Master of Arts in Counseling

The Counselor Education Program within the College of Education at the University of New Mexico offers both master’s and doctoral degrees that are accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The master’s degree requires a minimum of 60 semester credit hours of course work and is designed for students to develop the requisite competencies for a career as a professional counselor. Areas of focus in clinical mental health counseling and school counseling are currently available. The master’s degree program currently meets the preparatory standards for eligibility for licensure as a licensed mental health counselor (LMHC) in New Mexico and State Board of Education certification as a school counselor.

The Counselor Education Mission Statement

The Counselor Education Program prepares students to address the counseling and human development needs of a pluralistic society. The program recruits and retains students who reflect the broad range of diversity found in New Mexico. Students graduate with knowledge and skills in core competency areas that include professional identity, social and cultural foundations, human growth and development, career development, helping relationships, group work, assessment, and research and program evaluation.

The Counselor Education Program features an integration of theory, research, practice, and interdisciplinary collaboration. It is intended to prepare counselors who are informed; who will be sensitive to the diversity and uniqueness of individuals, families, and communities; and who will value and promote the dignity, potential, and well-being of all people. The program prepares professional school and clinical mental health counselors (master’s level) and counselor educators (PhD level) to respond to a world with challenging and pressing social problems.

Faculty members are committed to integrating teaching, scholarship, research, clinical practice, and service, while promoting a climate of social justice, systemic change, and advocacy. The faculty’s goal is to infuse multicultural and diversity training in all aspects of academic and clinical coursework in order to prepare multiculturally competent counselors and counselor educators. From the beginning of the graduate course of study, classroom education is combined with real-world integration and experiences. These experiences provide the opportunity for students to work in and with various educational settings and community agencies.

The Counselor Education Aspirations

Consistent with the goals and vision of UNM and the College of Education, the Counselor Education Program is committed to promoting excellence and diversity in teaching, scholarship, and community service. Faculty and students work to promote an understanding of human development and psychological health that will improve and foster optimal potential for individuals, families, and our communities.

The program features an integration of theory, research, and practice along with interdisciplinary collaboration that is intended to prepare counselors who are informed; who will be sensitive to the diversity and uniqueness of individuals, families, and communities; and who will value and promote the dignity, potential, and well-being of all people.
Courses Offered

The Counselor Education Program offers a variety of required and elective courses. Many of our students take more that the required 60 hours of course work. Our core courses are those courses that comprise the basic skills and professional knowledge necessary to function as a professional counselor. Consult the UNM Catalog for course prerequisites. The degree requirements are as follows:

**Foundational Core Courses**
- COUN 510 Professional Orientation and Ethics
- COUN 517 Theories of Counseling and Human Behavior
- COUN 584 Multicultural Issues in the Helping Professions
- COUN 518 Group Counseling

**Additional Required Courses**
- COUN 576 Diagnosis of Mental Disorders
- COUN 513 Career Counseling
- COUN 515 Testing and Assessment in Counseling
- COUN 516 Crisis, Disaster and Trauma Counseling
- COUN 577 Substance Use and Abuse
- COUN 522 Communication Skills in Counseling
- COUN 590 Practicum in Counseling
- COUN 519 Group Counseling Internship
- COUN 595 Internship (6 credits)
- EDPY 503 Principles of Human Development or FCS 503 Seminar in Human Growth and Development
- EDPY 500 Survey of Research Methods in Education or EDPY 505 Conducting Quantitative Educational Research
- EDPY 502 Survey of Statistics in Education or EDPY 511 Introductory Educational Statistics

**School Counseling Area of Focus**
- COUN 545 School Counseling
- COUN 541 Counseling Children and Adolescents
- COUN 581 Sexuality in Counseling and Psychotherapy

**Clinical Mental Health Counseling Area of Focus**
- COUN 521 Clinical Mental Health Counseling
- COUN 581 Sexuality in Counseling and Psychotherapy
- COUN 560 Family Counseling

**Matriculation Requirements**

In order to be admitted into the master’s program, students must have a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university in accordance with the requirements of the UNM admissions policies and Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) guidelines and dates. While specific areas of study (majors) are not required, many of our students come from behavioral sciences and human services-related fields such as psychology, social work, and sociology.
Application and Admission Procedures

Please carefully follow the instructions on the application instruction checklist that you can access on the Counselor Education webpage (https://coe.unm.edu/departments-programs/ifce/counselor-education/index.html).

Application to the Counselor Education master’s program includes application fee, official transcripts, a completed university application (submitted at http://www.unm.edu/apply), a letter of intent/personal statement, three recommendations, and a program application (must be completed), found on the Counselor Education website. Please combine your letter of intent and your program application into one document with a page break and upload to the letter of intent section. The Counselor Education application form requires a description of previous college course work, employment history, three references, and a letter of intent/personal statement. The master’s degree application does not require the GRE.

Application deadlines are August 15 for admission in the following spring semester and January 15 for admission the following fall semester. Students are admitted for the semester for which they are accepted. Deferring admissions requires program faculty approval. Application deadlines are firm. Only those applications that are complete (including all paperwork, fees, transcripts, etc.) will be reviewed. No Exceptions. We recommend you submit all application materials at least two weeks prior to the deadline dates to ensure the processing of your application.

For questions about the master of arts in counseling, please contact the Counselor Education office by calling (505) 277-4535 or emailing ifce@unm.edu. In order to be fair to all applicants, faculty members do not meet individually with applicants. Potential applicants are encouraged to attend information sessions regarding the program.

It is your responsibility to ensure that all application materials have been uploaded to your online application. You may check on the status of your application by logging on to LoboWeb.

How Your Application Is Evaluated

Six criteria are applied in evaluating your application. Applications that address each of these issues receive more consideration.

1. Academic Record and Potential
The Graduate School and the Counselor Education Program seek students who have an undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 (B) or greater. Students must have a bachelor’s degree or be in their last semester of their undergraduate program. If your undergraduate grade point average is not representative of the academic work of which you are currently capable, you may indicate that your last two years of undergraduate work are more indicative of your potential or present grades you achieved as a nondegree graduate student.

2. Academic Background
We are seeking students who have 18 credit hours of upper division (300–400 level course) undergraduate and/or graduate course work in the behavioral sciences. Courses that can be used to satisfy this requirement include, for example, education, psychology, family studies, sociology, anthropology, nursing, and social work, depending on the course content.

3. Relevant Work Experience
We will assess the quality of your work/volunteer experience and its relevance to your development as a counselor. It is to your advantage to tell us about your work/volunteer training including experiences teaching, working in human service settings, providing counseling services, and so forth.
4. Letters of Recommendation
Three letters of recommendation are required to be submitted via the online application for your application to be considered complete. One recommendation letter must be from a professor and the other two may be either academic or from work supervisors, each of whom can attest to your motivation and potential. You will need to provide the names and emails of the persons from whom you are requesting recommendations. Many referees prefer to write letters on their own stationary; these may be uploaded to your online application. They MUST still complete the numerical ratings on the online application. Personal or character references from friends, clergy, politicians, or family members are usually not rated as highly as detailed letters from individuals who know about the counseling profession and are in a position to judge your professional and academic potential.

5. Letter of Intent/Personal Statement (3 pages maximum)
Provide a statement that gives a supporting rationale for pursuing a master’s degree in counseling. Include your long-term and short-term goals, your personal qualities, and characteristics to support your pursuit of the counseling degree. Also discuss your experiences with cultural diversity and cultural background. Limit your statement to three double-spaced pages using 10–12-point font. Please combine your letter of intent and your program application into one document with a page break and upload to the letter of intent section. We consider your statement a sample of the writing we can expect from you as a student.

6. Multicultural Competence
In your personal statement describe your understanding or cultural pluralism. Tell us about your experiences or studies of people from cultures, backgrounds, or beliefs different from your own.

Interview With the Faculty
Typically, about half of the applicants (selected from an initial screening based on the aforementioned criteria) are invited to interview with the faculty. This provides us with the opportunity to meet potential students and for you to expand on your qualifications for admission to the Counselor Education Program. These interviews are only done in person.

Disclaimer
The Counselor Education Program complies with UNM admissions policies and OGS guidelines and dates. Admission to the MA or PhD programs in no way guarantees traverse, practicum, and/or internship placement; licensure; or employment. Additionally, finger printing and background checks may be required.