



UNIVERSITY OF
BRIDGEPORT



How to become a Clinical Mental Health Counselor

**| Master of Science in Clinical
Mental Health Counseling**

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■ Why Choose a Career in Counseling?

Today, counseling services are more accessible than ever before. Aside from increased public awareness surrounding mental health, telehealth is now widely available. For many Americans, this means that the help they deserve is just a few clicks away.

The field of counseling is rapidly expanding, and many mental health specialists are now struggling to accommodate their growing client bases. Consequently, there is an increasing demand for mental health providers in both the public and private spheres. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the employment rate for counselors is predicted to grow by 22% over the next 8 years.

Counseling isn't just a profession — it's a calling. People become counselors because they are compassionate, dedicated, and caring individuals who wish to improve the lives of others; it's an opportunity to build a career in which you can truly make a difference.

How do I become a counselor?

To prepare yourself for a rewarding career in this field, you will need to earn a master's degree in Counseling. By earning an advanced degree in Counseling, you receive the specialized knowledge and skills needed to provide compassionate and effective mental health care, and you prepare for the National Counselor Examination (NCE).

What licensing exams will I need to take?

Aside from earning your master's degree, you will also need to pass the NCE. This 200-question standardized exam is administered by the [National Board for Certified Counselors \(NBCC\)](#). The purpose of the test is to assess your counseling knowledge and abilities prior to your working with patients in the field.

What certification do I need to be a counselor?

Certification requirements vary by state. We recommend consulting the [NBCC](#) to learn the licensure requirements for the state in which you plan to practice.

What Career Options are Available to Counselors?

Counselors have the power to transform their clients' lives. A great counselor helps clients heal from past trauma, practice self-love and acceptance, and develop personalized strategies for navigating the unexpected throughout their day-to-day lives.

Counselors are not limited to a single career path. Here are some of the career paths available to prospective counselors:

1 Mental health counselor

Mental health counselors use psychotherapy techniques and a patient-centered approach to help clients who are suffering from psychological distress. Rather than focusing on dysfunction, mental health counselors focus on the development of personalized coping strategies. Some mental health counselors specialize in specific mental health and interpersonal issues, such as eating disorders or relationship communication issues. Others may choose to work with specific populations, such as children or the elderly. Mental health counselors provide care in various settings, from employee assistance programs to outpatient care facilities and private counseling practices.

2 Crisis counselor

Crisis counselors provide care to clients who are experiencing extreme emotional turmoil and may be in a state of emergency that requires highly specialized care. These professionals often work with individuals who have experienced a recent trauma, are under significant stress, or are suffering from long-term post-traumatic stress disorder. Crisis counselors positively influence their clients, providing them with a sense of emotional safety and stability. Because a crisis can occur anywhere, these professionals work in settings ranging from suicide prevention centers to humanitarian aid organizations.

3 Substance abuse counselor

Substance abuse counselors provide compassionate care to individuals who are struggling with addiction. These counselors work closely with their clients to modify addictive behaviors while addressing any underlying traumas or emotional issues that may be contributing to or triggering them. Substance abuse counselors help their clients develop coping mechanisms and aftercare plans to aid their journey to recovery. These professionals may even work with their clients' families to provide extra guidance and support, further easing the recovery process.

4 Private practice

Some counselors choose to open their own private care practice. Those who go into private practice have the freedom to incorporate different therapeutic techniques — better yet, they can set their own business hours, schedules, and specializations. Additionally, counselors in private practice can work independently or hire qualified staff to work alongside them, offering the opportunity to build and run a business. Although private practitioners are not limited by the rules of a hospital or clinic, they still must adhere to city and state regulations.

■ Why Choose UB?

Earn your Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling at UB

University of Bridgeport is proudly home to the state's most diverse Clinical Mental Health Counseling training program leading to LPC licensure. We use today's most effective, evidence-based practices to train the mental healthcare providers of tomorrow. Our graduates are among the most highly qualified counselors in Connecticut.

Blend evidence-based instruction with hands-on experience



At UB, our evidence-based Counseling curriculum hones your professional knowledge and practical skills. With the guidance of our expert faculty, you'll address the three dimensions of your development as a counselor: your personal growth, theoretical expertise, and clinical skills. As you fine-tune your identity as a counselor, you'll bridge the concepts you're learning in class with hands-on opportunities in the field — completing an internship in the state where you plan to practice. This dynamic blend of instruction and experience empowers you to succeed from classroom to career.

A flexible degree path designed for you



We understand academics aren't your only priority. That's why our Clinical Mental Health Counseling program can be completed online or in person. Join us in Bridgeport at our seaside campus or engage online in a collaborative virtual setting. However you decide to pursue your degree, UB will be with you every step of the way — providing the support you need on your degree journey.

Earn your degree from a CACREP-accredited program



UB's MS in Counseling program is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP). CACREP-accreditation is awarded to programs that meet the highest standards of practice for counselor education programs. In many states, a degree from a CACREP-accredited program is required for licensure.

■ Meet the Program Director

Allison Buller, Ph.D., LPC

Dr. Allison Buller is a professor of counseling and psychology at UB, where she serves as the Counseling program's department chair. She has training and experience working with clients using evidence-based treatments. Her professional training includes: Dialectical and Behavioral Therapy Skills training, Circle of Security Parenting, Motivational Interviewing and Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT).

Dr. Buller received several grants to support her dissertation study, "Exploring the Experiences of Counselor Educators Recognized for Their Excellence in Teaching." Her research interests include best practices in counselor education, DBT-Skills facilitation, MI, COSP and MBCT.



Curriculum

At UB, we address the three main aspects of your development as a counselor: personal growth, intellectual development, and professional skills. Our core curriculum prepares you for success on the NCE. Your studies will address:

- Assessment and testing
- Career development
- Counseling theories and helping relationships
- Group counseling and group work
- Human growth and development
- Professional counseling orientation and ethical practice
- Research and program evaluation
- Social and cultural diversity



For complete curriculum details, please visit [our website](#).

■ Admission Requirements

Program prerequisites for Clinical Mental Health Counseling

To be eligible for our Clinical Mental Health Counseling program, you must satisfy the following prerequisites:

- A bachelor's degree from an accredited university or international institution. The degree does not have to be in psychology or a related field.
- A minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0. Applicants with lower GPAs may be considered if they are highly qualified.
- Nine credits of undergraduate coursework in psychology with a B or higher.
 - Three of the nine credits could be in a related field.
 - It is recommended that three credits are in either abnormal psychology or psychopathology.
- At least 6-9 months' experience working in a social service agency, the mental health profession, or a substance abuse intervention site.

Required materials

The following materials must be submitted to the University's admissions department:

- [Application](#)
- Official transcript from a regionally accredited for your most recently earned degree. International transcripts must include an official course-by-course evaluation from an accredited academic evaluating service.
- Resumé
 - Resumé should show notable experience in the field of Counseling.
- Two letters of recommendation
 - Letters may come from employers, colleagues, or professors.
- A 250–500-word personal statement detailing your relevant academic, professional, and personal experiences. Your statement should also express your interest in UB's Counseling Program and explain how this degree will shape the future of your career.

You will be notified for an interview after all the above materials have been received.

Admission requirements and tuition information updated for the 2023-2024 academic year.



Tuition Information

| Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling | |
|--|----------------|
| Tuition (per credit hour) | \$780 |
| Online classes (per credit hour) | \$700 |
| General fee (9 credits or more) | \$1,025 |
| General fee (5-8 credits) | \$620 |
| General fee (0-4 credits) | \$390 |
| Student Government Fee | \$120 |
| Counseling Program Fee (first term only) | \$480 |
| Counseling Technology Fee (first term only) | \$200 |

Admission requirements and tuition information updated for the 2023-2024 academic year.

Testimonials



David Grant, LPCA, M.S., M.B.A.

“If I were to put my experience with the Counseling program at UB into one or two sentences, I would say that it was great learning from expert faculty who truly cared about my growth as an individual and as a counselor. I was also supported, encouraged, and challenged by the other students in the program. In short, it was a great experience”



Stacey Ilona Tapia

“I have known since I was young that I wanted to be a counselor, but I chose this specific program because of their emphasis on cultural diversity. I love the cultural diversity of the program, because being of a Hispanic background, I want to feel welcomed in any community, and I feel welcomed and valued here. I have great professors, who are understanding and empathetic, while at the same time making sure that we graduate knowing everything we need to know and taking advantage of opportunities that are available here. I am grateful.”

Student Resources and Support

At University of Bridgeport, we strive to help our students succeed. That's why we offer resources and support services to help you reach your personal and professional goals!

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|---|---|
| <h2>Academic Resources</h2> | <h2>Academic Supports</h2> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Advising Center (AAC) • Admissions • Financial Aid • Registrar's Office | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Preparation • The Heckman Center • Wahlstrom Library |
| <h2>Personal Support Services</h2> | <h2>Student Experience</h2> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counseling Services • Health Services • Knight's Pantry • Student Accessibility Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clubs and Organizations • Events • Greek Life • Recreation |
| <h2>Professional Development</h2> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Development Services | |



**UNIVERSITY OF
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Contact us today!

Call: 203-576-4552

Text: 203-275-0401

bridgeport.edu/counseling

The University of Bridgeport is accredited by the New England Commission of Higher Education. The University also is accredited by the Connecticut Office of Higher Education.

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