

MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNITY COUNSELING



Program Description The counseling programs provide coursework and experiential training designed to prepare individuals as professional counselors. The 48 credit Community Counseling program is appropriate for those intending to work in the counseling field or who intend to pursue doctoral work in psychology or related fields. The 60 credit Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program is specifically designed for students who plan to meet licensure requirements in the State of Indiana (or states having similar requirements) as a Mental Health Counselor.

VU's CMHC program is the only such program of its kind in the region housed within a psychology department, and the CMHC degree is the only counseling specialty that leads to licensure.

Program Requirements Students are initially accepted into the CMHC program. Then, as career objectives are identified in consultation with an academic adviser, students choose the program that better meets their professional and career goals. Both programs require 12 core courses (36 credits) as well as significant experiential training through practicum and internship. Within the core are four courses--Counseling Theories and Practice, Counseling Processes, Child Psychopathology, and Adult Psychopathology--designed to provide a strong and integrated professional learning experience. Depending on their program, students additionally choose 2 or 4 electives that permit emphasis in areas of interest and exposure to a wide range of counseling-related topics. Curriculum

Core Course Requirements		15 credits
COUN 545	Community & Health Counseling	3 cr
COUN 635	Introduction to Psychopathology	3 cr
COUN 660	Helping Relationships: Counseling Theories	3 cr
COUN 662	Helping Relationships: Counseling Processes	3 cr

COUN 693	Foundations of Professional & Ethical Issues in Counseling	3 cr
COUN 694	Counseling Proseminar (4 semesters)	0 cr
Advanced Courses		18 credits
PSY 602	Research Methods in Psychology	3 cr
COUN 570	Assessment in Counseling: Testing & Appraisal	3 cr
COUN 620	Human Development: Biological & Learned Bases of Behavior	3 cr
COUN 625	Social & Cultural Bases of Behavior	3 cr
COUN 664	Career Counseling: Appraisal & Intervention	3 cr
COUN 668	Group Counseling	3 cr
Experiential Training		9 credits
COUN 685	Counseling Practicum	3 cr
COUN 687	Counseling Internship (2 semesters)	6 cr
Speciality Electives		6 credits
Students should elect a specialty track. Individuals planning to work in community settings should generally elect the APPLIED TRACK, while those planning to pursue doctoral work or other study should complete the RESEARCH TRACK.		

What Can You Expect? Graduate study in psychology requires both diligence and motivation. The Counseling program is rigorous, both in its academic challenge and in its demand to prepare students to become competent professionals. Students become well-acquainted with both their faculty and peers. They are assigned a faculty adviser who provides assistance with course selection and career guidance. They work closely with faculty on research projects and during practicum training. At the same time, most students are quickly assimilated into the graduate student culture in the Psychology Department. This peer network increases the learning resources of the cohort group and adds to the social enjoyment of learning. Critical to the concept of peer learning, each year the program strives to enroll a mix of students with respect to ethnicity, background, age, and experience. To this end, the program actively encourages students of color or other diverse backgrounds to consider application to the program. Full or Part-Time Study Courses are offered in the evening to accommodate individuals employed part- or full-time while pursuing graduate study. A full-time load is 3-4 courses per semester, and 2 courses during

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the summer. Students with significant outside commitments may enroll on a part-time basis. A typical part-time load is 2 courses per semester, and 1 course during a summer session.

Criteria For Admission Admission to the counseling program requires:

- an undergraduate GPA of 3.00 (B) from an accredited university;
- 15 credits in the social/behavioral sciences (psychology, sociology, human development, etc.);
- a course in introductory psychology;
- a recent statistics course with a B or better.
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score of at least 550 (paper version), 230 (computer-based), or Internet Based Test (TOEFL iBT) score of at least 80; minimum IELTS (International English Language Testing System) score of 6; CET score of 6, or an INTERLINK Language Center Level 5, or the equivalent for non-native English speakers.

Applicants lacking this background may have to take additional courses to ensure adequate preparation for graduate coursework in counseling. Prospective students should provide official transcripts of an undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university and, be proficient in the English language. In addition, they must

- [Valparaiso University Graduate Application and CMHC Supplemental Application](#);
- Official transcripts of all prior undergraduate and graduate coursework. If you have received an undergraduate or graduate degree from Valparaiso University, you are not required to submit an official transcript from Valparaiso University;
- Two recommendation [forms](#);
- A reflective essay explaining your reasons for pursuing graduate study;
- A resume, or list of work experiences since high school in chronological order, giving a brief summary of the duties performed;
- Application Fee: \$30 for U.S. citizens, \$50 for International Students.

Admission is usually offered only for the fall semester, with priority given to applications submitted by March 1. Preference is given to applicants who plan to complete the program through full-time coursework.

Financial Considerations Students may be surprised to discover the affordable tuition rate at Valparaiso University. Tuition for the 2010-2011 academic year is \$530 per credit hour, highly competitive for a private institution of recognized national quality. Full-time graduate students pay a \$146 general fee each fall and spring semester. Part-time graduate students pay a \$95 general fee each fall and spring semester. [Financial aid](#) is available through direct and indirect student loans for students taking 6 credits or more during fall and spring semesters. Students may transfer up to 6 credits of approved graduate coursework into the program.

Financial Aid Options I. Counseling Traineeships. Approximately 3-5 traineeships are available to full time students (9-12 credits each semester, at least 6 credits during the summer) in the MA Clinical Mental Health Counseling program. These traineeships involve partnerships with local mental health and social service

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agencies and require a commitment of approximately 20 hrs/week on a year round basis. Benefits may vary with the site, but generally provide a stipend of \$7000-8000/year, limited tuition benefits (e.g., 1 course/semester), and basic health insurance. With successful completion of one year in a traineeship position, students automatically become eligible for a second year as trainees, with responsibilities and activities commensurate with their progress within the graduate program. Students have the added benefit of using their work experience at their training site to fulfill two of three experiential training requirements (practicum or internship) for the program.

II. Research Assistantship. One research assistantship is available to a graduate student in the Counseling program. Preference is given to a full time graduate student considering doctoral work in the field of counseling, but part time and other students are eligible as well. Responsibilities include approximately 5-8 hrs/week under the mentorship of a faculty member in the Department of Psychology. Although the amount of the assistantship is modest, \$1000-2000/year, this position provides the added benefit of opportunity for guided research and co-authorship under faculty supervision.

III. Assistant to the Director of the Counseling Program. This position is open to any qualified student in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program. Responsibilities include assisting the Program Director in recruitment, course registration, correspondence and materials filing and serving as a class representative to the faculty and graduate school. Collaboration in research may also be involved. The amount of the assistantship is modest, around \$1000 per year, but the exposure to the details of the program and its evolution is professionally enriching. As this position only requires 8-10 hours per week, sufficient time remains to both work outside the department and pursue full-time coursework.

IV. Employment in the Community. Graduate students can usually find employment in social service and mental health agencies in the Northwest Indiana region. Some students elect to work full time and undertake their studies on a part time basis. Typical salaries range from \$7-10/hr and usually require an undergraduate degree in Psychology, Social Work, or related Human Services fields. Depending on the specific position, credit toward fulfillment of the required practicum and internship courses may be counted, assuming the position involves some combination of individual and group counseling. Outside of mental health work, other options are available. For example, substitute teaching opportunities have been plentiful in the region and compensate at the rate of \$60-70/day. An undergraduate degree in any field is adequate to qualify for substitute teaching.

V. **Federal Loans**. Any student enrolled half time or more is generally eligible for student loans. For most individuals, these loans will cover the entire cost of the program. A minimum of 6 credits per semester is required.

For more information about the Master of Arts in Community Counseling program To learn more about the Master of Arts in Community Counseling, visit their department website at <http://www.valpo.edu/psych/>. Interested students should [request an information packet](#) from the Graduate School through our website or by e-mailing Graduate.School@valpo.edu.

[Click here](#) to apply online!