

Counseling Master's Degree Options

Clinical Mental Health and Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling Licensure Process

Clinical mental health and marriage, couples, and family counseling students at Montana State University graduate with a master's degree in counseling. The program is accredited by CACREP (Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs). Upon graduation, students must apply for a licensed professional counselor candidate's license from the State of Montana Board of Behavioral Health. The candidate's license is a training license while students accrue the required post-master's counseling hours to obtain their full LCPC (licensed clinical professional counselor). This license allows the graduate to practice independently.

School Counseling Licensure Process

School counseling students at Montana State University graduate with a master's degree in school counseling. The school counseling program is accredited by the Montana Office of Public Instruction and when students graduate, they are eligible to apply for a Class 6 license or a school counseling endorsement on their preexisting Class 2 (standard teaching) license. Upon review of degree completion, licensure applicants are granted an appropriate license to practice as a school counselor in grade levels K-12 throughout the state.

Interested students may obtain more descriptions by visiting the department website.

Financial Assistance

Teaching assistantships are available to 2nd Year counseling students within the Department of Counseling. Assistantships are a nine-month appointment. Research assistantships may be available with individual faculty members who have funded grants or contracts. Stipends vary depending on the type of appointment. See the costs section of the Graduate School website for detailed information on appointment criteria.

Certifications and Licensure

Licensed Professional Counselor or Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor

The MS in Counseling in the Department of Counseling leads to the opportunity to become licensed in the state of Montana as a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor. Following completion of a master's degree, the student must complete a minimum of 1500 hours of supervised counseling practice prior to sitting for and passing the NCE exam.

Licensed Addiction Counselor

The addictions certificate in the Department of Counseling prepares students to pursue licensure as a Licensed Addiction Counselor. State licensure requirements vary. Course credits often count toward interstate licensure; however, the student is encouraged to verify licensure requirements for the specific state they are pursuing licensure prior to applying.

Class 6 (Specialist certificate)

The school counseling master's degree leads to the opportunity to become licensed as a Class 6 specialist through the Office of Public Instruction. Following completion of the master's degree, the student is eligible to apply for this license in the State of Montana.

Clinical Mental Health Counseling

The 60-credit clinical mental health counseling option prepares counselors to apply principles of human development, counseling theory, learning theory, group dynamics, and the etiology of mental illness and dysfunctional behavior in their work at a variety of mental health facilities. While a student's clinical focus can expand following graduation, the primary focus of your training in the program will be on working with adults, 18 and older.

The clinical mental health counseling area of study provides students with 700 hours of supervised experience in appraisal, individual, group counseling, and consultation in primarily clinic and community agencies. The goals of the clinical mental health counseling program are the following: to enhance students' personal and professional development as counselors; to increase their ability to understand the characteristics and concerns of various client populations and their environments; and to develop their knowledge and skills in use of theory-based counseling model.

The clinical mental health counseling option meets educational licensure requirements for a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC) in the State of Montana. After licensure, graduates of the clinical mental health program work in a variety of mental health counseling contexts where they see adults.

Year 1	Credits
Summer	
HDCO 502 - Cnsl Ethic Prof Orient	2
HDCO 558 - Career Counseling	2
HDCO 508 - Counseling Theories I	2
Fall	
HDCO 503 - Prof Issues in Counseling	3
HDCO 510 - Counseling Theories II	3
HDCO 521 - Counseling Skills Lab	3
HDCO 522 - Group Counseling	3
Spring	
HDCO 524 - Crisis Counseling: Theory and Practice	3
HDCO 530 - Mind-Body Well-Being Self-Care	3
HDCO 564 - Diagnosis and Mental Health	3
HDCO 571 - Prof Counsel Practicum	3
Year Total:	30
Year 2	Credits
Summer	
HDCO 550 - Counseling Research and Evaluation	3
HDCO 551 - Appraisal	3
HDCO 598 - Internship	2
Fall	
HDCO 563 - Multicultural Awareness	3
HDCO 568 - Mental Health Methods	3
HDCO 598 - Internship	2
Electives	3
Spring	
HDCO 523 - Theory and Practice of Addiction (can be taken 1st or 2nd year)	3
HDCO 554 - Develop Theory Across Lifespan	3
HDCO 598 - Internship	2
Electives	3
Year Total:	30
Total Program Credits:	60

Partial List of Electives

CHTH 430	Mental Health & Social Issues in Aging	3
CHTH 435	Human Response To Stress	3
EDU 612	Critical Race Theory	3
HDCO 525	Counsel Child & Adolescents	3
HDCO 526	Adventure Counseling	3
HDCO 556	Sexuality Counseling	3
HDCO 565	Couples Counseling	3
HDCO 569	Advanced Family Counseling	3
HDFS 451	Trauma and Recovery: A Lifespan Perspective	3

Addictions Counseling (AC rubric) courses offered through the Addictions Counseling certificate program can also be taken as electives. These can count toward becoming a Licensed Addictions Counselor in the state of Montana post-graduation. Please talk to your advisor if you are interested in pursuing this avenue.

Marriage, Couples and Family Counseling

The 60-credit marriage, couples, and family counseling option prepares counselors to address mental health and relationship problems with individuals, couples, families, and children from a family systems perspective. Students are taught a conceptual framework for assessment and intervention which focuses on the multiple systems and family context of individual development. Emphasis is on a positive, competency-based view of individual and family strengths. This approach examines the larger environments in which individuals and families interact and the plethora of influences (i.e., social, cultural, and economic) that affect human growth and development. Interpersonal issues between family members and the family and outer environmental systems are highlighted.

In addition to family systems theory, students are well grounded in individual and group counseling theories. Collaboration between marriage and family counselors and other mental health care providers is emphasized.

The marriage, couple, and family counseling option meets educational licensure requirements for a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC) in the state of Montana. After licensure, these graduates work in a variety of counseling contexts where they see children, adolescents, individuals, couples, and families. In this program track students are prepared to work with individuals, as well as with couples and families. This extended focus beyond individual counseling provides a well-rounded training experience.

Year 1	Credits
Summer	
HDCO 502 - Cnsl Ethic Prof Orient	2
HDCO 558 - Career Counseling	2
HDCO 508 - Counseling Theories I	2
Fall	
HDCO 503 - Prof Issues in Counseling	3
HDCO 510 - Counseling Theories II	3
HDCO 522 - Group Counseling	3
HDCO 521 - Counseling Skills Lab	3
Spring	
HDCO 524 - Crisis Counseling: Theory and Practice	3
HDCO 525 - Counsel Child & Adolescents (recommended by not required)	3
HDCO 564 - Diagnosis and Mental Health	3

HDCO 571 - Prof Counsel Practicum	3
Year Total:	30

Year 2	Credits
Summer	
HDCO 550 - Counseling Research and Evaluation	3
HDCO 551 - Appraisal	3
HDCO 598 - Internship	2
Fall	
HDCO 563 - Multicultural Awareness	3
HDCO 565 - Couples Counseling	3
HDCO 598 - Internship	2
Spring	
HDCO 523 - Theory and Practice of Addiction (can be taken first or second year)	3
HDCO 554 - Develop Theory Across Lifespan	3
HDCO 569 - Advanced Family Counseling	3
HDCO 598 - Internship	2
Electives	3
Year Total:	30
Total Program Credits:	60

Partial List of Electives

CHTH 430	Mental Health & Social Issues in Aging	3
CHTH 435	Human Response To Stress	3
HDCO 526	Adventure Counseling	3
HDCO 530	Mind-Body Well-Being Self-Care	3
HDCO 556	Sexuality Counseling	3
HDCO 568	Mental Health Methods	0,3
HDFS 451	Trauma and Recovery: A Lifespan Perspective	3

Addictions courses offered through the addictions certificate program can also be taken as electives. These courses can count toward becoming a Licensed Addictions Counselor (LAC) post-graduation. Please talk to your advisor if you are interested in pursuing this avenue.

School Counseling

The master's degree in school counseling is a 60-credit program designed to prepare students to work in public or private schools as professional counselors. Upon completion, students are eligible to apply for certification as a school counselor with the Montana Office of Public Instruction. School counselors in Montana can be certified with a Class 6 (specialist) certificate (for those without a Montana teaching certificate), or certified with a school counseling endorsement on a Montana teaching certificate.

School counseling students take a common core of counseling and human development courses. This core of course work provides all students with the knowledge and skills necessary to be a professional counselor and follows the standards developed by CACREP. In addition, students in the school counseling major also study aspects of counseling germane to the school setting. The program focuses on a comprehensive and developmental approach to designing and implementing a school counseling program, and strives to provide the necessary self-awareness, knowledge, and skills for counseling students to become competent and capable professional school counselors.

Summer		
HDCO 502	Cnsl Ethic Prof Orient	2

HDCO 508	Counseling Theories I	2
HDCO 558	Career Counseling	2
Fall		
HDCO 505	Professional Issues in School Counseling	3
HDCO 510	Counseling Theories II	3
HDCO 521	Counseling Skills Lab	3
HDCO 522	Group Counseling	3
Spring		
HDCO 523	Theory and Practice of Addiction <small>can be taken 1st or 2nd year</small>	3
HDCO 524	Crisis Counseling: Theory and Practice	3
HDCO 525	Counsel Child & Adolescents	3
HDCO 564	Diagnosis and Mental Health	3
HDCO 571	Prof Counsel Practicum	3
Summer		
HDCO 506	School Counseling Programs	3
HDCO 550	Counseling Research and Evaluation	3
HDCO 551	Appraisal	3
Fall		
HDCO 563	Multicultural Awareness	3
HDCO 598	Internship	3
Directed Elective		3
Spring		
HDCO 554	Develop Theory Across Lifespan	3
HDCO 598	Internship	3
Directed Elective		3
Total Credits		60