



**Department of  
Educational and Clinical Studies**

**Counselor Education Program**

**Graduate Student Handbook**



Department of Educational and Clinical Studies  
Counselor Education Program

**GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK**

6th Edition

This handbook contains information essential for graduate students in the Department of Educational and Clinical Studies Counselor Education Program. It is designed to provide students with information necessary to successfully complete graduate studies in the program. Like the Graduate Catalog, the handbook is in effect when a student enrolls and is the final authoritative document outlining the program's requirements.

It is the responsibility of the student to be familiar with the contents herein and to meet all requirements and deadlines (See the Affidavit of Commitment).

## UNLV Counselor Education Program Graduate Student Handbook

### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the program in Counselor Education is to provide all master's level students with the latest methods, theories, and techniques of the discipline and to provide a field experience that will allow for a theory-to-practice developmental training approach. Indeed, we seek to enhance the requisite clinical skills needed to function as a counseling professional. In addition, and more broadly, we seek to train students to be critical thinkers, scientifically minded, culturally sensitive, promoters of social justice, and above all to be highly ethical and competent in their particular area of specialization. The Counselor Education mission statement embodies the personal and professional commitment that is required for those individuals who are intent on making a difference for people in our society.

### About the Department of Educational and Clinical Studies Counselor Education Program

The faculty members in the Counselor Education Program endeavor to promote excellence in counselor education and counseling research. Our counseling programs help prepare students to:

- Serve as professional counselors, system advocates, educational leaders, team members, and consultants who maximize opportunities for individuals, groups, and communities and especially, underrepresented populations;
- Address the developmental, academic, career, mental health, personal, cultural, social, spiritual and wellness needs of those we serve within the context of counseling;
- Help individuals, groups and communities strive to find meaning, involvement, and worth in their lives;
- Plan and conduct qualitative, mixed design and quantitative research studies to further the knowledge base and best practice initiatives of the counseling profession; and finally
- Consult and interface with various school and community organizations to promote client and societal well being.
- Click [here](#) to Meet the Faculty & Staff.

Department of Educational and Clinical Studies Department Counselor Education Graduate Programs

### **M.S. Clinical Mental Health Counseling**

The [Master of Science \(M.S.\) of Counselor Education in Clinical Mental Health Counseling](#), a 60-semester hour program, prepares professional counselors to work in community agencies, educational settings, as well as private practice.

As a CACREP accredited program, CED students are eligible to take the National Counselor Examination (NCE) leading to certification as a National Certified Counselor (NCC). The Clinical Mental Health Counseling program also prepares students to seek licensure as a Clinical Professional Counselor (CPC) in Nevada.

### **M.Ed. School Counseling**

The [Master of Education \(M.Ed.\) in School Counseling](#), a 48-semester hour program, prepares professional counselors to meet the academic, career, personal, and social needs of culturally and linguistically diverse K-12 student populations. The program is accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), meets the academic requirements for School Counseling endorsement in Nevada, and prepares counselors to:

- Serve as counselors, advocates, educational leaders, team members, and consultants, to maximize opportunities for students to succeed academically,
- Address the academic, career, and personal/social needs of all students in the school,
- Serve as leaders of equity and achievement and be able to address institutional and environmental barriers impeding student progress,
- Through the collection and dissemination of data, advocate for systemic change to promote student achievement and academic success,
- Become managers of resources and partnership builders, enlisting the support of parents, agencies, and community members.

### **Advanced Graduate Certificate in Clinical Mental Health Counseling**

[Certificate in Clinical Mental Health Counseling](#) is designed for individuals already holding a master's degree in counseling from a CACREP accredited or equivalent program, but do not meet the necessary educational requirements for the licensure for clinical professional counselors (CPC) in the State of Nevada. Specific programs of study are developed in consultation with the student's Faculty Advisor.

Currently admitted UNLV School Counseling Program students may apply for concurrent admission to the Advanced Graduate Certificate in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. These students will complete the 48 credit School Counseling core courses plus 12-18 additional credits for the certificate.

### Advanced Graduate Certificate in Addictions Studies

The [Advanced Graduate Certificate in Addiction Studies](#) is designed for individuals already holding a master's degree in a helping profession who aim to expand their scope of practice to include addictions counseling. Specific programs of study are developed in consultation with the student's Faculty Advisor.

Currently admitted UNLV Clinical Mental Health Counseling and UNLV School Counseling Program students may apply for concurrent admission to the Advanced Graduate Certificate in Addictions Studies. These students will complete their 48 credit School Counseling or 60 credit Mental Health Counseling core courses plus 12-18 additional credits for the certificate.

### CED Graduate Course Sequences

The course sequencing for both the Master of Science (M.S.) of Counselor Education in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, and the Master of Education (M.Ed.) in School Counseling can be found online.

Master of Science (M.S.) of Counselor Education in [Clinical Mental Health Counseling](#):

<http://education.unlv.edu/ecs/graduate/cmhc/>

Master of Education (M.Ed.) in [School Counseling](#) can be found online.

<http://education.unlv.edu/ecs/graduate/sc/>

## CACREP Accreditation

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accredits professional counseling programs within institutions of higher education throughout the United States. As an accrediting body, CACREP is committed to the development of standards and procedures that reflect the needs of a dynamic, diverse and complex society. CACREP is dedicated to (1) encouraging and promoting the continuing development and improvement of preparation programs, and (2) preparing counseling and related professionals to provide service consistent with the ideal of optimal human development offering specific training, skills, and knowledge in various counseling specialties. CACREP requires foundational training in eight core counseling areas: Professional Identity, Social and Cultural Diversity, Human Growth and Development, Career Development, Helping Relationships, Group Work, Assessment, and Research and Program Evaluation. Furthermore, CACREP requires additional training in counseling specialties. Clinical Mental Health Counseling students also take coursework in mental health counseling foundations, contexts, knowledge, and skills, culminating in a 900 hour Clinical mental health counseling internship. School counseling students take additional coursework in school counseling foundations, contexts, knowledge, and skills, culminating in a 600 hour school counseling internship experience. The master's clinical mental health counseling and master's school counseling programs at UNLV are fully CACREP accredited. For more information about CACREP, visit: [www.cacrep.org](http://www.cacrep.org)

## Financial Aid

For financial aid information, visit <http://www.unlv.edu/finaid>

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## Minority Recruitment

The principles of ethnic diversity and equal rights are accepted and valued by the Department of Educational and Clinical Studies Counselor Education Program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The program's commitment to "equal opportunity" includes active recruitment of minority students as a professional responsibility.

The program works to recruit and retain minority students by:

1. Using objective admissions requirements and review processes.
2. Encouraging students to apply when they are completing a degree program in a related discipline.
3. Encouraging minority alumni of the program to recommend applicants for admission consideration.
4. Seeking to employ minority faculty members to encourage minority student recruitment.

### Statement of Liability Awareness

Counselors and counselors-in-training are not immune to litigation regarding counseling practices. Therefore, in order to protect students in training who are providing direct client services, all students enrolled in clinical courses must obtain and present evidence of adequate personal liability coverage. It is recommended that students select insurance providing a minimum coverage amount of \$1,000,000 incident/\$1,000,000 aggregate.

Students may choose their own insuring company. Sources that will insure counseling students include: The American Counseling Association and The American School Counselor Association. It is the student's responsibility to evaluate the available insurance prior to choosing a particular company. Students may choose to use his or her own personal insuring agent if that company can provide satisfactory coverage.

Students will be asked to present evidence of coverage at the first class meeting of each course involving a clinical component. Evidence of coverage consists of a photocopy of the cover page of the insurance policy that shows the student's name, policy number, and dates of coverage. Courses involving a clinical component include but are not limited to: Counseling Process and Procedures, Practicum, Internship, and Advanced Internship.

## Student Advising

Upon admission to the Department of Educational and Clinical Studies Counselor Education Program, each student (including certificate students) will be assigned a Faculty Advisor to formulate a program of study compatible with the program to which the student has been admitted. Regular meetings with your Faculty Advisor will help ensure your progress and successful program completion. In the event a student is in need of an advisor change, the student must complete the change of advisor form located on the Graduate College website. We recommend that any change of advisor process occur during the first academic year.

When in doubt about any issues or concerns about your Program of Study or progress towards your degree, consult your Faculty Advisor. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to ensure that the Program of Study submitted meets the Program and Graduate College requirements. In addition, students are responsible for ensuring that they have met any and all prerequisite requirements for all courses in which they attempt to enroll.

## Filing a Program of Study

With the consultation and approval of the Faculty Advisor, all students must prepare a Proposed Graduate Degree Program, and complete a form for the Graduate College. The degree program outlines the courses the student will complete for the degree and must conform to the student's chosen program. The proposed program is to be submitted to the Graduate College prior to the student's completion of 16 credit hours of work toward the degree (this is typically done during the first fall semester). If the student requests that 15 or more credit hours (taken prior to formal admission) be considered for use toward the degree, the program must be submitted to the Graduate College within six weeks of the beginning of the semester of admission. It is the student's responsibility to schedule an appointment with his/her Faculty Advisor for the purpose of filing the program well in advance of the program deadline.

## Policy on Independent Studies

Students with a particular interest in an area of study in the counseling field may pursue Independent Study courses with faculty who have expertise and/or substantive interest in the area in question. These Independent Study courses afford students an opportunity to tailor an experience to their individual educational needs. Independent studies are to be used for these purposes only. Independent studies may not be used as a substitute for core program coursework. Students may not enroll in an independent study without prior faculty approval. No more than six credits can be used toward independent study

## Academic Policies for Graduate Students in the Department of Educational and Clinical Studies Counselor Education Program

All full and part-time students entering into the M.Ed. and M.S. programs are required to enroll in CED 701 Introduction to Counseling and CED 727 Counseling Process and Procedures during their first fall semester. A grade of B or better is required in both CED 701 and CED 727 in order to continue taking coursework in the M.S. and M.Ed. programs. Students who make a grade of B- or lower (but not an F) in either CED 701 or CED 727 may not continue taking other CED coursework until successfully repeating these courses. If after a second attempt a student does not make a B or better in CED 701 or CED 727, the student will be officially separated from the graduate program.

Students must make a grade of B or better in CED 741 Practicum in Counseling in order to enroll in CED 751 Internship in Counseling. A grade of B or better is required for all internship courses (CED 751 and CED 775) or they must be repeated.

A student receiving a grade of F in any required course in the degree program will be officially separated from the graduate program. Students must repeat any course in which they make a grade of C- or lower.

Students making three or more grades of B- or lower will be officially separated from the graduate program.

In order to earn the degree, students must have a cumulative degree GPA of 3.0 or better.

## Academic and Interpersonal Benchmarks of Student Progress

In addition to academic development, the program faculty is required by CACREP to maintain ongoing awareness of counseling students' personal development. Thus, the faculty meets regularly to discuss students' personal development. If any concerns are noted for any intrapersonal, interpersonal and behavioral concerns, at a minimum, each advisor attempts to deal with matters of concern on a one to one basis. In the event more invasive action is required to effectively address the matter, then the program faculty will consult the appropriate authority for a consultative response. An appropriate action might be a referral to an identified source to help meet the needs of the student. Students reserve the right to accept or reject the referral option.

Benchmarks of student academic progress include:

Benchmark 1: Successful completion of CED 701 and CED 727.

Benchmark 2: Successful completion of additional core coursework including Counseling & Consultation Theories, Social Justice & Advocacy in Counseling, Introduction to Group Counseling, and Legal & Ethical Issues in Counseling.

Benchmark 3: Successful completion of Counseling Practicum prior to Internship as evidenced by a grade of B or better.

Benchmark 4: Successful involvement in and completion of the Counseling Internship as evidenced by supervisor evaluations, completion of required contact hours, and a grade of B or better.

Benchmark 5: Successful completion of the comprehensive examination prior to graduation from the program.

## Dismissal/Appeal Process (Goodness of Fit)

There are times when a student may be considered for dismissal from the program. The counselor education program follows the dismissal and appeals process as outlined by the Graduate College. Some of the reasons why students may be considered for dismissive action include but is not limited to the following:

### Program Dismissal/Appeal Policy

#### Dismissal

1. Grades below the minimum standard of the program.
2. Student failed the comprehensive exam.
3. Student has exceeded the time limit for completing the degree.
4. Student has not shown continuous enrollment in the degree program.
5. Major ethical/legal violations
6. Student has violated the academic integrity policy.
7. Unsatisfactory progress involving mental health treatment.

The advisor and the program coordinator will forward the necessary paperwork to the department chair documenting why such action is being initiated.

#### Appeal

The UNLV Graduate School sets the policy regarding the student appeals process. It is assumed that the student will follow the Graduate College guidelines when initiating an appeal.

Academic Appeals Policies refer to the [Graduate College Catalog](#)

### Practicum & Internship Policies

Enrollment in practicum and internship are considered critical experiences for successful completion of the M.S. and M.Ed. in counseling. Primary goals of both practicum and internship are to develop strong counseling skills and to promote the development of the student's professional counselor identity in an organization compatible with their program emphasis area. Practicum and Internship activities will take place at departmentally approved sites with appropriately qualified supervisors where the intern can work with clients appropriate for the student's program emphasis.

Practicum (CED 741) placement requires students to complete 100 hours in an approved community setting under supervision from faculty and site supervisors. Students typically spend

6-10 hours per week involved in direct and indirect counseling activities and individual and group supervision. Hours in practicum must be accrued throughout the 15-week semester. Students ordinarily earn practicum credit at a single site; the department faculty must approve requests for an additional practicum site.

Internship (CED 751) requires 300 hours total of direct and indirect counseling in community settings for Clinical Mental Health Students and 600 hours of direct and indirect counseling in school settings for School Counseling students. For Clinical Mental Health students at least 150 hours must involve direct client services. School counseling students must have at least 240 direct client hours. Students enroll in CED 751 (1, 2, 3 credits) based upon the number of hours in the field. Each one-credit section of CED 751 equals 200 internship hours. Note that a \$250 supervisor fee is assessed upon registration for CED 751. Students ordinarily earn internship credit at no more than two sites per semester; the department faculty must approve requests for an additional internship site. The minimum time investment expected at an individual site placement is 15 weeks (one semester). Please note that students who choose to pursue full time completion of their internship hours (30-40 hours weekly) in a single semester may not be employed full time. In the semester prior to beginning Internship, students should select an Internship site in consultation with the Faculty Advisor that is consistent with their needs and their program area. All Practicum and Internship sites must be approved by the CED Program (a current list of approved sites is available on the Department of Educational and Clinical Studies website.).

Work at the Internship site begins only after the student enrolls in, and begins attending, CED 751. Enrollment will be consistent with those guidelines described in the CACREP standards. Students must register for a minimum of one credit hour of CED 751 each semester during which they work as Interns. During internship, the department faculty will provide opportunity for discussion of professional and ethical issues related to the practice of counseling through a weekly on campus seminar.

Attendance at this seminar is required throughout internship.

**Advanced Internship (CED 775)**, only for students in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program, builds upon the skills developed in the first 300 hour internship experience and requires an additional 300 clock hours of supervised counseling experience in an organization compatible with their program emphasis area. Of these hours, a minimum of 150 direct client contact hours is required.

### Application for Practicum & Internship

Applications for Practicum and Internship must be filed by the appropriate deadline in the semester before the semester in which the experience will occur. Students will not be permitted to participate in Practicum, Internship, or Advanced Internship unless an application is on file with all the necessary departmental and faculty approvals.

Students are required to consult with their Faculty Advisor regarding these applications in order to ensure that all prerequisites have been met prior to participation in these experiences.

Applications may be obtained from the field experiences section of the department webpage.

## Practicum Requirements

The counseling practicum experience is designed to foster critical individual and group counseling skills necessary for the quality practice of professional counseling. Students in both school and community mental health programs complete their practicum experience at specific, departmentally approved, community counseling sites. In accordance with standards developed by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), practicum consists of a minimum of 100 hours of supervised counseling activities. Of these, a minimum of 40 hours must be in direct individual counseling services and a minimum of 10 hours must be in direct group counseling services, with the remaining hours to be in appropriate indirect counseling related activities as outlined below:

Direct Hours include:

- Individual counseling (40+ hours)
- Group counseling (10+ hours)

Indirect Hours may include:

- Counselor observation
- Individual case conceptualization planning for client needs
- Researching strategies based on counseling theories
- Writing case progress notes
- Group supervision, UNLV faculty supervision, and on-site supervision

### Recording Client Sessions

In accordance with CACREP standards for counseling supervision, practicum and internship students must have opportunities to record counseling contact with clients. This involves videotaping/electronic recording/digital taping/audiotaping of individual and group counseling. Site placements that do not allow for recording of client sessions will not be considered and students will be placed in other settings. Students are responsible for meeting the recording expectations established by practicum and internship instructors.

## Clinical Mental Health Counseling Internship and Advanced Internship Requirements

The UNLV master's clinical mental health counseling internship experience is designed to continue fostering quality counseling skills, as well as offer interns the opportunity to apply their knowledge of clinical mental health counseling in a field based experience. In accordance with standards developed by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), Internship consists of a minimum of 300 hours of field-based clinical mental health counseling activities. Of these, a minimum of 150 hours must be in direct counseling services, with the remaining hours to be in appropriate indirect counseling. The Advanced Internship consists of a minimum of 300 hours of field-based clinical mental health counseling activities. Of these, a minimum of 150 hours must be direct counseling services, with the remaining hours to be in appropriate indirect counseling.

Direct Hours may include:

- Intake interviews
- Assessments
- Individual counseling
- Group counseling

Indirect Hours may include:

- Case management
- Counselor observation
- Individual case conceptualization planning for client needs
- Researching strategies based on counseling theories
- Writing case progress notes
- Group supervision, UNLV faculty supervision, and on-site supervision
- Professional development activities including: Conferences and workshops

### Recording Client Sessions

In accordance with CACREP standards for counseling supervision, practicum and internship students must have opportunities to record counseling contact with clients. This involves videotaping/electronic recording/digital taping/audiotaping of individual and group counseling. Site placements that do not allow for recording of client sessions will not be considered and students will be placed in other settings. Students are responsible for meeting the recording expectations established by practicum and internship instructors.

## School Counseling Internship Requirements

The UNLV master's school counseling internship experience is designed to continue fostering quality counseling skills, as well as offer interns with the opportunity to apply their knowledge of comprehensive school counseling programs in a field based experience. Because the Nevada endorsement for school counseling is an all-level credential, students are required to gain experience at both elementary (PK-5) and secondary (6-12) levels at some point during their internship. In accordance with standards developed by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the internship consists of a minimum of 600 hours of field-based school counseling activities. Of these, a minimum of 240 hours must be in direct counseling services, with the remaining hours to be in appropriate indirect counseling related activities as outlined below:

240 Direct hours may include:

- Individual counseling
- Group counseling
- Classroom guidance
- Consultation with parents, teachers, administrators, counselors
- Staff development and parent group presentations
- Leadership activities

360 Indirect Hours may include:

- Student classroom observation
- Counselor observation
- Guidance curriculum development
- Individual planning for academic or career needs (including registration activities)
- Group supervision, UNLV faculty supervision, and on-site supervision

Examples of non-counseling duties that do not meet the requirement for direct or indirect hours include:

- Making disciplinary decisions or imposing disciplinary actions
- Student supervision duty including: bus duty, taking tickets at school events, recess duty, lunch duty, hall duty etc.
- Substitute teaching of a class
- Non-counseling related clerical work
- Other duties that do not foster the development of a professional school counselor

### Recording Client Sessions

In accordance with CACREP standards for counseling supervision, practicum and internship students must have opportunities to record counseling contact with clients. This involves videotaping/electronic recording/digital taping/audiotaping of individual and group counseling. Site placements that do not allow for recording of client sessions will not be considered and students will be placed in other settings. Students are responsible for meeting the recording expectations established by practicum and internship instructors. Students are taught the appropriate manner of protecting client confidentiality in skills based courses throughout the curriculum (CED 727, CED 741, CED 751, CED 775).

\*For further information on practicum and internship, consult the Fieldwork Handbook.

## Final Comprehensive Examination Process

The comprehensive examination is required of all students enrolled in the Counselor Education program.

The comprehensive exam is taken during the final semester or one semester after students complete all course work. Comprehensive exams are offered only during the fall and spring semesters. If students will be completing course work during the summer session, the comprehensive exam may be taken during the previous spring semester.

**COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS ARE NOT OFFERED DURING THE SUMMER!** Students must have applied for graduation with the Graduate College to be eligible to register for the comprehensive examination.

The comprehensive examination will be administered two times per year. The examination is administered on campus from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. The administration dates will typically be the second Saturday in October and the second Saturday in February. Students will be notified of the location of the exam via email. Comprehensive exam application deadlines are one month prior to the examination date. Students must register with their faculty advisor to take the comprehensive examination. The faculty advisor will advise the program coordinator of intent to take the examination. If students have not received official confirmation from the program coordinator, they will not be permitted to participate in the examination process.

The Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE) is administered as the comprehensive exam. There is no official study guide for this examination. However, the [CPCE website](#) does provide additional information that could prove helpful when preparing for the examination.

Each student is responsible for paying the administration fee (currently \$55). On the day of the examination, the student will bring a personal check, money order, cashier's check, or money gram made out to CCE. **NO CASH ACCEPTED.** This fee is non-refundable!

Students who do not pass the comprehensive examination will be required to retake **ONLY** those sections that were not rated as passable. Students can retake the examination a maximum of three times. If after the third time a student does not pass the comprehensive exam, then the student could be dismissed from the program. However, if the student is unable to pass after the third attempt, the faculty will recommend separation to graduate college.

Please Note: Students must be enrolled in at least one course in order to take the comprehensive exam.

## Applying for Graduation

The Application for Graduation may be obtained from the Graduate College website. A completed application, properly signed, must be filed with the Graduate College by the date indicated on the

UNLV academic calendar of the semester of graduation. All fees must be paid by this deadline. See the Graduate College website for further information. Students will not be permitted to participate in Commencement ceremonies until they have finished all of the requirements for their degree. Additionally, students must be enrolled for at least one (1) credit during the semester in which they intend to graduate.

**NOTE: IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO ENSURE THAT ALL REQUIREMENTS HAVE BEEN MET BEFORE APPLYING FOR GRADUATION.**

## Steps to Graduation Timeline

Step	Timeline
1. Faculty Advisor assigned	First semester of study
2. Develop proposed degree program with Faculty Advisor and file form with Graduate College	First year of study
3. Submit application for Counseling Practicum to the CED Internship Coordinator	By October 1 <sup>st</sup> for spring enrollment
4. Submit application for Counseling Internship and Advanced Internship to the CED Internship Coordinator	By March 1 <sup>st</sup> for fall enrollment and by October 1 <sup>st</sup> for spring enrollment
5. Notify CED Program Coordinator via RebelMail of intent to participate in the comprehensive final examination process.	By February 1 <sup>st</sup> for spring semester and by September 15 <sup>th</sup> for fall semester Final Examinations are NOT offered in the
6. Apply for graduation	By first week of intended semester of graduation; see Graduate College website for specific deadlines and application materials.

## Student Participation in Professional Counseling Organizations

The Counselor Education Program encourages student participation in any professional counseling organization that supports the interest areas of the student. Please discuss with your advisor about some possible groups for consideration.

### AFFIDAVIT OF COMMITMENT

Read and sign below. Obtain your Faculty Advisor's signature and leave this form with the department's administrative assistant to be placed in your file. You may request a copy for your records.

My signature below indicates that I have read and understand the information in the Counselor Education Program Handbook and I agree to be bound to its stipulations, policies, and procedures. I understand my rights and responsibilities as a graduate student in the Counselor Education Program.

Furthermore, I commit to enroll in courses each consecutive fall and spring semester during my program of study, unless I obtain permission in writing to do otherwise for a legitimate reason and a specific period of time.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Student Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Advisor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date