

# Professional Counseling Program Objectives

The Master's Degree Programs in Professional Counseling have the following objectives for each of the content areas established by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2009):

## Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice:

1. To train counselors who understand the history and philosophy of the counseling profession
2. To train counselors who are knowledgeable about the professional roles, functions, and relationships with other human service providers, including strategies for interagency/interorganization collaboration and communications
3. To train counselors who are knowledgeable about counselors' roles and responsibilities as members of an interdisciplinary emergency management response team during a local, regional, or national crisis, disaster or other trauma-causing event
4. To train counselors who understand and engage in self-care strategies appropriate to the counselor role
5. To train counselors who understand counseling supervision models, practices, and processes
6. To train counselors who are knowledgeable about professional organizations, including membership benefits, activities, services to members, and current issues
7. To train counselors who are knowledgeable about professional credentialing, including certification, licensure, and accreditation practices and standards, and the effects of public policy on these issues
8. To train counselors who understand the role and process of the professional counselor advocating on behalf of the profession
9. To train counselors who understand advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impede access, equity, and success for clients
10. To train counselors who are knowledgeable about ethical standards of professional organizations and credentialing bodies, and applications of ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling

## Social and Cultural Diversity:

1. To train counselors who are knowledgeable about multicultural and pluralistic trends, including characteristics and concerns within and among diverse groups nationally and internationally
2. To assist students in understanding their attitudes, beliefs, understandings and acculturative experiences in order to foster their understanding of self and culturally diverse clients
3. To train counselors to be knowledgeable about theories of multicultural counseling, identity development, and social justice
4. To assist counselors in acquiring individual, couple, family, group, and community strategies for working with and advocating for diverse populations
5. To train counselors who are multiculturally competent
6. To train counselors who understand counselors roles in developing cultural self-awareness, promoting cultural social justice, advocacy, and conflict resolution, and other culturally supported behaviors that promote optimal wellness and growth of the human spirit, mind, or body
7. To train counselors who understand their roles in eliminating biases, prejudices, and processes on intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination

### **Human Growth and Development:**

1. To train counselors who are knowledgeable about theories of individual and family development, transitions across the lifespan, theories of learning and personality development, and theories for facilitating optimal development and wellness over the lifespan
2. To train counselors who understand the effects of crises, disasters, and other trauma-causing events on persons of all ages
3. To train counselors who understand theories and models of individual, cultural, couple, family, and community resilience
4. To help counselors develop a general framework for understanding exceptional abilities and strategies for differentiated interventions
5. To train counselors who understand human behavior, development crises, disability, psychopathology, and situational and environmental factors that affect both normal and abnormal behavior
6. To train counselors who are knowledgeable about theories and etiology of additions and addictive behaviors

### **Career Development:**

1. To train counselors who are informed and knowledgeable regarding career development theories and decision-making models
2. To train counselors who are knowledgeable about career, vocational, educational, occupational, and labor market information resources, and career information systems
3. To assist counselors in developing the skills necessary for career development program planning, organization, implementation, administration, and evaluation
4. To train counselors who are aware of the interrelationships among and between work, family, and other life roles and factors, including the role of multicultural issues in career development
5. To assist counselors in developing skills necessary for career and educational planning, placement, follow-up, and evaluation
6. To train counselors to use assessment instruments and techniques relevant to career planning and decision making
7. To train counselors who are knowledgeable about the career counseling process, techniques, and resources, including those applicable to specific populations in a global community

### **Helping Relationships:**

1. To assist counselors in developing an orientation to wellness and prevention as desired counseling goals
2. To assist counselors in developing characteristics and behaviors that influence the helping process
3. To assist counselors in developing essential interviewing and counseling skills
4. To train counselors who understand counseling theories that provide a model to conceptualize client presentation and help in the selection of appropriate counseling skills
5. To introduce counselors to models of counseling that are consistent with current professional research and practice and assist them in developing a personal model of counseling
6. To train counselors who have a systems perspective that provides an understanding of family and other systems theories and major models of family and related interventions
7. To help counselors develop a general framework for understanding and practicing consultation
8. To train counselors who are knowledgeable about crisis intervention and suicide prevention models, including the use of psychological first aid

**Group Work:**

1. To train counselors who are knowledgeable about the principles of group dynamics, including group process components, developmental stage theories, group members' roles and behaviors, and therapeutic factors of group work
2. To train counselors who understand group leadership or facilitation styles and approaches
3. To train counselors who understand theories of group counseling, including commonalities, distinguishing characteristics, and pertinent research and literature
4. To train counselors who understand group counseling methods, group counselor behaviors, appropriate group selection criteria, and methods of evaluation of effectiveness
5. To provide counselors with direct experiences in which they participate in a small, counseling group for a minimum of 10 hours

**Assessment:**

1. To train counselors who understand the historical perspectives concerning the nature and meaning of assessment
2. To train counselors who are knowledgeable about the basic concepts of standardized testing or other assessment techniques
3. To train counselors who understand statistical concepts including scales of measurement, measures of central tendency, indices of variability, shapes and types of distributions and correlations
4. To train counselors who understand the basic concepts of reliability (i.e. theory of measurement error, models of reliability, and use of reliability information) and validity (i.e. evidence of validity, types of validity) and the relationship between validity and reliability
5. To train counselors who are informed regarding social and cultural factors related to the assessment and evaluation of individuals, groups, and specific populations
6. To train counselors who are knowledgeable about and sensitive to ethical strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment and evaluation instruments and techniques in counseling

**Research and Program Evaluation:**

1. To train counselors who value the importance of research in advancing the counseling profession
2. To train counselors who are knowledgeable about research methods (i.e. qualitative, quantitative, single-case designs, action research, outcome-based research)
3. To train counselors who understand statistical methods used in conducting research and program evaluation
4. To train counselors who understand the principles, models, and applications of needs assessment, program evaluation, and the use of findings to effect program modifications
5. To train counselors who understand the use of research to inform evidence-based practice
6. To train counselors to use ethically and culturally relevant strategies for interpreting and reporting the results of research and/or program evaluation studies

**Supervised Practica & Internship:**

1. To provide counselors in training with supervised practice in individual counseling with clients who represent the ethnic and demographic diversity of the community
2. To provide counselors with the opportunity apply counseling theory to practice and to develop counseling skills under supervision

3. To assist counselors in training to develop client conceptualization and diagnostic skills
4. To assist students in utilizing the supervisory process as fully as possible
5. To train counselors who are knowledgeable about the supervisory process and who can prepare for supervision sessions
6. To assist counselors to practice ethical behaviors in counseling and to be change agents for clients in a variety of settings

## Individual Program Objectives

MA in Clinical Counseling:

To train counselors who:

1. understand the history, philosophy, and trends in clinical mental health counseling
2. understand ethical and legal considerations specifically related to the practice of clinical mental health counseling
3. understand the roles and functions of clinical mental health counselors in various practice settings and the importance of relationships between counselors and other professionals, including interdisciplinary treatment teams
4. know the professional organizations, preparation standards, and credentials relevant to the practice of clinical mental health counseling
5. understand a variety of models and theories related to clinical mental health counseling, including methods, models, and principles of clinical supervision
6. recognize the potential for substance use disorders to mimic and coexist with a variety of medical and psychological disorders
7. are aware of professional issues that affect clinical mental health counselors (e.g., core provider status, expert witness status, access to and practice privileges within managed care systems)
8. understand the management of mental health services and programs, including areas such as administration, finance, and accountability
9. understand the impact of crises, disasters and other trauma-causing events on people
10. understand the operation of an emergency management system within clinical mental health agencies and in the community
11. demonstrate the ability to apply and adhere to ethical and legal standards in clinical mental health counseling
12. apply knowledge of public mental health policy, financing, and regulatory processes to improve service delivery opportunities in clinical mental health
13. demonstrate appropriate knowledge and skills in the areas of counseling, prevention, and intervention (e.g., principles and concepts of mental health, diagnosis, methods of counseling, biopsychosocial case conceptualization, referral procedures)
14. demonstrate an understanding of the impact of living in a multicultural society on self, clients, and the community (e.g., the effect of racism, discrimination, privilege, and oppression on clients access to services, principles of social justice advocacy)
15. understand assessment, case conceptualization, and clinical evaluation as well as the demonstrate an ability to select and utilize comprehensive assessment to assist in diagnosis and treatment planning (i.e. intake interviews, mental status evaluation, other psychological assessments)
16. demonstrate knowledge and skills related to research and program evaluation (e.g., ability to evaluate research, understand program evaluation, use research to inform clinical practice)
17. demonstrate knowledge and skills related to clinical diagnosis using the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*

## **MA in Clinical Counseling: Couples and Family Therapy:**

To train counselors who:

1. know the history, philosophy, and trends in marriage, couple and family counseling
2. understand the ethical and legal considerations specifically related to the practice of marriage, couple and family counseling
3. know the roles and functions of marriage, couple, and family counselors in a variety of practice settings and in relation to other helping professionals
4. know the professional organizations, preparation standards, and credentials relevant to the practice of marriage, couple and family counseling
5. understand a variety of models and theories of marriage, couple, and family counseling
6. understand family development and the life cycle, sociology of the family, family phenomenology, contemporary families, family wellness, families and culture, aging and family issues, family violence, and related family concerns
7. understand the impact of crises, disasters, and other trauma-causing events on marriages, couples, families, and households
8. demonstrate the ability to apply and adhere to ethical and legal standards in marriage, couple and family counseling
9. demonstrate the ability to select models or techniques appropriate to couples' or families' presenting problems
10. demonstrate knowledge and skills related to marriage, couple and family counseling, prevention, and intervention (e.g. understand the family life-cycle and healthy family functioning, use a systems approach to conceptualize presenting problems and develop systemic treatment plans)
11. demonstrate an understanding of the impact of living in a multicultural society on self, clients (couples and families), and the community (e.g., the effect of racism, discrimination, privilege, and oppression on couples and families access to services, principles of social justice advocacy)
12. understand assessment, case conceptualization, and clinical evaluation from a systems perspective as well as the demonstrate an ability to select and utilize comprehensive assessment to assist in case conceptualization and treatment planning (i.e. intake interviews, mental status evaluation, other psychological assessments)
13. demonstrate knowledge and skills related to research and program evaluation in marriage, couples, and family counseling (e.g., ability to evaluate research, understand program evaluation, use research to inform clinical practice)

## **MA in School Counseling (K-12):**

To train counselors who:

1. know history, philosophy, and trends in school counseling and educational systems
2. understand ethical and legal considerations specifically related to the practice of school counseling
3. know roles, functions, settings, and professional identity of the school counselor in relation to the roles of other professional and support personnel in the school
4. know professional organizations, preparation standards, and credentials that are relevant to the practice of school counseling
5. understand current models of school counseling programs (e.g., American School Counselor Association [ASCA] National Model) and their integral relationship to the total educational program

6. understand the effects of atypical growth and development, health and wellness, language, ability level, multicultural issues, and factors of resiliency on student learning and development
7. understand the operation of the school emergency management plan and the roles and responsibilities of the school counselor during crises, disasters, and other trauma-causing events
8. demonstrate the ability to apply and adhere to ethical and legal standards in school counseling
9. demonstrate the ability to articulate, model, and advocate for an appropriate school counselor identity and program
10. demonstrate knowledge and skills related to counseling, prevention, and intervention in school counseling (e.g., theories and processes of effective school counseling, ability to design, implement, and evaluate school counseling programs geared towards prevention and intervention, ability to assess and manage suicide risk)
11. demonstrate an understanding of the impact of living in a multicultural society on self, students, communities, and schools (e.g., the effect of racism, discrimination, privilege, and oppression on student learning and career development, ability to engage parents, guardians, and families in school counseling programs, the ability to understand and apply principles of social justice advocacy in the school system)
12. understand the influence of multiple factors that affect the personal, social, and academic functioning of students as well as the demonstrate an ability to use appropriate assessment strategies to evaluate students' academic, career, and personal/social development
13. demonstrate knowledge and skills related to research and program evaluation in school counseling (e.g., ability to evaluate research, understand program evaluation, use research to inform clinical practice)
14. understand curriculum design, lesson plan development, and classroom management strategies, and differentiated instructional strategies for teaching counseling and guidance related material
15. have the ability to implement programs and differentiated instructional strategies to promote student academic and social development
16. demonstrate knowledge and skills related to collaboration and consultation in school counseling (e.g., ability to with parents, families, and guardians, ability to consult with teachers, staff, and community based organizations)
17. demonstrate knowledge and skills related to effective leadership in the school in order to take a leadership role in the design, implementation, management, and evaluation of a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program