Stephen F. Austin State University
Department of Human Services

Clinical Mental Health Counselor Education Program

Information Packet
Revised January 2016
THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Stephen F. Austin State University, located in historic Nacogdoches, Texas, was established by the state legislature in 1921. Originally founded as a teachers college, it is now a regional university with an average enrollment of more than 13,000 students each regular semester and more than 5,000 students each summer semester. The University grants baccalaureate degrees and emphasizes master's level study in Arts, Business, Education, Forestry, Humanities and Sciences.

The Department of Human Services offers multifaceted programming. The Department of Human Services was established as a separate department in the College of Education in 1968. The Department offers undergraduate majors in Rehabilitation Services, Orientation and Mobility, Special Education and Communication Disorders. Teaching specialties are offered in Deaf Education and Teacher of the Visually Impaired. Graduate majors include Counseling, School Psychology, Speech and Language Pathology, and Special Education.

PROFESSION OF CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

Clinical Mental Health (CMH) Counseling is a comprehensive profession intended to provide both prevention and remediation by using a combination of direct services and environmental interventions to meet client needs within a community or clinical setting. A focus on primary prevention emphasizes lowering the incidence of emotional problems and promoting positive mental health among apparently well-functioning people within a community context. Remediation attempts to assist those with chronic and acute problems to resolve and/or reduce their problems and the effects of these problems.

CMH counselors are aware of the individual's interaction with his or her social system and therefore seek change in both the individual and the community system. CMH counselors provide 1) direct community services (preventative education); 2) direct client services (direct counseling services); 3) indirect community services (influencing public policy); and 4) indirect client services (advocacy for special groups and individuals).

CMH counselors provide interventions for individuals, small and large groups, and families in their efforts to prevent and/or remediate problems. The Counseling profession is holistic in nature with an emphasis on individual strengths, developmental expectations, and wellness.

Employment

CMH counselors work in a variety of settings. Possible employment settings include state mental health agencies, state and private psychiatric hospitals, probation and correctional institutions, various private, community based counseling settings, university counseling centers, and private practice. Other settings include private industry, including insurance companies and other commercial enterprises, consulting firms, and various employee assistance programs. Employment of CMH counselors is expected to grow faster than other occupations between 2008 and 2018, resulting in a projected 18 percent growth (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

A 60 semester hour master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling is the educational requirement for CMH counselors. For most counseling positions, state licensure as a Professional Counselor or eligibility for licensure is required.

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accredits graduate programs in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. A minimum of two (2) years of study, including both a supervised practicum and internship is required for the master's degree.
Master's degree programs generally offer courses in human development, social and cultural foundations, the helping relationship, group counseling, lifestyle and career development, appraisal and assessment, research and evaluation, and professional orientation.

CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING PROGRAM

The mission of the SFASU Clinical Mental Health Counseling program is to provide high quality academic and clinical training experiences for the purpose of developing licensed professional counselors who are prepared to serve the needs of a diverse client population. Program graduates will demonstrate competence in providing a wide variety of counseling services using evidence-based practices. The program is fully accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The curriculum combines academic theory and technique courses with hands-on practicum and field-site internship experiences. The faculty of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Education Program place great value on exposing students to a variety of theories and techniques of counseling, appropriate professional counseling organizations, and interdisciplinary professional activities.

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program at Stephen F. Austin State University endorses the philosophy that counseling is an empowering process in which persons exercise control over their own lives. The program adheres to concepts of the holistic nature of people, self-responsibility for health promotion and wellness, the uniqueness of each individual, and equal opportunity for counseling services for all persons.

The program and course of study in Clinical Mental Health Counseling is organized to meet the following objectives:

1. To provide a comprehensive base of knowledge in the areas of human growth and development, social and cultural foundations, counseling relationships, group processes, consultation skills, lifestyle and career development, appraisal, research and evaluation, professional orientation, and family counseling.

2. To provide a theoretical and experiential background for conceptualizing and implementing strategies, techniques and therapeutic procedures for individual, group, and family counseling within a multicultural and developmental context.

3. To provide opportunities to develop an ethical and legal responsibility toward the counseling profession through appropriate readings and personal experiences.

4. To provide opportunities for self-development through course work, research, laboratory experiences, group interaction and facilitation, and supervised practicum and internship experiences.

5. To provide support for professional development through inservice and continuing education programs, ready access to current professional literature, and information on counseling employment trends and opportunities.

6. To provide, through classroom and clinical activities, opportunities to develop, identify, and articulate a personal philosophy and orientation for counseling.

7. To provide a working knowledge of the community social service system.

8. To provide opportunities to conduct appropriate assessments and develop treatment plans based on DSM-V diagnostic procedures.
9. To provide opportunities to develop a strong sense of professional identity as a counselor through appropriate readings, membership and participation in the state and national counseling associations (TCA and ACA), and clinical and classroom experiences.

10. To provide the didactic and clinical experiences necessary to become a competent Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC) and Nationally Certified Counselors (NCC).

The primary focus of the master's program in Clinical Mental Health Counseling is the development of a counseling practitioner. Although the program emphasizes the evaluation and use of counseling research, the program's aim is to produce professionals who can provide high quality counseling and counseling related services.

**MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING**

The Master of Arts degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling requires a minimum of 60 semester hours of academic preparation. The degree includes a required core curriculum of 48 hours, 9 hours of practicum and internship, and 3 hours of elective counseling or counseling related courses.

The curriculum is comprised of the following courses:

**CURRICULUM PLAN FOR CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING STUDENTS**

**BACKGROUND COURSES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSY 133</td>
<td>General Psychology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIRST YEAR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COU 510</td>
<td>Survey of Abnormalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COU 520</td>
<td>Professional Orientation in Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COU 531</td>
<td>Theories of Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COU 585</td>
<td>Lifespan Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COU 541</td>
<td>Research in Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COU 533</td>
<td>Counseling Skills and Techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COU 535</td>
<td>Multicultural Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COU 523</td>
<td>Legal and Ethical Issues in Counseling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SECOND YEAR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COU 521</td>
<td>Substance Abuse Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COU 522</td>
<td>Family Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COU 525</td>
<td>Vocational and Educational Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COU 530</td>
<td>Crisis Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COU 539</td>
<td>Professional Counseling Practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COU 559</td>
<td>Assessment in Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COU 591</td>
<td>Mental Health and Psychopathology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COU 528</td>
<td>Group Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COU XXX</td>
<td>Elective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**THIRD YEAR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COU 594</td>
<td>Practicum in CMH Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COU 595</td>
<td>Internship in Clinical Mental Health Counseling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of these courses may be taken during the summer sessions.

Total 60 hours
APPLICATION AND ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES

IMPORTANT! All graduate students in the Clinical Mental Health Counselor Education Program should take special care to carefully read the guidelines outlined in the Stephen F. Austin State University Graduate Bulletin for the year in which they entered their program. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to the regulations for admission, academic policies, application for graduation, and general requirements for the Master's degree--especially the Checkpoints for the Master's Candidate.

ADMISSION TO THE MASTER'S PROGRAM IN CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

Admission to the Master's degree program in Clinical Mental Health Counseling is contingent upon admission to the Graduate School; therefore, students applying to the Graduate Clinical Mental Health Counselor Education Program (www.sfasu.edu/hs) must first apply to the Stephen F. Austin State University Graduate School. Details regarding Graduate School application are contained in the Graduate Bulletin (http://www.sfasu.edu/bulletin/). Criteria for admission to the Graduate School includes a 2.8 GPA on the last 60 hours of undergraduate work and a 2.5 on all undergraduate work.

All admission materials must be received by the Counselor Education Admissions Committee prior to the application deadline for the intended semester of enrollment. The deadlines are as follows:

- Fall admission – June 1
- Spring admission – October 1
- Summer admission – May 1.

All required materials for application to the Graduate School and the Counselor Education program must be received by the deadline in order for an application to be complete. Failure to meet the above deadlines may result in delaying the admission decision until the next semester.

Before your admission to the counselor education program can be considered, we require:

To the Graduate School
(Liberal Arts North, Room 423)

1. Application to the Graduate School with all transcripts. Apply on line at http://www.sfasu.edu/graduate/ProspStudents/apply_reg.html
2. A $50.00 application fee.

To the Counselor Education Program Admissions Committee

3. Autobiographical letter of application – Your responses to the following questions should total 2-4 pages typed and double spaced.
   a. Why did you choose counseling as a possible career and what life experiences have led you to your decision to enter the helping profession?
   b. A statement of your professional goals and your understanding of the counseling profession.
4. Three letters of recommendation (using the program recommendation form found at http://www.sfasu.edu/hs/counseling/counsel-recommendation-form.pdf). One letter should be from a professional in the field of counseling if possible. Letters from family members, social acquaintances, or pastors will not be accepted.
5. Current Resume.
6. Completion of the Personal Data Form which can be found on the program website.
Do not submit your application materials in any type of binder, portfolio, or folder. Transcripts are to be sent to the Graduate School, Stephen F. Austin State University, P.O. Box 13024, SFA Station, Nacogdoches, TX 75962.

*Please return your autobiographical letter, three letters of recommendation, resume, and program data form to:*

Counselor Education Admissions Committee
Stephen F. Austin State University
Department of Human Services
Box 13019, SFA Station
Nacogdoches, TX 75962-3019

The applicant's file is initially reviewed by the Counseling Program Admissions Committee, which makes recommendations for the interviewing of individual applicants to the program. If the applicant is recommended for an interview, the student will be contacted via email to schedule. After the interview, the Committee makes a final decision regarding admission. Students are notified by email of the committee's recommendation on their application.

The Counselor Education Program has enacted a rolling admission policy. Candidates for admission will be considered in the 30 days following a completed application packet. The packet is not reviewable until all admission criteria are completed. Incomplete applications will be maintained for 60 days. After 60 days, the file will be closed and reapplication will be necessary.

Although the Graduate School allows students to take up to 12 semester hours of coursework under "Post-Baccalaureate Student" status prior to their being formally accepted into one of the school's recognized degree programs the **Counselor Education Program only allows six (6) semester hours before formal admission** to the program. Attending classes under the Post Baccalaureate student status does not imply admission to the program. Applicants who have not completed the prerequisite background courses will not be permitted to take counseling courses at the Post Baccalaureate status until those courses are completed.

**NOTE:** Student's who have not met all of the requirements for clear admission into the Master's degree program in Clinical Mental Health Counseling may not apply for financial aid with any of the Federal stipend or local scholarships available through the department.

The Review of all graduate applicants involves consideration of multiple factors. In addition to criteria set by the Graduate School, the Department may consider the following:

- GPA
- Match between professional goals and the Counselor Education Program’s mission
- Letters of recommendation
- Professional development, experience and accomplishments
- Bilingual/multilingual proficiency
- Evidence of leadership potential
- Personal interviews

Other factors, including quality of prior educational opportunities (high school and undergraduate), family's educational background, disability, socio-cultural experiences, English language proficiency (for international students, measured by the TOEFL score), and any other factors which may have significantly influenced the applicant's academic and professional record to-date may also be considered. Program areas may use additional factors in the review process, as appropriate (e.g., minimum number of years of teaching or field experience, adequate professional preparation in the chosen area of specialization).
Steps in the graduate admissions review process:

- The completed application file is forwarded to the chosen program area for review;
- The Counselor Education Admissions Committee makes an admission recommendation.
- The recommendation by the Counselor Education Admissions Committee is forwarded to the Graduate School.
- The applicant is notified via email of the final decision by the Director of Counselor Education Programs and by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Applicants are not guaranteed admission even though they meet these minimum requirements.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Membership in professional organizations is a key element in developing professional identity. In order to demonstrate a commitment to developing professional identity, students are strongly encouraged to join ACA and TCA during their graduate program. Student membership fees are available from both organizations.

For further information and applications for ACA see www.counseling.org

For information and applications for TCA (Texas Counseling Association), see www.txca.org

LICENSURE

The Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors (TSBEPC) has been designated by the Texas Legislature as the licensing body for counselors in Texas who want to pursue a career as a Licensed Professional Counselor. Any person practicing counseling activities and/or claiming the credentials of a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) is required by law to submit appropriate credentials for evaluation and take an examination before recognition is granted. The Board may initiate requirements over and beyond those one might satisfy in any given degree program.

Applicants with a criminal history may be denied licensure by the TSBEPC. An individual with a criminal history is encouraged to contact the Board for a determination of licensure consideration before beginning a graduate program.

Bobbie Alexander, Executive Secretary
Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors
P.O. Box 12197, Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711
(512) 834-6658
http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/hcq/plc/lpc/lpc_def.htm
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the cost of attendance?

   The average cost for full time attendance (9 hours) is approximately $3000 per semester for tuition and fees. The cost of books for each semester is approximately $500-750.

2. Is there financial aid available?

   Financial aid is available to all students through the Financial Aid office. The majority of the aid is in the form of student loans. There are no counseling specific scholarships. Depending upon personal income, grants may be available. Students are encouraged to research outside scholarships through employers, private foundations, or service groups.

3. How long does it take to complete the program

   Full time students take between 9-12 hours per semester. Due to scheduling or courses and course sequencing, it takes 6-7 semesters (including summers) to complete the degree. Most full time students graduate in 2.5 – 3.5 years.

4. Is the program online?

   The SFASU Counselor Education faculty feels strongly that highly qualified professional counselors cannot be trained in a fully online environment. We pride ourselves in the relationships we develop with students and the quality of face-to-face supervision provided. We have identified courses that are appropriate for online instruction. Approximately 40% of the courses are offered online.

5. Can I work and go to school?

   Approximately half of our students are employed full time while completing the program. Classes are offered once a week at 4:30 and 7:15 in order to meet the needs of working students. Half-time enrollment is recommended for students who are enrolled full time.

6. Where are internships completed?

   Internships for CMHC students can be completed in any setting that provides counseling services and has an appropriately credentialed site supervisor. Intern sites in the area include Burke Center, SFASU Counseling and Career Services, and Nacogdoches County Juvenile Probation. Students are able to complete an internship in another city if it is within a reasonable traveling distance for the University Supervisor.

7. Can I work during internship?

   If your current place of employment provides counseling services and agrees to allow you to complete your internship on site, it is possible to continue to work full time. Internship requires 6 credit hours from completion. The internship requires 600 hours with a minimum of 240 direct hours. It is possible for students to complete the internship in one long semester (6 hours/40 working hours per week). It can also be taken over two long semesters (3 hours each semester/20 working hours per week). Most CMHC internships are unpaid unless it is done at your place of employment.
Stephen F. Austin State University
Counselor Education Program Recommendation Form

To the Applicant: It is suggested this form should be given to: (a) a professor, outside the SFA Counselor Education program, with whom you have studied; (b) an employee supervisor under whom you have taught or worked; and/or (c) a practicing counselor (if possible). If those categories are not available to you, the recommender should be able to comment on your qualifications for graduate study and as a participant in the counseling profession. *Recommendations from personal friends, social acquaintances, and pastors will not be considered.* A letter of recommendation should accompany the form. Letters of recommendation will not be accepted without this fully completed form, including the applicant information and signature.

Desired program? (Check one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Clinical Mental Health</th>
<th>Rehabilitation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant</th>
<th>Recommender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your Name:</td>
<td>Your Name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security #</td>
<td>Organization and address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Address</td>
<td>Your Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City, State, Zip</td>
<td>Relationship to Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone Number</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You may wish to retain your right to review information provided by the recommender you choose. Some persons prefer not to complete recommendation forms unless they can be assured of the confidentiality of their comments. It is our opinion that comments provided on a confidential basis are likely to be of more help to us in judging important characteristics such as creativity, originality, independence and research capability. Therefore, the Stephen F. Austin State University Counselor Education Faculty are affording you the opportunity to waive your right of subsequent access to this reference statement. In any event, your application for admission and/or financial support will be given full consideration based on all the information accumulated in your application file, including this form, regardless of your decision on waiving your right of future review. It is our policy to shred recommendation forms and letters following the admission decision.

I do waive my right to subsequent access to this recommendation form

I retain my right of subsequent access to this recommendation form.

SIGNATURE

DATE
To the Recommender: the above named individual has applied for admission to our Masters degree program in either school, community or rehabilitation counseling. We are asking you to provide information and evaluation concerning this applicant’s ability to complete graduate study in counseling and/or their potential for success in the counseling profession.

1. How long and under what circumstances have you known the applicant?

2. Please rate the applicant with others with whom you have worked in a similar capacity by placing a check (✓) in the appropriate box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualities</th>
<th>Lower Third</th>
<th>Middle Third</th>
<th>Upper Third</th>
<th>Top 10%</th>
<th>Not Able to Judge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to collaborate with others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional maturity and stability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics/Personal integrity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendliness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative and self-direction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual ability/critical thinking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observed competence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential as a Counselor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance for ambiguity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing ability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. On a separate letterhead, please attach a letter that includes a description of the applicant’s particularly relevant strengths, limitations, and other pertinent information that might help in making our decision.

4. At what level of overall confidence would you recommend the applicant?

   Not Recommend          Recommend with Reservations
   Recommend with
   Reservations
   Recommend
   Strongly Recommend
   (Please specify in letter)

Recommender Signatures and Information

Name (PRINT) ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
Signature of recommender ___________________________ Email address ___________________________

Stephen F. Austin State University does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, national or ethnic group, religious preference, disability, or sex in any aspects of its operations.