

# MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling program prepares counselors to address the wide array of intersecting psychosocial, cultural, vocational and systemic circumstances that are barriers to the health, wellness, and quality of life of those served. Clinical Mental Health Counseling students are trained to work with communities who experience a wide array of health and behavioral health conditions that are often complicated by histories of poverty, trauma, homelessness, substance abuse, oppression, and criminal justice involvement. Students entering our program are social-justice oriented, embrace difference and inclusion, exhibit a desire for ongoing self-examination, and are expected to continually work towards cultural and disability competency.

Trained through a biopsychosocial lens, students are oriented towards conceptualizing clients' multiple, intersecting identities, contexts, vulnerabilities, and assets, using contemporary classification systems relevant to today's practicing counselor. Students learn and apply a broad spectrum of traditional and post-modern theories and modalities, including the Mental Health Recovery Model, and are expected to integrate health promotion, wellness, and evidence-based practices into their work. Our program strives to graduate students who are not only therapeutically skilled and culturally competent counselors, advocates and clinical case managers, but who also understand and challenge systemic factors that negatively impact the health and well-being of our clients, their families, and their communities.

Students graduating from the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program work in a diverse range of community-based health and behavioral health organizations, county, state and federal agencies, integrated behavioral health settings, hospital-affiliated programs, federally qualified health centers, educational settings, and private practice. Graduates meet all the academic and pre-degree fieldwork requirements for the California Professional Clinical Counselor License (LPCC) as set forth in Section 4999.33 ([http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=BPC&division=2.&title=&part=&chapter=16.&article=3.](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=BPC&division=2.&title=&part=&chapter=16.&article=3.)) of the Business and Professional Code for Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors. To become an LPCC, graduates must obtain 3,000 post-graduate hours under a qualified supervisor, and pass the National Clinical Mental Health Counselor Examination (NCMHCE) and the California Law and Ethics Exam. Please refer to CALPCC (<http://calpcc.org>) for more information. Clinical Mental Health Counseling graduates are also positioned to become a Nationally Certified Counselor (NCC) (<http://nbcc.org>).

## Program Learning Outcomes

1. Students integrate ethical standards into practice and demonstrate self-awareness and self-care for sustainable professional functioning.
2. Students can develop advocacy plans addressing systemic, institutional, and societal barriers, both for individual clients and for advancing the profession.
3. Students will demonstrate knowledge of role of heritage, attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences.
4. Students will demonstrate understanding of the effects of various sociocultural influences, including public policies, social movements, and cultural values, on mental and physical health and wellness

5. Students will demonstrate knowledge of developmental theories (individual, family, cultural identity, and personality) to assess and understand client and family behaviors across the lifespan, integrating factors such as neurobiological influences, environmental context, and the impact of mental health conditions, trauma, and stress.
6. Students will apply models of resilience, optimal development, and wellness to inform treatment plans, focusing on promoting positive coping strategies and adaptability in response to illness, disability, or crises.
7. Students will assess and conceptualize the interconnections between work, socioeconomic standing, wellness, trauma, and relationships, demonstrating how these factors shape an individual's career development and decision-making processes.
8. Students will evaluate the school and work (e.g., paid work, unpaid care work, unemployment) environment's impact on clients' life experiences and career development, considering factors such as organizational culture, accessibility, and discrimination.
9. Students will gain and utilize knowledge of essential interviewing, counseling, and case conceptualization skills to promote a strong therapeutic alliance and to create comprehensive and culturally relevant treatment plans.
10. Students will understand and implement therapeutic factors and strategies that are culturally sustaining and inclusive, ethical and legal, and enhance the effectiveness of group counseling from the perspective of a group member and leader.
11. Students will select and administer assessments that are culturally sustaining and developmentally appropriate, integrating individual accommodations and environmental modifications as needed
12. Students will critically evaluate the evidence base for counseling theories, interventions, and practices, ensuring that they are supported by sound research and are appropriate for diverse client populations.
13. Students will describe different research designs, including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods, and understand appropriate methodology for addressing specific counseling-related questions.

## Clinical Mental Health Counseling Learning Outcome

1. Students will demonstrate their knowledge and application of the biopsychosocial and mental health recovery model in prevention, intervention, and treatment of mental health conditions

## Graduate Programs in Counseling General Information

At least 60 units of approved graduate work are required for the Master of Science degree. All students go through a basic core sequence of academic courses, including four semesters of supervised counseling practicum and internship. Students select electives according to their area of specialization. Two different academic year field placements are required. The department works collaboratively with over 150 community agencies, schools, colleges, and universities that provide service and training opportunities for our students. These sites are carefully screened to meet our standards. Fieldwork placements are viewed as an integral part of the training of prospective counselors.

Once admitted to the program, students may petition the department's program coordinator and chair for up to 12 units of appropriate post-baccalaureate degree work taken in other institutions within seven years from the date students plan to graduate. Courses taken for another degree or credential may **not** be counted toward the master's degree. Courses taken at other institutions after admission to the graduate program may **not** be counted toward the master's degree. Refer to Graduate Admissions and Graduate Studies, Transfer Credit from Other

Institutions (<https://bulletin.sfsu.edu/graduate-education/admissions/#TCFOI>) for more information.

It may be possible to complete the M.S. program either as a full-time student or as a part-time student. Students *must*, however, expect that their personal and work schedules will need to be flexible to accommodate fieldwork requirements and department class schedules (must be able to take daytime, late afternoon, and evening classes at various times in the program). The program is an in-person program.

## Admission to Program

Applicants are admitted as conditionally classified graduate students in the fall semester only - there are no spring admits. Admission to the department involves the following procedures:

1. Submit the Cal State Apply application by December 15<sup>th</sup>, including all supplementary materials.

## Recommended Preparation

Prior to enrolling for classes, it is recommended that an applicant complete the following undergraduate courses: theories of personality/counseling, development through the lifespan, and a psychopathology course and an undergraduate course providing an introduction to the field of counseling. The Department uses a holistic admissions process that considers past academic success, work and volunteer experience, letters of recommendation, personal statement, and other factors. A minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0 in the last 60 units is required. Paid or volunteer experience working with people of diverse backgrounds is an important factor for admission. Selection of students is based on academic as well as personal experience.

## Access to Counseling Courses Prior to Admission

Applicants may request to take a course in the department by submitting a formal request. These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## Written English Proficiency Requirement

### Level One

All applicants must successfully demonstrate writing proficiency through a writing sample that is evaluated by the department after being admitted to the program but before enrolling. Those who do not meet the minimum writing expectation upon admission will be required to take a writing course, usually at an additional cost.

### Level Two

Satisfied by demonstration of English competency on the culminating experience paper for COUN 892.

## Clinical Mental Health Counseling

### – Minimum 60 units

### Required Courses (60 units)

Code	Title	Units
COUN 700	Theories of Counseling and Psychotherapy	3
COUN 702	Developmental Foundations for Counselors	3
COUN 703	Psychological Foundations for Counselors	3
COUN 704	Biopsychosocial Aspects of Health, Behavioral Health, Aging, & Disability	3
COUN 705	Counseling Practicum	3
COUN 706	Counseling Skills and Process	3
COUN 715	Assessment in Counseling	3

COUN 736	Advanced Counseling Process	3
COUN 720	Career Counseling	3
COUN 737	Psychopharmacology in Counseling	3
COUN 738	Addictions	3
COUN 741	Crisis Counseling for Counselors	3
COUN 794	Seminar in Research	3
COUN 811	Group Counseling Process	3
COUN 833	Social and Cultural Foundations in Counseling	3
COUN 857	Law and Ethics for Counselors	3
COUN 870	Professional Issues, Clinical Case Management and Systems of Care	3
COUN 890	Integrative Counseling and Internship	3
COUN 891	Case Studies and Internship Seminar	3
COUN 892	Culminating Experience for Counselors	3

## Clinical Proficiency Requirement

Students must earn a grade of B or better in the following fieldwork courses: COUN 706, COUN 736, COUN 890 and COUN 891.