

MASTER OF ARTS: COUNSELING

The MA in Counseling prepares students to become reflective, competent counseling practitioners who use research to inform their work with diverse students and clients. The program prepares counselors who are eligible for state licensure as professional counselors or certification as school counselors in Missouri.

Requirements for the Master of Arts in Counseling

Requirements for the Master of Arts in Counseling include completion of a minimum of 60 credit hours (33 core credits, 12 credits of practicum and internship, and 15-18 credits in one of three emphasis areas). All coursework must be at the 5500 level or above and students must maintain a graduate GPA of 3.0 or higher, including earning at least a grade of B or better or Credit (CR) in each class on the program of study.

Up to twenty percent (i.e., 12 credits) of resident graduate coursework may be transferred from other accredited universities' graduate programs. A maximum of 49 percent of acceptable graduate work (29 credits) may be transferred from other campuses of the University of Missouri. Only courses that earned a grade of B (or Credit) or better are able to be transferred. Credits are transferred only with the recommendation of the advisor and the consent of the dean's representative in the School of Education, Social Work, and Psychological Sciences. Transfer credit must not be more than seven years old at the time of program completion.

Transfer credit may be allowed for online coursework if it meets program requirements for licensure in the state of Missouri (i.e., synchronous meetings that allow for visual and verbal interactions among faculty and students).

The School of Education, Social Work and Psychological Sciences website of the Master of Arts in Counseling (<https://seswps.umkc.edu/academics/psychology-and-counseling/ma-in-counseling.html>).

Requirements for Retention

Students must:

1. Meet all admission requirements.
2. File a planned program of study in consultation with a faculty advisor, securing approvals from the chair, dean's representative and the School of Graduate Studies.
3. Complete all coursework listed on the approved program of study.
4. Maintain an acceptable graduate GPA with no grades below B (3.0) on any courses on the program of study.
5. Apply for the degree (graduation) by the posted deadline during the final term of enrollment.
6. Enroll in at least one credit hour during the term they intend to graduate.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students graduating from this program will:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the various major theories of counseling and demonstrate skills in application of them. (All students)
- Develop competency in creating and managing the counseling relationship, including counselor attitudes and behaviors that influence helping processes. (All students)
- Develop awareness, knowledge and skills in addressing the needs of diverse populations. (All students)
- Become versed in the major theories of career development and utilization of career assessment tools. (All students)
- Apply an understanding of assessment process and techniques to the selection, administration and interpretation of assessment instruments. (All students)
- Develop skills in the use of research to inform evidence-based practice. (All students)
- Develop a professional identity as a counselor. (All students)
- Develop knowledge, sensitivity and skill in the provision of group therapy. (All students)
- Demonstrate knowledge and skills in ethical practice and decision making. (All students)
- Demonstrate knowledge in diagnostic systems. (All students)
- Develop skills in preventive intervention and consultation. (All students)
- Demonstrate knowledge of theories of human development, biological factors in human functioning and sociocultural influences on behavior. (All students)
- Use supervision to improve practice. (All students)
- Develop skills in assessment, treatment and evaluation of individuals with substance abuse problems. (Students in Mental Health emphasis area)
- Learn major theories and interventions in couples and family counseling. (Students in Couples & Family emphasis area)

- Implement a multiculturally and developmentally competent comprehensive school counseling program, while adhering to ethical, legal, and professional standards and school expectations and policies. (Students in School Counseling emphasis area)
- Design and deliver needs-driven, results-based school counseling core curriculum units that facilitate students' academic, career and/or social-emotional development. (Students in School Counseling emphasis area)
- Use, analyze and report on student-focused, data-driven interventions and identified program changes that improve student achievement, career and social-emotional development. (Students in School Counseling emphasis area)
- Reflect on learning across all areas of a comprehensive school counseling program, including personal philosophy and professional practice. (Students in School Counseling emphasis area)
- Integrate research and professional development into school counseling practice. (Students in School Counseling emphasis area)
- Employ current school counseling theory and standards to evaluate their own professional practices. (Students in School Counseling emphasis area)
- Utilize theoretical frameworks of school leadership and advocacy to develop and manage a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program promoting a positive, inclusive school climate and culture for all. (Students in School Counseling emphasis area)

Mission Statement

The mission of the Counseling program at UMKC is to prepare students to meet the psychological, social/emotional and educational needs of individuals, couples and families from diverse backgrounds. Based on national and state standards for excellence in counselor preparation, the MA program in Counseling prepares students to be reflective, integrative practitioners who effectively use scholarship and research to successfully work as professional school counselors and licensed professional counselors in diverse settings.

Overview of the M.A. in Counseling

The master's degree is the first professional degree in counseling. Graduates holding this degree will gain the basic understanding and skills necessary for professional practice as a certified school counselor or licensed professional counselor. The program, which is primarily delivered in a face-to-face format with some online courses available, currently offers three emphasis areas leading to the M.A. degree: School Counseling, Couples and Family Counseling and Mental Health Counseling.

The Counseling Program is accredited by the Master's in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council.

All emphasis areas meet the educational requirements for licensure as a professional counselor in Missouri. Students pursuing licensure must complete the supervision requirements and pass the National Counselor Exam. Eligibility for school counselor certification is based on meeting the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)'s certification requirements, including grade point average and passing scores on all required assessments and exams. Students receiving certification as a school counselor are certified to work in all levels of K-12 education (e.g., elementary, middle, high school). The couples and family and mental health emphasis areas are designed for students who wish to work in a variety of settings other than the public schools, such as community colleges, four-year colleges, specialized areas in large universities (e.g. career planning and placement), the court system and community-based mental health services. Several students also go on for advanced degrees.

Requirements for Admission

Alternative criteria may be accepted at the discretion of the admissions committee if there is good reason to believe the regular criteria do not adequately portray the student's potential to do quality graduate work. Applicants may provide explanations for circumstances of not meeting the GPA criteria in the online application system.

- Overall undergraduate 2.75 GPA or better on a 4.0 scale
- Personal statement detailing interest in and plans for counseling degree
- Three professional or academic letters of reference
- Note that meeting the minimum criteria for admissions will not guarantee admission to the program

Admission Procedures

Applications for the mental health and couples/family emphasis areas are accepted twice a year: by Sept. 1 to be admitted for the spring semester or by March 1 to be admitted for the fall semester. School Counseling applications are accepted and reviewed year-round. Although applications for school counseling are accepted year-round, it is recommended all application materials be submitted at least one month prior to the beginning of the semester in which the student wishes to enroll.

Students who wish to apply to the program must submit all required materials through the electronic portal: futureroo.umkc.edu/apply

Students will be required to submit their (a) UMKC Application for Admission, (b) \$45 (domestic) or \$75 (international) non-refundable application fee, (c) official transcripts from all colleges/universities previously attended, and (d) relevant documentation for permanent residents, refugees, DACA students, etc.

In addition, students must complete the MA in Counseling Application, submit three academic or professional letters of reference, and submit a statement describing their professional and personal goals. Additional requirements may apply for international students.

Please Note: we do not provide feedback to applicants about their application materials or on the interview process. Admission to UMKC does not guarantee admission to the Master of Arts in Counseling degree program.

Requirements for Graduation

Students must complete all courses in the M.A. program with a B or better in all coursework. Courses can only be repeated once. Up to two classes can be retaken.

Students must apply for graduation by the posted deadline during their final term of enrollment. All students must be enrolled during the term they intend to graduate.

For more specific information about the M.A. in Counseling see the website of Master of Arts in Counseling (<https://seswps.umkc.edu/academics/psychology-and-counseling/ma-in-counseling.html>).

Degree Requirements

All students in the M.A. in Counseling take a common core of 33 credit hours of coursework. Students also complete additional coursework (15-18 credit hours) related to their selected emphasis area and complete practicum and internship coursework corresponding to their emphasis.

* Note: Only courses with an asterisk may be taken prior to being admitted to the program.

Note: Course can be taken if officially admitted to a graduate degree program.

Required Core Courses (All Emphases)

Code	Title	Credits
CPCE 5500	Introduction To Professional Counseling *	3
PSYCH 5533	Diagnosing and Treatment Planning	3
CPCE 5505	Career Development I #	3
CPCE 5513	Lifespan Human Development *	3
CPCE 5515	Assessment Methods In Professional Counseling	3
CPCE 5520	Theories of Counseling	3
CPCE 5530	Skills for Counseling and Psychotherapy	3
CPCE 5540	Theories And Methods In Group Counseling	3
CPCE 5551	Counseling in a Pluralistic Society	3
CPCE 5553	Ethics And Professional Issues In Counseling	3
EDUC-R&P 5508	Principles And Methods Of Research *	3
Total Core Requirement Hours		33

Please Select One Emphasis Area:

Couples and Family Emphasis Area

Beginning with the Spring 2026 semester, admission into our Couples & Family emphasis area of the Counseling MA program has been suspended.

We are no longer accepting applications for students to join this emphasis area. We encourage students to consider applying to one of our other two emphasis areas, Mental Health and School Counseling.

Code	Title	Credits
Emphasis Area Coursework:		
CPCE 5527	Theory And Methods Of Sexual Counseling	3
CPCE 5541	Couples And Family Therapy	3
CPCE 5542	Theories and Techniques of Family Systems Therapy	3
CPCE 5590	Prevention, Consultation, and Program Evaluation in Community Settings	3
3 Credit Hours of Approved Electives		3
Practicum and Internship:		
CPCE 5531	Counseling Practicum I	3
CPCE 5533	Couples And Family Therapy Practicum	3
Take the following course 2 times:		6
CPCE 5575	Internship in Counseling	
Total Emphasis Area Hours		27
Total Degree Hours: MA in Counseling-Couples and Family Emphasis		60

Mental Health Emphasis Area

Code	Title	Credits
Emphasis Area Coursework:		
CPCE 5521	Special Counseling Methods - Substance Abuse	3
CPCE 5590	Prevention, Consultation, and Program Evaluation in Community Settings	3
9 Credit Hours of Approved Electives		9
Practicum and Internship:		
CPCE 5531	Counseling Practicum I	3
CPCE 5532	Counseling Practicum II	3
Take the following course 2 times:		6
CPCE 5575	Internship in Counseling	
Total Hours: Mental Health Emphasis		27
Total Degree Hours: MA in Counseling-Mental Health Emphasis		60

School Counseling Emphasis Area

Code	Title	Credits
Coursework Required of All School Counseling Students:		
CPCE 5502	Fndtns Of Elementary & Secondary School Counseling	3
CPCE 5504	School Counseling Programs	3
CPCE 5550	Organization And Administration Of Counseling Programs	3
TCH-ED 5404	Education of the Exceptional Child and Youth (or an Approved 3 Credit Hour Elective) ¹	3
Coursework Required for Students who Hold a Teaching Certification:		3
3 Credit Hours of Approved Electives		
OR Coursework Required of Students who Do Not Hold a Teaching Certification:		6
EDUC-C&I 5512	Strategies For Effective Classroom Management	
EDUC-C&I 5517	Teaching Methods And Practices	
Practicum and Internship (Required of All School Counseling Students):		
Take the following course 2 times:		6
CPCE 5535	School Counseling Practicum	
Take the following course 2 times:		6
CPCE 5576	School Counseling Internship	
Total Hours: School Counseling Emphasis		27-30
Total Degree Hours: MA in Counseling-School Counseling Emphasis		60-63

¹ TCH-ED 5404 may be substituted for an approved elective course for students who have teacher certification and have previously taken an equivalent

Licensure Disclosure**Licensure Disclosure**

Graduates holding the UMKC M.A. Counseling degree will acquire the basic knowledge and skills necessary for professional practice as a licensed professional counselor and/or certified school counselor. Licensure as a professional counselor is required for independent practice as a professional counselor; consult individual states for information on when a license is required to practice as a school counselor.

Program Director**Mental Health and Couples and Family Emphases:**

LaVerne Berkel (berkell@umkc.edu), PhD

School Emphasis:

Marvalee Collins (mcollins@umkc.edu), PhD

Licensed Professional Counselor (All areas of emphasis)

Applying for licensure requires completing an application for licensure, successfully passing the state required counseling exam (e.g., National Counselor Exam), and completion of post-graduate supervised hours. In some states additional requirements may be needed for full licensure.

There are other related licenses available (e.g., Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Alcohol and Drug Counselor). Students may be interested in pursuing these additional career paths, but the UMKC M.A. Program curriculum does not meet the criteria for these licensures.

UMKC M.A. Counseling Program: Professional Counselor

States in Which the Curriculum Meets the Educational Requirements for Licensure

AK, American Samoa**, AR, DE, GA, Federated States of Micronesia**, KS, ME, MI, MS~, MO, NJ, NY, PR, Republic of Palau**, Republic of the Marshall Islands**, SC, TN, TX, USVI~, WA, WV.

States in Which the Curriculum Does Not Meet the Educational Requirements for Licensure

AL, AZ*, CA, CO*, CT*, DC*, FL, ID, IN, Guam, HI*, IL, IA, KY, LA, MA, MD, MN, MT, NE*, NM, NV, NH*, NC, ND*, Northern Mariana Islands, OH, OK*, OR*, PA*, RI*, SD*, UT*, VT*, VA*, WI, WY.

~ Students may need to use program electives to meet different state requirements; school counseling students entering the program without initial teacher certification do not take electives. Consult with the M.A. program coordinator for additional information.

* Coursework requirements are met but a higher number of clinical hours are required.

** Licensure does not exist.

School Counselor Certification/Licensure (School Counseling emphasis area only)

Students completing the UMKC M.A. Counseling program with an emphasis in school counseling are prepared for school counseling practice and eligible to apply for Missouri's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) school counseling certification. In a few states, an initial teaching certification/licensure and/or teaching experience may be required. Individuals are encouraged to contact specific states to determine whether teaching certification/licensure is required for employment as a school counselor in that state.

States in Which Curriculum Meets Educational Requirements for School Counseling Certification/Licensure

AL, American Samoa**, AZ, AR, CA, CO, CT, DE, Federated States of Micronesia**, FL, GA, Guam, HI, ID, IL, IN~, IA, KS^, KY^, ME, MA, MI, MN, MS^, MO, ND, NV, NH, NJ, NM, NC, OH, OK, PA, PR**, Republic of Marshall Islands**, Republic of Palau**, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, USVI**, VA, VT, WI, DC.

States in Which Curriculum Does Not Meet Educational Requirements for School Counseling Certification/Licensure

AK, LA, MD, MT, NE, NY, OR, UT, WA, WV, WY.

** Licensure does not Exist

~ Specific courses must be taken as electives to fill licensure requirements. Students completing the school counseling emphasis area will only meet this requirement if they have initial teaching certification/licensure when they enter the M.A. Counseling program. Contact the M.A. School Counseling Program Coordinator for additional information.

^ Must hold Missouri School Counseling Certification

Important: Licensure and certification processes and decisions are handled by states. All individuals seeking licensure as a professional counselor or certification/licensure as a school counselor are strongly encouraged to contact specific states for information regarding their state requirements.