MASTER OF ARTS IN CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING (M.A.)

Purpose
The Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling is a 60-hour graduate-level residential and online program designed to meet the Virginia requirements for licensure as a Professional Counselor (LPC). The faculty provide quality professional training of clinical mental health counselors from a faith-based perspective. Our mission is to produce ethically and spiritually aware mental health counselors who possess the knowledge, values, skills, and personal disposition to promote the mental health and holistic wellness of clients across diverse populations. Our mission is achieved, in significant measure, through offering rigorous academic programs, dynamic interaction with mentors, faculty, and carefully structured practica and internships.

Program Learning Outcomes
The student will be able to:

1. Apply the ethical and professional principles, standards, and expectations that are integral to a professional counselor’s role and identity.
2. Apply the social and cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills required to work with diverse populations at all developmental stages across the lifespan in a culturally sensitive and ethical manner.
3. Assess the individual and group counseling skills necessary to establish and build a therapeutic relationship and will form a preliminary theoretical framework when counseling individuals at all developmental stages across the lifespan.
4. Use developmentally appropriate assessment relevant to the client’s academic/education, career, personal, and social development and identify ethical, social, and cultural factors related to assessment.
5. Evaluate research and apply it to their counseling practice in accordance with best practices, and identify social and cultural implications for interpreting and reporting results.
6. Integrate faith and spirituality into counseling where appropriate in an ethically competent manner.
7. Synthesize counseling theories into a comprehensive biopsychosocial-spiritual theoretical approach that informs assessment, diagnosis, and treatment planning for diverse individual, group, and family client(s) with a broad array of presenting problems and mental disorders.

Program Specific Admission Procedures
In addition to the General Admission Procedures outlined in this Catalog, applicants to the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program must have:

1. Apply online or download application for admission and submit via mail.
2. Fax/scan unofficial college transcripts.
   • Please Note - Unofficial transcripts can be used for acceptance purposes with the submission of a transcript request form.
3. Mail official college transcripts (sealed, unopened copy).
   • Regionally or Nationally accredited bachelor’s degree with at least a 2.7 GPA for good standing. Applicants who have earned a master’s degree or at least 12 graduate credits from an accredited institution may be assessed on the basis of the master’s-level degree work. NOTE: once accepted into the program, a 3.0 graduate GPA is needed to maintain good academic standing in the program.
4. Students without the following coursework on their undergraduate transcript will be required to complete the following class upon admission to the program:
   a. 3 credit hours in Statistics (can be MATH 201)
5. Admission to this program requires:
   a. Two Letters of Recommendation from professional sources (i.e., not family/friends).
   i. These individuals should be qualified to address the applicant’s ability to complete the graduate level work, disposition and ability to become a counselor, maturity, motivation and ethics. Some examples of individuals that may be suitable include professors, employers, or leaders in an organization where the applicant volunteers.
   b. Statement of Purpose: In a 1,000-1,200 word typed and double-spaced document, address your past and current helping experiences, your future goals in the field of Clinical Mental Health Counseling, and your personal qualities that will enable you to be an effective counselor. Please also address how your interests and goals match the mission of Liberty University and the Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling degree program. Please see the program handbook for Department’s mission statement.
   c. Students seeking to be admitted into this program and plan to finish it outside of the US will be required to sign an International Disclosure Agreement.
6. Students must agree to the Department of Counselor Education and Family Study’s Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling Mission Statement and Diversity Statement, which is available at the following link: http://www.liberty.edu/academics/arts-sciences/counseling/index.cfm?PID=5975.

Applicants must submit each of the items listed in the General Admissions Procedures to the Office of Graduate Admissions before being considered for acceptance to the program.

The applicant’s personal and professional disposition, integrity, and general fitness to practice counseling may be considered in the admission process. The Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies grants special admissions only under exceptional circumstances.

Notification of Admission
Admission decisions normally are made within a few days following the receipt of all of the student’s documentation and faculty review of the application packet. Official notification of admission, and of any conditions attached to that admission, is sent by letter to the applicant by the Office of Graduate Admissions. Correspondence or notification from other sources does not constitute official notice of admission. The term for which the applicant is admitted is stated in the official admission letter from the Office of Graduate Admissions.

Transfer of Credit
Students may transfer up to 30 hours of coursework into the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program. For a transferred course to replace a Liberty University course, the following requirements must be met:
Course Requirements

The M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program (60-hour) consists of a minimum of 60 hours of counseling courses that provide students with a thorough curricular experience in the areas of integration of faith and spirituality into practice; individual and group counseling theories and skills; clinical practice; ethical, professional, and legal issues in counseling; social and cultural factors in counseling; human development across the lifespan; career counseling and development theories and interventions; appraisal and assessment issues in counseling; and the application of research methodology and statistics to understand mental health issues. This degree prepares individuals for licensure and national certification and careers in mental health agencies, hospital programs, private practices, faith based counseling centers, and other public and private facilities.

Detailed information, policies, and procedures regarding the various programs offered are provided in the Student Handbook. Students should familiarize themselves with the Student Handbook before they begin their studies and before they register for classes every semester.

Comprehensive Examination

Students enrolled in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program must take a comprehensive examination.

The examination should be taken after the student has completed at least 39 hours of graduate coursework, including all of the COUC 500-level core coursework and COUC 667 Clinical Diagnosis and Treatment Planning (3 c.h.). The study guide for the comprehensive exam is available online at the departmental website. Students will be given three attempts to successfully complete the exam. Students who have failed the CPCE® twice are required to complete a CPCE® Third Attempt Plan (CTAP) form and prepare for an additional minimum of one semester before registering for their final attempt. If after three attempts, a student has not been able to pass the comprehensive examination, the student will not qualify for a master’s degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. At that point, students may choose to apply to the Human Services Counseling program for possible conferral of the MA in Human Services Counseling degree.

This examination is offered periodically throughout the year. To register for the Comprehensive Exam, please contact the Comprehensive Exam Coordinator at least 30 days prior to the exam date. (See the Counseling Comprehensive Examination website for scheduling information).

Administrative Dismissal

Students will be eligible for Administrative Dismissal from the Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling if any of the following are true:

1. It will be mathematically impossible for them to raise their cumulative Graduate GPA to 3.00 with their remaining required courses.
2. They do not have a cumulative Graduate GPA of at least 3.00 at Gate 2 (Completion of Early Core) or Gate 3 (Practicum).
3. They have two (2) grades of C+ or C-; and they have applied the repeat policy for the maximum allowed six (6) hours, and they earn two (2) or more additional grades of C+ or lower.
4. They earn two (2) grades of D+ or lower.

Consult specific program sections of this catalog for additional requirements.
Graduation Requirements
To graduate, students in the Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program must:

1. Complete a minimum of 60 hours.
2. Pass the Comprehensive Exam.
3. A maximum of 50% of the program hours may be transferred if approved and allowable, including credit from an earned degree from Liberty University on the same academic level.
4. Complete their required curriculum with a cumulative GPA of 3.00.
5. No more than two grades of C (includes grades of C+ & C-) may be applied to the degrees.
6. No grades of D (includes grades of D+ & D-) may be applied to the degrees.
7. For information regarding the repeat policy, please refer to “Course Repeat Policy” in the Academic Information and Policies section of this Catalog.
8. Liberty course work that is more than seven (7) years old must be repeated.
9. The degrees must be completed within seven (7) years.
10. Submission of Degree Completion Application must be completed within the last semester of a student’s anticipated graduation date.

Program of Study
Delivery Format: Residential and Online
- Clinical Mental Health Counseling (M.A.)

Career Opportunities
- Churches and Faith-based Mental Health Institutions
- Mental Health Agencies
- Mental Health Hospitals
- Public or Private Practices
- Residential Treatment Facilities

Courses