

# **M.A. PROGRAM IN SCHOOL COUNSELING**

**Program Description**  
**Department of Educational Psychology**  
**Neag School of Education**  
**The University of Connecticut**  
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## **M.A. Program in School Counseling**

The Master of Arts Program in School Counseling at the University of Connecticut is designed to facilitate self-understanding and self-development through individual and small group activities. In addition to a common core of curricular experiences, all students in the program are expected to demonstrate their knowledge and skill in the foundations of school counseling; in coordinating counseling program components as they relate to the total school community; in the practice of school counseling including program development, implementation, and evaluation; in counseling and guidance; in consultation; and in clinical instruction (CACREP, 2001).

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the University of Connecticut's School Counseling Program is to prepare professional school counselors to work in elementary, middle, and secondary school settings as educational leaders; advocates for all students, with special emphasis on poor and minority youth; users of school data to effect systemic change; providers of individual counseling, group counseling, and classroom guidance services; and collaborators with faculty, parents, and community agencies. Our mission is set within the American School Counselor Association's National Model for School Counseling and incorporates the domains of academic, career and personal/social development.

Students who graduate from the program will have the necessary skills to: demonstrate effectiveness by assessing and evaluating their school counseling programs; actively advocate for educational equity, work to close the achievement gap for poor and minority youth; and promote academic achievement for all students.

### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will:

1. Possess the ability and demonstrate the skills, characteristics and attributes to meet state and national standards for certification as a school counselor by successfully completing

a core curriculum that includes 10 content areas, i.e., *Human Growth and Development, Social and Cultural Foundations, Helping Relationships, Group Work, Career and Life Style Development, Appraisal, Research and Program Evaluation, Professional Orientation, Foundations and Contents of School Counseling, and Collaborating/Consulting*; a progression of supervised experiences in counseling and guidance; and a course of study in special education thereby enabling them to practice as a school counselor for grades pre-K through 12.

2. Demonstrate knowledge about the history, philosophy, and current trends in school counseling and educational systems.
3. Apply both developmental and intervention models to the total development of students as unique individuals within educational settings.
4. Use school-based data to design comprehensive programs to meet specific school counseling program goals, including action plans for implementation and evaluation.
5. Develop mechanisms for referral, collaboration, and public relations.
6. Become leaders in the school and advocates for educational equity for all students.
7. Be aware of current ethical and legal issues, laws, and both federal and state regulations relevant to school counseling.
8. Apply current and emerging technological resources to: 1) enhance counseling and guidance planning, and 2) promote informed academic, career, and personal/social choices.
9. Demonstrate accountability by using outcome-based data to effect systemic change.

## **PROGRAM OF STUDY**

The school counseling program's emphasis is comprised of a minimum of two (2) full academic years, defined as four (4) semesters of approved graduate-level study with a minimum of 51 semester hour credits required of all students.

To meet state<sup>1</sup> and national standards for certification as a school counselor, the core curriculum includes 10 content areas, a progression of supervised experiences in counseling and guidance, and a course of study in special education.

The 10 content areas are;

1. Human Growth and Development
2. Social and Cultural Diversity

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<sup>1</sup> Certification regulations Sec. 10-145d Initial Educator Certificate Requirements, Effective July 1, 2004

3. Helping Relationships
4. Group Work
5. Career and Life Style Development
6. Assessment
7. Research and Program Evaluation
8. Professional Identity and Ethics
9. Foundations and Contents of School Counseling
10. Collaborating/Consulting

### **PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT**

All program students are encouraged to join the American Counseling Association (ACA), the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), which relate to their professional training and aspirations. Program students are encouraged to be involved in state, regional and national conference programs and presentations as well as local and regional workshops and professional development seminars.

### **STUDENT EVALUATION**

Upon enrollment in the School Counseling Program, students will undergo mid-point or process screening leading to retention (i.e., candidacy), or non-retention. Process screening occurs during the first and second semesters of full-time study, or in the case of part-time study, during enrollment in at least six (6) semester hours of coursework up to a maximum of twelve (12) semester hours of course work. Criteria for retention in the program include: satisfactory academic performance, satisfactory progress as a counselor in training, and supportive recommendations of the faculty. Implied in these criteria is the notion that some individuals may not possess the attributes or characteristics necessary for successful functioning as a school counselor.

That is, criteria for evaluation retention (candidacy) include more than satisfactory academic performance. Adherence to the American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Professional Ethics will be employed in informing, explaining, and advising those students who are not recommended for retention (candidacy) in the program due to unsatisfactory performance in regard to academic and/or non-academic criteria.

In accord with Graduate School Policy, satisfactory academic performance is defined as the completion of all academic coursework with an overall Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 or above on a 4.0 point scale.

## **PREREQUISITES IN THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES**

Although flexibility in program admission is highly valued and encouraged, prerequisites in the behavioral sciences may be necessary to accommodate for individual differences in student competencies and understandings acquired prior to entering the program. Thus, students not possessing a Bachelor's degree in education, psychology, sociology, human development, anthropology, or related areas may be required to enroll in appropriate background courses in the behavioral sciences. These pre-requisite courses will not be included as part of the 51 credit hours for graduation.

## **COURSE SYLLABI**

Syllabi for all courses in the School Counseling program may be obtained by students prior to course enrollment from the course professor, and/or by contacting the departmental secretary in the Department of Educational Psychology, at 860-486-4031.

## **FACULTY**

The School Counseling program faculty includes four full-time professors who teach core courses in the program. Additional faculty in the Department of Educational Psychology teach core program courses in evaluation, consultation, and special education.

All faculty members in the School Counseling program are productive researchers providing reference to relevant research findings in instructional experiences, supervision of student research activities, and collaborative involvement of students in program faculty research activities.

### The School Counseling Program faculty:

Dr. Robert Colbert, Assistant Professor, Educational Psychology, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin.

Dr. Orv C. Karan, Professor, Educational Psychology, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin.

Dr. James O'Neil, Professor, Educational Psychology, Ph.D., University of Maryland

Dr. Rachelle Pérusse, Associate Professor, Educational Psychology, Ph.D., Virginia Tech University.

## **THE CURRICULUM**

Curricular experiences and demonstrated knowledge and skill competence in each of the following common-core areas are required of all students in the school counseling program. The common-core areas and required courses in each area are listed below. Specific course descriptions for each of the listed courses may be found in the Graduate School Bulletin. Each of

the listed courses equals 3 hours of credit (although there are special provisions allowing students to register for 6 credits during their internship). The total number of required program hours from the ten (10) common-core areas equals thirty-six (36). In addition, students are required to complete a course in special education and a progression of supervised experiences in counseling and guidance culminating in a 10-month full time internship. The only exception to this state mandated timeframe is for students that are certified teachers with at least 30 months of teaching experience. These students complete a 600 hour internship instead. Upon the completion of these requirements amounting to between 51 to 57 total credits the student is eligible to receive an initial educator certification endorsement in School Counseling. “The school counseling endorsement is required for a person serving in the employ of a board of education as a school counselor in early childhood, elementary, and secondary school settings” (Sec. 10-145d-555).

1. HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT: 3 credit hours required in this area - to include:

EPSY 3XX- Human Growth & Development

2. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY: 3 credit hours required in this area - to include:

EPSY 429 Cross-Cultural Counseling

3. HELPING RELATIONSHIPS: 6 credit hours required in this area - to include:

EPSY 316 Counseling Theory and Practice

and

EPSY 416 Counseling: Advanced Practice

4. GROUP WORK: 3 credit hours required in this area - to include:

EPSY 302 Group Processes in Counseling

5. CAREER AND LIFESTYLE DEVELOPMENT: 3 credit hours required in this area - to include:

EPSY 312 Principles of Career Development in Counseling

6. ASSESSMENT: 3 credit hours required in this area - to include:

EPSY 415 Appraisal Procedures in School Counseling

7. RESEARCH AND PROGRAM EVALUATION: 3 credit hours required in this area - to include:

EPSY 341 Principles and Methods in Educational Research

8. PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY: 3 credit hours required in this area - to include:

EPSY 315 Professional Orientation for School Counselors

9: FOUNDATIONS AND CONTENTS OF SCHOOL COUNSELING: 3 credit hours required in this area to include:

EPSY 305 Foundations & Content in School Counseling

10. SPECIAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENT: (mandatory requirement for school counselors): 3 credit hours required in this area - to include:

EPSY 308 Instruction for Students with Special Needs in the Mainstream

11. COLLABORATING/ CONSULTING: 3 credit hours required in this area - to include:

EPSY 430 Consultation Theories & Practices

12. CRITICAL ISSUES: 3 credit hours required in this area divided into three one (1) credit modules on special topics that confront contemporary school counselors including: (1) Professional orientation, (2) Ethical and Legal Considerations in Counseling, and (3) Contemporary Issues in Counseling, e.g., crisis counseling, substance abuse, family dynamics, grief counseling and suicide prevention – to include: EPSY 3XY – Critical Issues in School Counseling.

13. SUPERVISED EXPERIENCES: 3 credit hours required in this area. This requirement is met during the student's final two semesters of academic course work.

EPSY 447 Fieldwork in School Counseling (Fall and Spring Semesters)

\*Note. EPSY 447 may be taken during either the Fall or Spring semesters for 3 credit hours. In addition to an on-campus, practicum-seminar requirement each student is expected to complete a progression of field experiences consisting of not less than 150 hours directly supervised by a certified school counselor, in collaboration with the preparing institution, in elementary and secondary public school settings, with students of different ages, cultural and linguistic backgrounds and exceptionalities. The practicum provides for application of knowledge and mastery of counseling skills (Sec.10-145d-701). Individual, weekly supervision by the field placement supervisor and/or practicum professor (a minimum of one-hour per week) is also expected during the student's enrollment in EPSY 447. The requirements meet the State of Connecticut's standards for certification as a school counselor. States other than Connecticut may have different requirements.

INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENT: For those students who have not had 30 school months of successful teaching experience as a certified teacher, and who wish to be certified as a school counselor in the State of Connecticut, an additional six (6) hours of credit is required. The necessary course is:

EPSY 448 Internship in School Counseling

\*Note. EPSY 448, and the internship experience, is intended to meet the certification

requirements for a school counselor in the State of Connecticut. The internship requirement is a 10-month, full-time school counseling residency in a public school, which includes a ten-week guided teaching experience using a developmental guidance curriculum, under the direct supervision of a certified school counselor, and the preparing institution (SEC. 10-145d-556). Students that are certified teachers with at least 30 months of teaching experience are allowed to waive the 10 month internship, but must complete a 600 hour internship instead. States other than Connecticut may have additional and/or differing standards and requirements to address the teaching experience criterion for school counselors.

## **REQUIRED PLAN OF STUDY**

Course offerings for the school counseling program are provided in a systematic manner to insure that students may complete their program plan of study within a two (2) academic year, or four (4) semester time period. Limited course offerings are also provided during the summer semester. Following acceptance to the school counseling program, some students elect to begin their studies during the summer semester, however, most students begin their program of study during the fall semester following acceptance to the program in April or May.

### **Course Sequencing for Masters Level School Counseling Students**

#### **Full-time students:**

##### **Fall 1**

EPSY 315	Professional Orientation for School Counselors
EPSY 316	Counseling Theory and Practice
EPSY 429	Cross-Cultural Counseling
EPSY 312	Principles of Career Development in Counseling

##### **Spring 1**

EPSY 302	Group Processes in Counseling
EPSY 305	Foundations & Content in School Counseling
EPSY 416	Counseling: Advanced Practice
EPSY 415	Appraisal Procedures in Counseling
EPSY 3XX	Human Growth and Development

##### **Fall 2**

EPSY 341	Principles and Methods in Educational Research
EPSY 447	Practicum in Counseling
EPSY 430	Consultation Theories and Practices

##### **Spring 2**

EPSY 308	Instruction for Students with Special Needs in the Mainstream
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EPSY 447     Practicum in Counseling  
EPSY 3XY     Critical Issues in School Counseling

**Fall 3**

EPSY 448     Internship in School Counseling

**Spring 3**

EPSY 448     Internship in School Counseling

**Part-Time Students:**

*You will begin your coursework in the first two-semester by taking the following courses:*

**Fall 1**

EPSY 315     Professional Orientation for School Counselors  
EPSY 316     Counseling Theory and Practice

**Spring 1**

EPSY 305     Foundations & Content in School Counseling  
EPSY 416     Counseling” Advanced Practice

The courses typically offered during the summer semester include:

EPSY 305  
EPSY 341  
EPSY 415

The sequence of the coursework and the educational experiences of the curriculum are developed as a plan of study designed in consort with each student’s advisory committee (i.e., major advisor and two associate advisors) and in accord with the standards and criteria established by:

1. Criteria for Program Accreditation of the "Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs" (CACREP, 2001).
2. National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC, 2000), Criteria for Counselor Certification, American Counseling Association, 2000.
3. State of Connecticut Certification Regulations for School Counselors effective July 1, 2004.

**ENVIRONMENTAL AND SPECIALTY STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL COUNSELING**

Embodied in the school counseling program philosophy, curriculum, and content of its course offerings is a focus and emphasis on environmental and specialized studies that include:

- A. Meeting the needs of a diverse population at all levels in urban schools
- B. The American School Counseling Association's National Model for School Counseling
- C. The National Transforming School Counseling Initiative (The Education Trust, Inc.)