.uhv.edu/cpp/>.

Financial Aid

The Office of Financial Aid has information regarding loans, grants, College Work-Study, on-campus employment and other types of financial assistance which are available for qualified graduate students. Financial Aid is available for students with full admission status only. The Office of Financial Aid is located in Room 110, University West, *Phone:* 361-570-4131 or 1-877-970-4848 ext. 131. The Office of Veterans' Affairs is located in the Financial Aid office and has information regarding Veterans' Administration educational benefits and the Hazelwood Act. Graduate assistantships are not regularly offered for students of the UHV Counselor Education program.

Professional Associations

A variety of professional associations have student members. As a whole, these associations provide many benefits, products, and services to counselors and counseling students. They promote public recognition of the profession, advocate counselor parity with other helping professionals, and represent counselors' interests before federal, state, and/or local government. Addresses for professional associations most directly related to our master's-level options are provided below:

American Counseling Association
5999 Stevenson Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22304-3300
800/347-6647
<http://www.counseling.org/>

Texas Counseling Association
1204 San Antonio, Suite 201
Austin, TX 78701

800/580-8144

www.txca.org

American Mental Health Counselors Association

801 N. Fairfax St., Suite 304

Alexandria, VA 22314

800/326-2642

www.amhca.org

American School Counselor Association

801 N. Fairfax St, Suite 310

Alexandria, VA 22314

800/306-4722

www.schoolcounselor.org

Chi Sigma Iota (Counseling Honor Society)

P.O. Box 35448

Greensboro, NC 27425-5448

(336) 841-8180

www.csi-net.org

In addition, students are encouraged: a) maintain active membership in professional associations such as those mentioned above; b) keep in contact with the UHV Counselor Education faculty (including sharing personal and professional achievements), and c) participate in attempts by the faculty to evaluate the counseling program.

Faculty Endorsement Policy

Program faculty endorsement is given only:

- a) on the basis of evidence of demonstrated proficiency in the vocational and/or credential area for which endorsement is sought,
- b) after the candidate has completed a substantial portion of the program, necessarily including supervised practicum and/or internship experiences during the program at UHV and
- c) for the professional credential for which the candidate has been prepared, necessarily including appropriate course work and practicum and/or internship placement(s).

Program Evaluation

The Counseling Program periodically conducts formal program evaluations. Results of the most recent evaluations are available in the SOEHD office.