

# Counseling

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## Overview

The program in Counseling at the University of Alabama at Birmingham offers concentrations in Clinical Mental Health; Marriage, Couples, and Family; and School Counseling at the Master's level. At the master's level students acquire core knowledge and clinical skills, which enable them to enter the profession of counseling.

All counseling concentrations (Clinical Mental Health; Marriage, Couples, and Family; and School Counseling) are designed to meet the coursework and field experiences requirements for professional licensure in the State of Alabama. A 15-credit Marriage, Couples, and Family certificate is offered to provide additional coursework for mental health and school counselors who would like to broaden their clinical expertise and knowledge in Marriage, Couples, and Family counseling. A 15-credit Clinical Mental Health Counseling certificate is also offered to provide additional coursework for school counselors and marriage, couples, and family counselors who would like to deepen their knowledge and skills in mental health. The School Counseling Concentration meets the course work and field experiences required by the Alabama State Department of Education for certification.

The Counseling program at the University of Alabama at Birmingham is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). All three counseling concentrations (Clinical Mental Health Counseling, School Counseling, and Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling) are CACREP-accredited.

## Admission Process

Consideration for admission to graduate study in Counseling will occur in the fall and spring semesters.

For more information about admission to the Counseling program, please see the following link: <https://www.uab.edu/education/home/graduate/counseling>

## Non-Degree Seeking Students

Potential students may take classes prior to admission to the Counseling Program as "non-degree seeking" students. However, non-degree seeking students are limited to 12 hours of coursework that may be transferred into the Counseling Program. Non-degree seeking students may enroll in elective courses with the permission of the instructor. It would be important for non-degree seeking students to make an advising appointment with a Counseling faculty member prior to enrolling in courses. Non-degree seeking students are not permitted to take courses not designated as open to non-degree seeking students. It is also important to note that students taking coursework as a non-degree seeking student do so at their own risk. Enrolling and passing non-degree seeking coursework *does not* guarantee admission into the program as admission criteria (e.g., test scores, undergraduate GPA, and interview) are the primary factors considered when reviewing student suitability for the program

## Evaluation of Candidates

Counseling candidates are evaluated throughout the course of their program via a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These KPIs are found throughout the course of study, including indicators such as specific course assignments in Area I coursework, CPCE exam, and

midterm/final evaluations in internship. Evaluation of the counselor-in-training is an on-going process. The faculty reserves the right to assess the candidate's appropriateness to be a professional counselor.

## Dispositions

Counseling faculty individually review the professional dispositions (behaviors and attitudes) of students within each course in accordance with the Counseling Student Handbook. Additionally, faculty will collectively review student dispositions and overall progress in the program at the end of each semester. Dispositional areas identified as deficient could result in termination from the program.

## Clinical Experience: Master's Level

Before admission to the program, students in the school counseling concentration must submit to fingerprinting and a Background Review conducted by the Alabama State Department of Education at the student's cost. For information on the cost and how to complete this requirement, go to <http://background.alabama.gov/>. No school counseling student shall begin a clinical placement (Practicum or Internship in an education environment) in Alabama without a suitability letter from the Alabama State Department of Education demonstrating that the student's criminal background has been reviewed and cleared by the Department of Education. Clinical Mental Health counseling students are not required to submit to fingerprinting or a background review upon admission to the Counseling Program. However, Clinical Mental Health counseling students are required to complete clinical placements in order to obtain the master's degree in counseling and many of the outside agencies/entities require fingerprinting and background reviews prior to accepting a student for clinical placement.

For all counseling students, the appearance of one or more felonies and/or several misdemeanors on a student's background review may negatively impact placement potential and/or credential obtainment.

Per CACREP standards, before beginning the first semester of their clinical experience, students must obtain and submit proof of individual liability insurance. This is to be procured by the student at the student's expense and must be maintained throughout the student's clinical experience. Student must submit proof of current individual liability coverage at the beginning of each semester that student is enrolled in a clinical experience. This is a requirement for all counseling students, regardless of concentration. If proof of insurance is not provided, student will be administratively removed from the clinical course.

Prerequisites for the clinical experience include successful completion of required coursework, meeting the required outcomes and competencies in Area I, and successful completion of comprehensive exams. The practicum experience requires a minimum of 100 hours (including **40 hours of direct client contact**) on-site at an appropriate setting to be determined by the Clinical Coordinator. The internship is 600 hours (**including 240 hours of direct client contact**) on-site over two semesters ( Each semester, students must have a minimum of 300 hours on -site and 120 hours of direct client contact.) Grading for the clinical experiences is on a Pass/Fail basis. To receive a Pass grade the counselor-in-training must be able to demonstrate basic counseling skills, behave in an appropriate professional manner consistent with the American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics, and satisfactorily complete the academic, dispositional and outcome requirements set forth in both the practicum and internship classes.

## Certificate in Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling

The certificate in Marriage, Couples, and Family counseling prepares school counselors and clinical mental health counselors to position themselves to more effectively work with clients, to better align with evidence-based practice, and to increase their range of services and versatility through additional coursework in this subject area. The certificate is open to current UAB counseling students as well as graduates of Master's level school counseling and mental health programs. The certificate consists of 15 credits of coursework, and takes students about one year to complete on average.

### Admission Process

Candidates seeking admission to the Marriage, Couples, and Family counseling certificate who are graduates of a Master's level counseling program, must complete an application found on the UAB Graduate School website, as well as submit a statement of purpose, and their graduate-level transcript. Admission is accepted for summer and fall terms. The admissions deadline for the certificate is April 1. The prerequisite course (ECG 691) for all other coursework for the certificate is offered in the summer term only.

Current UAB clinical mental health or school counseling students who wish to pursue the MCF certificate should speak with their advisor to arrange to complete the required coursework.

Note: 1) All students must complete ECG 691, ECG 685, ECG 689, ECG 680, and ECG 660 for a total of 15 hours. 2) A student who has graduated from the UAB Clinical Mental Health Counseling or School Counseling program may count ECG 691 and ECG 660 if these were already completed. 3) A student who has graduated from another university cannot count courses taken as part of a degree at another institution. 4) All MCF certificate students have the option of completing ECG 661: Play Therapy I as an elective.

Requirements	Hours
ECG 660 Relationships and Human Sexuality	3
ECG 680 The Intersections of Family and Community Systems	3
ECG 685 Marriage and Couples Counseling	3
ECG 689 Advanced Family Counseling Techniques	3
ECG 691 Introduction to Couples and Family Counseling	3
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>15</b>

## Certificate in Clinical Mental Health Counseling

### Admission Process

Candidates seeking admission to the Clinical Mental Health counseling certificate who are graduates of a Master's level counseling program, must complete an application found on the UAB Graduate School website, as well as submit a statement of purpose, and their graduate-level transcript. Admission is accepted for summer and fall terms. The admissions deadline for the certificate is April 1.

Current UAB counseling students who wish to pursue the CMHC certificate should speak with their advisor to arrange to complete the required coursework.

Requirements	Hours
ECG 600 Intro to Integrated Care Counseling	3
ECG 613 Foundations of Substance Abuse	3
ECG 631 Suicide Prevention	3
ECG 650 Diagnosis and Treatment of Psychological Disorders	3
ECG 652 Advanced Counseling Techniques	3
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>15</b>

## Master of Arts in Counseling with a Concentration in Clinical Mental Health

The Master of Arts in Counseling with a concentration in Clinical Mental Health counseling is designed to prepare students to demonstrate knowledge and skills with several counseling modalities appropriate for a broad range of clients in a multicultural society; interact effectively with other helping professionals and referral resources; make appropriate counselor-client related decisions in the context of professional, ethical, and legal guidelines; and fill effectively entry-level positions of professional responsibility within the specialization of agency counseling. The coursework is approved by the Alabama Board of Examiners in Counseling, which allows graduates of the program to pursue licensure as professional counselors in the state of Alabama. This program takes no less than 3 years to complete. For most students, it takes approximately 3 years or 9 terms (including summers) to complete the program.

Requirements	Hours
<b>Area I</b>	
EPR 590 Research & Prgrm Eval in Coun	4
ECG 612 Professional Orientation	3
ECG 621 Theories of Individual Counseling	3
ECG 624 Assessment	3
ECG 626 Group Counseling: Process and Procedures	3
ECG 628 Social and Cultural Diversity	3
ECG 630 Career Development: Vocational and Life Planning	3
ECG 638 Practicum I: Clinical Skills and Techniques	3
EPR 614 Lifespan Human Development	3
Comprehensive Exam <sup>1</sup>	
<b>Area II</b>	
ECG 600 Intro to Integrated Care Counseling	3
ECG 613 Foundations of Substance Abuse	3
ECG 631 Suicide Prevention	3
ECG 650 Diagnosis and Treatment of Psychological Disorders	3
ECG 652 Advanced Counseling Techniques	3
ECG 653 Counseling Children and Adolescents	3
ECG 660 Relationships and Human Sexuality	3
ECG 691 Introduction to Couples and Family Counseling	3
<b>Area III: Clinical Requirements</b>	
ECG 695 Practicum II: Supervised Field Experience	3
Counseling Internship	
ECG 696 Counseling Internship A	3
ECG 697 Counseling Internship B	3
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>61</b>

<sup>1</sup> The Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam will be given the semester of successful completion or upon successful completion of Area I. This is a "high stakes" assessment. Students who do not successfully pass this examination will be given the opportunity to re-take the exam a maximum of two times. There are no exceptions. Students unsuccessful in passing the comprehensive exam after 3 attempts will be dismissed from the program.

## Master of Arts in Counseling with a Concentration in Marriage, Couples and Family Counseling

The Master of Arts in Counseling with a concentration in Marriage, Couples, and Family counseling is designed to prepare students to work with individuals, couples, or groups where interpersonal relationships are examined for the purpose of achieving more adequate, satisfying, and productive marriage and family adjustments; make appropriate ethical decisions as counseling professionals; comprehend systems theory and use it to conceptualize problems and solutions for couples and families; and fill effectively, entry-level positions of professional responsibility within the specialization of marriage and family counseling. The coursework allows graduates of the program to pursue licensure as marriage and family therapists in the state of Alabama. This program takes about 3 years to complete.

Requirements	Hours
<b>Area I</b>	
EPR 590 Research & Prgm Eval in Coun	4
ECG 612 Professional Orientation	3
ECG 621 Theories of Individual Counseling	3
ECG 624 Assessment	3
ECG 626 Group Counseling: Process and Procedures	3
ECG 628 Social and Cultural Diversity	3
ECG 630 Career Development: Vocational and Life Planning	3
ECG 638 Practicum I: Clinical Skills and Techniques	3
EPR 614 Lifespan Human Development	3
ECG 691 Introduction to Couples and Family Counseling	3
Comprehensive Exam <sup>1</sup>	
<b>Area II</b>	
ECG 613 Foundations of Substance Abuse	3
ECG 650 Diagnosis and Treatment of Psychological Disorders	3
ECG 653 Counseling Children and Adolescents	3
ECG 660 Relationships and Human Sexuality	3
ECG 680 The Intersections of Family and Community Systems	3
ECG 685 Marriage and Couples Counseling	3
ECG 689 Advanced Family Counseling Techniques	3
<b>Area III: Clinical Requirements</b>	
ECG 695 Practicum II: Supervised Field Experience	3
Counseling Internship	
ECG 696 Counseling Internship A	3
ECG 697 Counseling Internship B	3
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>61</b>

<sup>1</sup> The Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam will be given the semester of successful completion or upon successful completion of Area I. This is a "high stakes" assessment. Students who do not successfully pass this examination will be given the opportunity to re-take the exam a maximum of two times. There are no exceptions. Students unsuccessful in passing the comprehensive exam after 3 attempts will be dismissed from the program.

## Master of Arts in Counseling with a Concentration in School Counseling

According to the American School Counseling Association, "the purpose of a counseling program in a school setting is to promote and enhance the learning process." The goal is to enable all students to achieve success in school and to develop into contributing member of our society.

The concentration in School counseling is designed to prepare individuals as counselors in grades K-12. The program leading to the Master of Arts in Counseling degree requires a minimum of 61 semester hours of prescribed coursework to meet the academic and field experience requirements for the SDE Class A Professional Certificate in school counseling.

**Certification Requirements:** In order to receive certification as a school counselor, school counseling students who do not hold a teacher certificate in Alabama must satisfactorily obtain a passing score on the following assessments: the Praxis II Test in School Counseling and the National Counselor Exam. School counseling students who already hold teaching certificates in Alabama must obtain a passing score on the Praxis II Test in School Counseling to receive certification.

The school counseling concentration meets the course work and field experiences required by the Alabama State Department of Education for certification. The concentrations meet the academic and field experience requirements for licensure as professional counselors in Alabama.

Requirements	Hours
<b>Area I</b>	
EPR 590 Research & Prgm Eval in Coun	4
ECG 612 Professional Orientation	3
ECG 621 Theories of Individual Counseling	3
ECG 624 Assessment	3
ECG 626 Group Counseling: Process and Procedures	3
ECG 628 Social and Cultural Diversity	3
ECG 630 Career Development: Vocational and Life Planning	3
ECG 638 Practicum I: Clinical Skills and Techniques	3
EPR 614 Lifespan Human Development	3
Comprehensive Exam <sup>1</sup>	
<b>Area II</b>	
ECG 619 Special Issues for School Counselors	3
ECG 620 Foundations of School Counseling	3
ECG 623 Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance: M/H School	3
ECG 627 Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance: Elementary School	3
ECG 653 Counseling Children and Adolescents	3
ECG 661 Play Therapy I	3
ECG 680 The Intersections of Family and Community Systems	3
ECY 600 (If not completed previously)	0-3
ECY 600 Introduction to Exceptional Learner <sup>2</sup>	3
EEC 515 Learning Environments through Positive Behavior Support	3

**Area III: Clinical Requirements**

ECG 695	Practicum II: Supervised Field Experience	3
Counseling Internship		
ECG 696	Counseling Internship A	3
ECG 697	Counseling Internship B	3
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>64-67</b>

- <sup>1</sup> A National Comprehensive Examination will be given the semester of successful completion or upon successful completion of Area I. This is a "high stakes" assessment. Students who do not successfully pass this examination will be given the opportunity to re-take the exam a maximum of two times. There are no exceptions. Students unsuccessful in passing the comprehensive exam after 3 attempts will be dismissed from the program.
- <sup>2</sup> Must be taken if not taken as part of previous studies. This usually applies to students who did not go through teacher certification programs previously.