

## 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 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 into the Counseling Programs

Applicants must meet the admission requirements for the Counseling program, which include:

1. Undergraduate degree from an accredited University;
2. 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;
3. An overall grade point average of at least a 3.00;
4. an undergraduate GPA of 3.00 (B) from an accredited university;
5. 15 credits in the social/behavioral sciences (psychology, sociology, human development, etc.)
6. a course in introductory psychology;
7. a recent statistics course with a B or better.

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. Applicants should provide the following:

1. [Valparaiso University Graduate Application and CMHC Supplemental Application](#);
2. Official transcript reflecting an undergraduate degree from an accredited University;
3. Two letters of reference;
4. A reflective essay detailing your professional goals;
5. 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

Each year the Counseling programs enroll approximately 13-15 students, with each incoming class consisting of a mix of full and part time students. Students may be surprised to discover the affordable tuition rate at Valparaiso University. Tuition for the 2008-2009 academic year is \$450 per credit hour, highly competitive for a private institution of recognized national quality. Students enrolled in graduate courses pay a \$80 general fee each 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 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.

Interested students can also [request an application packet](#) from the Office of Graduate Studies through our website or by e-mailing [graduate.studies@valpo.edu](mailto:graduate.studies@valpo.edu).

## **Criteria for Admission into the Dual Law & Psychology/Counseling Programs**

Applicants must be admitted to both the Graduate School and the School of Law. Admission to each program is separate. For a graduate application, click [here](#). For a VU School of Law application, click [here](#). Applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate School, which include:

- Undergraduate degree from an accredited University;
- TOEFL of 575 or 230 computer version or higher for non-native English speakers;
- An overall grade point average of 3.0;
- Applicants to the JD/MA Psychology program must have at least 9 credits of prior coursework in psychology in order to enter the program;
- Applicants to the JD/MA CMHC program must have at least 15 credits of graduate or undergraduate study (equivalent of a minor) with a minimum 3.0 grade point average in the social and behavioral sciences (psychology, sociology, social work, human development, or other closely related fields). Prior coursework must include introductory psychology and statistics.

As part of the application process, students must provide:

- [Valparaiso University Graduate 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 letters of recommendation (Letters may be forwarded from the VU School of Law);
- A reflective essay relating your professional goals to law and psychology;
- Application Fee: \$20.

Because the number of positions in both JD/MA programs is limited, applications received by March 1 will be given priority for fall semester admission. Furthermore, presenting the minimum credentials as listed above does not guarantee admission into the program. Applications received after March 1 will be considered on a space-available basis

## **Financial Considerations**

Full time students enrolled in the VU School of Law may take a maximum of 6 credits in the Graduate School without paying additional tuition, as long as these credits are taken during the fall and spring semesters. Because dual and joint degree programs provide significant savings in both tuition, time, and credit hours through mutual exchange of credit, law students in such programs are not extended the courtesy of 6 credits in the graduate or undergraduate division during either fall or spring semester at no additional charge. The savings afforded by combining degrees enables a law student to add on a Master of Arts in Psychology degree for about \$10,800 and the Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling degree for about \$14,850.

Students are strongly encouraged to begin their study during either the summer or fall semesters. Students may be surprised to discover the affordable tuition rate at Valparaiso University. Tuition for the 2008-2009 academic year is \$450 per credit hour, highly competitive for a private institution of recognized national quality. Students enrolled in graduate courses pay a \$80 general fee each 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.

For more information about the School of Law programs To learn more about the School of Law, visit their website at <http://www.valpo.edu/law/>.

Interested students should [request an application packet](#) from the Graduate School through our website or by e-mailing [Graduate.Studies@valpo.edu](mailto:Graduate.Studies@valpo.edu).