

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
Program Information for Counseling Program Interviewees
2015

CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING (M.S.) and
SCHOOL COUNSELING (M.A.Ed.)

Both Master's degrees in Counseling are CACREP-Accredited
The Counseling Program is part of the Department of Human Services,
College of Education and Allied Professions, WCU
Housed at WCU-Biltmore Park (in Asheville)

PROGRAM FACULTY

For 2015, the counseling program has six faculty:

- Dr. Lisen Roberts, Counseling Program Director
- Dr. Russ Curtis, Clinical Mental Health Counseling Coordinator
- Dr. Phyllis Robertson, School Counseling Coordinator
- Dr. Melodie Frick
- Dr. Heather Thompson
- Dr. Dale Brotherton, Human Services Department Head (part-time teaching)

PROGRAM CURRICULUM OVERVIEW (including proposed changes for 2015-2016)

The WCU counseling program specialty areas of clinical mental health counseling and school counseling programs are accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Both specialty areas are sixty (60) credit-hours. CACREP establishes a core curriculum for all students and sets standards for field placement requirements.

**SCHOOL and CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING
REQUIRED CORE COURSES:**

- COUN 602: Professional Orientation and Ethics
- COUN 605: The Helping Relationship
- COUN 610: Family Counseling
- COUN 615: Cross Cultural Counseling
- COUN 617: Substance Abuse Counseling
- COUN 625: Developmental Perspectives in Counseling
- COUN 630: Theories and Techniques of Counseling
- COUN 633: Crisis Counseling
- COUN 635: Group Methods in Counseling
- COUN 640: Measurement and Appraisal in Counseling
- COUN 650: Career Development
- COUN 667: The DSM and Effective Treatment in Counseling
- EDRS 602: Methods of Research

CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING ALSO REQUIRES:

- COUN 623: Introduction to Clinical Mental Health Counseling
- Three guided counseling electives
- COUN 686: Practicum in Counseling, a one-semester 150-hour field placement
- COUN 687: Internship in Counseling, a one-semester 600-hour field placement.

SCHOOL COUNSELING ALSO REQUIRES:

- COUN 620: Counseling Children and Adolescents
- COUN 645: Consultation and Collaboration
- COUN 660: School Counseling Program Development
- One guided counseling elective
- COUN 686: Practicum in Counseling, a one-semester 150-hour field placement
- COUN 687: Internship in counseling, a one-semester 600-hour field placement
- The Professional School Counseling subtest of the PRAXIS II exam is also required by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction for NC state licensure as a school counselor.

Beginning Summer 2015, all WCU counseling courses (and program events) are at the WCU Biltmore Park instructional site in Asheville.

A limit of six hours of graduate credit can be transferred into the clinical mental health or school counseling program with the approval of the student's advisor. It is not recommended to transfer coursework within the counseling core as all students are required to complete comprehensive written exams based on WCU's core counseling curriculum. Coursework taken to complete a previously earned master's degree cannot be transferred.

FIELD PLACEMENTS

Practicum requires a minimum of 8-10 hours weekly at a mental health or school site for one semester. Practicum also includes one hour of individual supervision per week and three hours of group supervision every other week, both at Biltmore Park. Practicum is a 3-credit course. Students apply for practicum the semester prior to enrollment. Approval for admission into practicum and for the practicum placement is made by the faculty. Professional liability insurance is required for all students enrolled in practicum.

Internship requires 40 hours weekly (full-time placement) at a mental health or school site for one semester. One hour of weekly individual supervision is provided by the site. Group supervision is conducted weekly at Biltmore Park for three hours at night. Following university approval (expected Spring 2015), Internship will be a 6-credit course. Students apply for internship the semester prior to enrollment. Approval for admission into internship and for the internship placement is made by the faculty. Typically, internship is an unpaid experience. Professional liability insurance is required for all students enrolled in internship.

LOCATION AND TIMING OF CLASSES

Counseling classes are taught in 3-hour blocks typically in the evening from 5pm to 8pm at WCU's Biltmore Park instructional site. When a second section of a given course is offered, it

takes a day slot (a 3-hour block between 9am and 3pm). In these cases, students choose which section, day or evening, they prefer. All students are required to complete summer courses (typically four) as part of the 60-hour counseling program.

ORIENTATION, PLANS OF STUDY, AND ADVISEMENT

A counseling program orientation is required by all new students and will be scheduled on a Friday in late August (typically the first Friday of fall classes). There will also be a Graduate School-sponsored student orientation in Cullowhee that new students are encouraged to attend and that graduate assistants are expected to attend.

Each student will be assigned an academic advisor at the time of admission into the program. Students must initiate a meeting with their advisors to formulate a plan of study no later than the end of the fall semester of their first year of enrollment.

New students admitted in 2015 will begin coursework in their choice of Summer (June) or Fall (August) 2015. It is in the Fall semester only that the two primary introductory courses are offered (COUN 602 for all students, and COUN 623 for Clinical Mental Health or COUN 660 for School). New students wishing to begin in Summer 2015 may do so after consultation with their advisor (and updating their application term with the Graduate School to Summer 2015). A limited number of courses will be appropriate for new students in Summer 2015 (COUN 650, EDRS 602, and two electives: COUN 637 and COUN 672).

FULL-TIME STUDENTS in both specialty areas complete the required 60 hours in their choice of 2, 2½, or 3 years, including required summer courses. **PART-TIME STUDENTS** (those enrolled in 3 or 6 hours per semester) typically complete the program in 4 years. Part-time students are strongly encouraged to enroll in 6 hours per academic semester. All students have a maximum of six years to complete the counseling program from the time of initial enrollment.

Outlines of course sequences for full and part-time students will be distributed at the group interview on February 27.

Individual faculty offices are located in Killian Building, WCU, Cullowhee. A shared counseling faculty office is located at Biltmore Park 349. Email faculty to schedule appointments (complete contact information will be given upon admission; in the meantime, contact the program director).

PROGRAM REVIEW OF STUDENTS

Following CACREP standards, students are systematically reviewed and evaluated with regard to academic performance, clinical skill development, and professional and personal development throughout the program.

Typical points of review for students are during the admission process, near the end of each fall and spring semester, and at the point of application to practicum and internship.

A written comprehensive exam that covers designated core counseling courses are required. Students take the comprehensive exam as they are completing core courses, typically with internship.

FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid is available in the form of graduate assistantships, Chancellor's Fellowships, Graduate School grants, scholarships, and student loans. Applicants interested in financial aid assume responsibility for applying for financial assistance.

Graduate Assistantships in Counseling

A limited number of graduate assistantships (GAs) are available for full-time counseling students through the Department of Human Services. **Graduate assistantships typically require at least one day per week on WCU's main campus in Cullowhee.**

Graduate assistantships are awarded for fall and spring annually; assistantships are not available during the semester in which a student is enrolled in internship.

There are three general types of graduate assistantships: Teaching-focused; Faculty-focused; and Office-focused.

Graduate Teaching Assistantships. The counseling program is responsible for COUN 140: Skills for College, a one-credit course for first-year WCU undergraduates, and assists with LC 101: Learning Contract, a one-credit course for undergraduates on academic probation. Graduate teaching assistants in counseling are independent instructors for these courses. COUN 140 meets one hour, 1-2 days per week in the fall semester on the WCU main campus in Cullowhee. LC 101 meets for 1-2 days per week in the spring semester on the WCU main campus in Cullowhee. Teaching GAs will be responsible for 1 section of COUN 140 in fall and 1 section of LC 101 in spring.

First priority for funds available for Graduate Assistantships will be for the COUN 140/LC 101 teaching positions. Other non-teaching assistantships will be available as additional assistantship funds are allocated to the program. The Graduate School gives preference in GA assignments to students with higher-than-average GRE scores and undergraduate GPAs.

Assistantship contracts must be completed by late April/early May.

ADMISSION DECISIONS AND NOTIFICATION PROCESS

Counseling faculty will review all applications.

Official notification informing applicants of final admission decisions are sent via email from the Graduate School. Final admission decisions for applicants will begin in early March and be completed by late April.

Because the WCU counseling programs have more qualified applicants than can be admitted into the program, some applicants will be placed on a waiting list for admission for 2015. Persons who receive notice of being placed on the waiting list may later receive notice of acceptance. If a person on the waiting list cannot be admitted in 2015 due to lack of space in the program, the person must re-apply if interested in admission consideration for 2016.

Written confirmation of intent to enter the program is required of all persons granted admission to the program.

Persons admitted will be notified of their assigned advisor in the admission letter from the Graduate School.

If a person accepts admission to the program and plans alter prior to beginning coursework, please notify the counseling program director as soon as possible.

To learn more about the WCU Counseling Program, please visit the counseling program website at <http://counseling.wcu.edu>

Contact Information

WCU Counseling Program Director

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