DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELOR EDUCATION

Overview

The Department of Counselor Education offers a range of programs and options for post-master's degree study. The M.S. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program provides students with a broad range of career possibilities, including working in community settings, hospitals, educational institutions, VA treatment centers, and private practice settings. This degree meets the education requirements for licensure in Pennsylvania as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC).

Completion of the M.Ed. School Counseling program academically qualifies candidates for the Pennsylvania Educational Specialist I Certificate, which is required for employment as an elementary or secondary school guidance counselor. Individuals who have earned a Master's degree in counseling may pursue a non-degree program of study (certification only) leading to the Educational Specialist I Certificate.

A Post-Master's Certificate in Professional Counselor Licensure Preparation is offered for individuals who have completed a master's degree in counseling or a closely related area and would like to build their clinical mental health skills while completing the educational requirements for licensure as a professional counselor.

Master of Science: Clinical Mental Health Counseling

Dr. Lynn Zubernis, Program Coordinator

Master of Education: School Counseling

Dr. Karen Dickinson, Program Coordinator

Certificate in Higher Education Counseling/Student Affairs

(no longer accepting new students)

Dr. Eric Owens

Post-Master's Certificate in Professional Counselor Licensure Preparation (LPC)

Dr. Cheryl Neale-McFall

Specialist Certificate I in (School) Counseling

Dr. Cheryl Neale-McFall

Programs

Master's Programs in Counselor Education

- M.S. in Higher Education Counseling/Student Affairs (no longer accepting new students)
- M.S. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling

Certificates in Counselor Education

- Higher Education Counseling/Student Affairs
- Specialist Certificate I in (School) Counseling
- Post-Master's Certificate in Professional Counselor Licensure Preparation (LPC)

Admissions

All applicants to one of West Chester University's graduate programs will be held to the graduate admissions requirements. When applicable, additional requirements for admission into specific department program(s) may be listed below.

Master of Education in School Counseling/Master of Education in Clinical Mental Health Counseling

When admitting an applicant to the counselor education programs, the department makes a commitment to the student's development and future success. The department evaluates each candidate through the use of multiple criteria. Admission requires an undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university. The expected standard for students applying to counselor education programs is a minimum 3.0 grade point average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale. Standardized scores such as the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) or the Miller Analogies Test (MAT) are not required. In addition to undergraduate grades, all candidates must submit two letters of reference. Candidates may also be assessed by way of an interview.

Specialist Certificate I in Counseling/Post-Master's Certificate in Professional Counselor Licensure Preparation

Master's degree is required.

Policies

All graduate students are held to the academic policies and procedures outlined in the graduate catalog. Students are encouraged to review departmental handbooks for program tips, suggested course sequences, and explanations of procedures. When applicable, additional policies for specific department programs may be listed below.

Degree Requirements

After completion of 15 credit hours but prior to enrolling for 25 credit hours of counselor education course work, students are eligible and must apply for degree candidacy.
Degree Candidacy Requirements
1. Students must achieve a grade of B (83%) or better in all degree candidacy courses (EDC 503, EDC 506, EDC 567, EDC 570, and EDC 571) at the point the application is submitted.
2. Faculty are asked to share each semester any concerns with the student's interpersonal skills and/or overall mental health. If concerns are expressed, a formal assessment may be required prior to granting degree candidacy.
3. Students seeking certification as a school counselor must successfully complete the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) certification requirements: Praxis PPST Reading, Writing, and Mathematics Tests (or already be PDE teacher certified in another subject area). All students admitted after January 1, 2011 must complete PDE Chapter 49.13 requirements.

Comprehensive Exam Policy for the Department of Counselor Education
All students will complete a comprehensive exam, which represents the major cognate evaluation of counseling candidates. The degree being pursued will be granted only when students have passed the department's standards, which includes passing the comprehensive exam.

Field Experience Policy
Students in the Department of Counselor Education must earn a B or better in any field experience course (i.e., EDC 590, EDC 592, EDC 600, EDC 601, EDC 602). A grade of B- or below in any field experience course must be repeated with remediation. Only one field experience course may be remediated and a grade of B or better is required before continuing on to a future field experience course.

Educational Specialist I Certificate
In order to obtain the Educational Specialist I Certificate, students must successfully complete the required practicum and internship experiences in approved secondary or elementary school settings. These courses provide an opportunity for students, under West Chester University faculty supervision, to work closely with a professional counselor in a school setting. The certificate is issued on the basis of the program approval status of the counselor education program at the University as granted by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Effective January 1, 2011, the Pennsylvania Department of Education Chapter 49.13 regulations went into effect. This regulation requires all Pennsylvania teacher certification candidates to complete nine credits or 270 hours or an equivalent combination for adaptations and accommodations for diverse students in an inclusive setting, and three credits or 90 hours or an equivalent combination to meet the instructional needs of English language learners. EDC 559 meets three of the nine required credits of course work in adaptations and accommodations for diverse students in an inclusive setting. The remaining diverse learner in inclusive settings and English language learner requirements can be met through courses at the undergraduate level and must be completed prior to graduation from the M.Ed. program.

Faculty
Professors
Kathryn Alessandria (kalessandria@wcupa.edu) (2003)
B.S., M.A., University of Pittsburgh; Ph.D., Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Vickie Ann McCoy (vmccoy@wcupa.edu) (2007)
B.A., M.S., M.A., Monmouth College; Ph.D., University of Southern Mississippi
Richard D. Parsons (rparsons@wcupa.edu) (1990)
B.A., Villanova University; M.A., Ph.D., Temple University
Matthew Snyder (msnyder@wcupa.edu) (2007)
B.S., Pennsylvania State University; M.A., Arcadia University; Ph.D., University of Connecticut
Naijian Zhang (nzhang@wcupa.edu) (1999)
B.A., Xi’an Foreign Languages Institute (China); M.A., Ph.D., Ball State University
Lynn Zubernis (lzubernis@wcupa.edu) (2007)
B.A., Rosemont College; M.A., Ph.D., Bryn Mawr College

Associate Professors
Karen L. Dickinson (kdickinson@wcupa.edu) (2011)
B.A., Rutgers University; M.A., West Chester University; Ph.D., University of Delaware
Cheryl W. Neale-McFall (cneale@wcupa.edu) (2012)
Graduate Coordinator, Counselor Education
B.S., James Madison University; M.S., University of Georgia; M.Ed., Ph.D., Old Dominion University
Eric William Owens (eowens@wcupa.edu) (2011)
Chairperson, Counselor Education
B.A., University of Pittsburgh; M.A., Indiana University of Pennsylvania; Ph.D., Duquesne University

Assistant Professor
Bridget Asempapa (basempapa@wcupa.edu) (2017)
B.S.Ed., M.S.Ed., Youngstown State University; Ph.D., Ohio University

Courses
EDC
EDC 503. Professional Orientation to Counseling. 3 Credits.
An introductory course that provides an understanding of counseling as a profession: including history, roles, organizational structures, ethical and legal issues, standards, and credentialing. Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.

EDC 504. Organization & Administration of School Counseling Programs. 3 Credits.
The student will learn how to develop, maintain, and evaluate a comprehensive school counseling program that effectively addresses student needs. National models for school counseling programs that provide process and content frameworks will be examined. Specific emphases will be placed on the school as a system, needs based and data driven program development, process and outcome accountability, program management, and the cost/ effective delivery of programs. Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.

EDC 505. School Counselors Working with Diverse Learners. 3 Credits.
The course has been developed to meet the requirements of Pennsylvania Department of Education (Act 49.13) and in recognition of the growing number of English Language Learners (ELL) in public schools. The goal of this course is to provide students with an overview of the characteristics and unique challenges confronted by the diverse learner. Students, who because of limited English language proficiency or disabilities may exhibit literacy deficits and experience academic needs that require both varied instructional strategies and counselor support and advocacy. The role of the school counselor as an advocate and supportive agent for the diverse learner will be highlighted along with the unique value of counselor as ‘teacher-consultant and collaborator’. Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.

EDC 506. Counseling Research Methods and Program Evaluation. 3 Credits.
This course is designed to provide a foundation for understanding research design and program evaluation specific to the counseling profession. Emphasis will be given to understanding and identifying multiple methods of research, strategies for conducting ethical research, understanding evidence-based practices, and understanding the purpose of a needs assessment. Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.
EDC 520. Social and Cultural Diversity Issues in Counseling. 3 Credits.
This course explores different racial, social class, gender, and ethnic group orientations to counseling and examines exceptionality implications in applying traditional counseling approaches for use with diverse client populations.
Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.

EDC 521. Human Development Through Life Span. 3 Credits.
Exploration of cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development over the life span. This course examines both theory and research in human development and applies this knowledge to the practice of counseling.
Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.

EDC 530. Introduction to Student Affairs. 3 Credits.
The primary goal of this course is to provide the graduate students in counseling/student affairs with a comprehensive introduction to the field of student affairs in American higher education including: an historical overview of student affairs, legal and professional ethics, models and practices of leadership, organizational management, consultation, and the many functions and activities associated with student affairs. The course is designed to examine student affairs in public and private institutions as well as two and four year institutions.
Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.

EDC 531. Theories of American College Student Development. 3 Credits.
The general purpose of this course is to focus on the examination of a range of human development theories that offer insights to the process of student learning, growth, and development during the college years. Special focus will be directed toward understanding the implication of these models for the policies and practices of higher education and student affairs in particular.
Typically offered in Fall.

EDC 532. Leadership and Management in Student Affairs. 3 Credits.
The purposes of this course are (1) to explore research on management and leadership and to prepare the student as an educational leader in student affairs, (2) to review the policy implications that affect social, interpersonal, and academic success of American college students, (3) to examine the American college student’s lifestyle, attitudes, characteristics, and demographics, and (4) to assess the effects of higher education, student affairs in particular, on the American college student.
Typically offered in Spring.

EDC 551. Introduction to Clinical Mental Health Counseling. 3 Credits.
This course introduces students to clinical mental health counseling, exploring the history and philosophy of the field, and the primary settings in which mental health counselors provide services. An understanding of the roles and functions of the clinical mental health counselor, and the scope and methods of counseling used, allows students to develop a coherent professional identity. The course emphasizes the importance of understanding client diversity, the implications of sociocultural, demographic and lifestyle factors, and the impact of oppression and discrimination, which enables students to empower their clients and advocate for change. The professional issues unique to clinical mental health counseling are also covered, including mandated care, reimbursement, practice privileges, organizational challenges, and fiscal and legal aspects of community mental health settings.
Typically offered in Spring.

EDC 552. Trauma and Crisis Intervention Work and the Professional Counselor. 3 Credits.
The purpose of this course is to provide students with an understanding of the theories and practices associated with counseling survivors of crises and other traumatic events. Upon completion of the course, students will understand the impact of crises, disasters, and other trauma-causing events on people, as well as how crisis intervention occurs within clinical mental health settings and the community at large. This course will review the principles of crisis intervention and trauma counseling, as well as methods for assessing individuals in crisis, such as suicidality, self-injury, and so forth. Participants will understand the appropriate use of diagnosis during a crisis, disaster, or other trauma-causing event, as well as learn to differentiate between pathological and developmentally appropriate reactions to these events.

EDC 553. Introduction to Addictions Counseling. 3 Credits.
An introduction to substance abuse counseling and related issues. This course provides an overview of the historical context, etiological theories, and psychoactive impact of substances on the brain and body. The course will focus on evidence-based assessment, diagnosis and treatment of substance abuse/depenence with emphasis on clinical counseling practice by theory and research.

EDC 554. Grief Counseling. 3 Credits.
This course will focus on the experiences of loss, grief and bereavement as it is viewed by individuals, families and loved ones. The aspiring counselor will become acquainted with the guidelines for conceptualizing loss and grief, coping mechanisms for clients, and strategies for loss adaptations. In addition, we will consider how social factors, including culture, ethnicity/ race, gender, class and sexual orientation may impact the grieving process. Students will be required to apply and integrate this knowledge through various written assignments, class discussion and introspective analysis.

EDC 555. Marriage and Family Counseling. 3 Credits.
A survey course that examines the dynamics of general systems theory, family systems, and the rationale and practice of marriage and family counseling. The student is introduced to various theories of family counseling; related approaches to therapeutic intervention; and the associated contextual, ethical, and professional practice issues. A significant portion of the class is devoted to experiential learning activities designed to facilitate integration of theory and practice and to stimulate self-reflection and assessment.

EDC 556. Career Development Theories and Practices. 3 Credits.
Theories and techniques relating to career development in children, adolescents, and adults. Career development programming within the context of a systems approach is stressed. Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.

EDC 557. Advanced Counseling Skills and Techniques. 3 Credits.
This course provides students with advanced knowledge and hands-on application of counseling techniques commonly used in clinical mental health settings. Students will gain knowledge of how these techniques are derived from theory and research on Evidenced Based Practices (EBP). They will learn how to select and utilize these techniques appropriately based on their case conceptualization of diverse clients. Students will engage in hands-on practice of these techniques in mock counseling sessions. Finally, students will learn how to evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions.
Pre / Co requisites: EDC 557 requires prerequisite of EDC 580.
Typically offered in Fall & Spring.

EDC 558. Counseling Military Professionals, Veterans, and Their Families. 3 Credits.
This course explores the challenges facing military personnel, veterans and their families. Course work will prepare students to understand the mental health challenges facing all three populations, as well as the services and programs available for assistance. A special focus will be on mental health issues such as PTSD and coping with physical and psychological trauma.

EDC 559. Human Exceptionality for Counselors. 3 Credits.
The goal of this course is to provide future school counselors with an overview of human exceptionality and advanced educational psychology constructs as they pertain to new experiences of persons with disabilities in our educational system.
Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.

EDC 560. Diagnosis and Treatment Planning for Counselors. 3 Credits.
This course is focused on developing the knowledge and skills essential to employ valid diagnosis, assessment, client conceptualization, and clinical intervention and treatment planning. There will be an emphasis on the use of biosocially conceptualization models and evidence based practices as a basis for treatment planning.
Typically offered in Spring.

EDC 561. Current Issues in Mental Health. 3 Credits.
The course will focus on the current issues in mental health counseling to include the role of ethical and legal considerations in counseling, social and cultural issues to include advocacy action planning, and trends affecting the field, the direction in which our field is heading, and the practice of mental health counseling.
Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.

EDC 567. Group Dynamics. 3 Credits.
This course in group processes focuses on the identification of the implicit and explicit role functions of the group member and the group leader. The recognition and awareness of one’s behavior with multiple feedback sources is of primary concern. The major objective of this course is to initiate, develop, and master relationships in a group setting.
Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.

EDC 570. Fundamentals of the Helping Relationship. 3 Credits.
The course will introduce students to the counseling process. Communications skills essential to the helping relationship will be taught and practiced in a counseling lab.
Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.
EDC 571. Counseling Theory and Techniques. 3 Credits.
The course provides an in-depth look at selected theories and their resultant "therapeutic operations", including cognitive/behavioral, person-centered and solution focused models. Emphasis is on both theory and the application of theory to practice. This pre-practicum course includes direct contact with 'simulated clients' and the development of counseling intervention plans.
Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.

EDC 572. Fundamentals of Assessment, Diagnosis, and Mental Health Intervention. 3 Credits.
The purpose of this course is to provide the student with a comprehensive understanding of the role of psychological assessment in counseling and diagnostic processes, as well as the importance of mental health in optimal well-being. This course will focus on both the knowledge and skills required of professional counselors in assessing, diagnosing, and intervening with mental health concerns. The practice and evaluation of skill development is an essential element of this course.
Pre / Co requisites: EDC 572 requires prerequisites of EDC 503, EDC 506, EDC 570, EDC 571.
Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.

EDC 576. Consult & Coord In Guild & Couns. 3 Credits.
This prepracticum course focuses on models, mechanisms, and strategies of employing consultation and coordination in remedial and preventive interventions in educational settings. Systems analysis and program development and evaluation will be addressed relative to consultation and coordination.
Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.

EDC 577. School Counseling Strategies for Change. 3 Credits.
The course is designed to provide an in-depth look at strategies employed by school counselors in individual and group format for promoting client change. The strategies presented reflect those of "best practice" and are tailored to the developmental needs of specific client populations. This prepracticum course includes actual counseling experience with a level appropriate student.
Typically offered in Fall & Spring.

EDC 580. Practicum in Mental Health Counseling. 3 Credits.
Students will complete a counseling practicum experience in an approved community mental health setting that totals a minimum of 100 clock hours; a minimum of 40 of hours will be direct contact. For this practicum experience students will be provided with a variety of individual, group, couple, marriage, and family counseling experiences with field-based clients. Students will receive both triadic and group supervision under the direction of a University faculty member. The instructional procedures of this course will include didactic presentations, group discussions, video presentations, case studies, group and triadic supervision.
Pre / Co requisites: EDC 580 requires prerequisite of EDC 503, EDC 521, EDC 567, EDC 570, EDC 571, and EDC 551.

EDC 590. Practicum in School Counseling. 3 Credits.
Students will complete a counseling practicum experience in an approved elementary school setting that totals a minimum of 100 clock hours. This practicum will include both individual and group counseling experiences. Students will receive both individualized and group supervision under the directions of a University faculty member.
Pre / Co requisites: EDC 590 requires prerequisites of EDC 503, EDC 567, EDC 570, and EDC 571.
Typically offered in Fall & Spring.

EDC 592. Practicum in Higher Education Student Affairs. 3 Credits.
Students will complete a counseling practicum experience in an approved higher education student affairs setting that totals a minimum of 100 clock hours. This practicum will include both individual and group counseling experiences. Students will receive both individualized and group supervision under the directions of a University faculty member.
Pre / Co requisites: EDC 592 requires prerequisites of EDC 503, EDC 567, EDC 570, EDC 571; EDC 530 or EDC 531 must be completed before or concurrently.
Typically offered in Fall & Spring.

EDC 594. Workshop in Counselor Education. 1-6 Credits.
workshop.
Typically offered in Summer. Repeatable for Credit.

EDC 595. Workshop in Counselor Education. 1-6 Credits.
workshop.
Distance education offering may be available.
Typically offered in Summer. Repeatable for Credit.

EDC 596. Workshop in Counselor Education. 1-6 Credits.
workshop.
Typically offered in Summer. Repeatable for Credit.

EDC 597. Workshop in Counselor Education. 1-6 Credits.
workshop.
Typically offered in Summer. Repeatable for Credit.

EDC 598. Workshop in Counselor Education. 1-6 Credits.
workshop.
Typically offered in Summer. Repeatable for Credit.

EDC 599. Independent Study. 1-3 Credits.
Independent research and study under the direction of a faculty member.
Consent: Permission of the Department required to add.
Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.

EDC 600. Counseling Internship in Higher Education/Student Affairs. 3 Credits.
The internship is designed to provide an intensive, supervised on-site counseling experience specific to student's program specialization working in a field site approved by the department. Each three-credit internship has a 200-hour minimum requirement with the course being repeated until the student has accumulated a minimum of 600 on-site hours over at least 2 semesters. This course may be taken again for credit.
Pre / Co requisites: EDC 600 requires prerequisites of EDC 592, EDC 540, and EDC 556; corequisites of EDC 531 and EDC 532.
Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer. Repeatable for Credit.

EDC 601. Counseling Internship Elementary School. 3 Credits.
This internship is designed to provide an intensive, supervised on-site counseling experience in an elementary school setting (grades K-6) in a field site approved by the department. Each three-credit internship has a 200-hour minimum requirement with the course being repeated until the student has accumulated a minimum of 600 hours in school settings over at least two semesters. This course may be taken again for credit.
Pre / Co requisites: EDC 601 requires prerequisites of EDC 590, EDC 576, and EDC 540; EDC 504, EDC 556, and EDC 559 must be taken before or concurrent with first internship. Typically offered in Fall & Spring. Repeatable for Credit.

EDC 602. Counseling Internship Secondary School. 3 Credits.
This internship is designed to provide an intensive, supervised on-site counseling experience in a secondary school setting (grades 7-12) in a field site approved by the department. Each three-credit internship has a 200-hour minimum requirement with the course being repeated until the student has accumulated a minimum of 600 on-site hours in school settings over at least two semesters. This course may be taken again for credit.
Pre / Co requisites: EDC 602 requires prerequisites of EDC 590, EDC 576, and EDC 540; EDC 504, EDC 556, and EDC 559 must be taken before or concurrent with first internship. Typically offered in Fall & Spring. Repeatable for Credit.

EDC 605. Clinical Mental Health Counseling Internship. 3 Credits.
The internship is designed to provide supervised counseling experiences for graduate students preparing to work in clinical and community settings. The internship is typically one of the final courses in the student's graduate program and offers the student the opportunity to observe, practice and demonstrate the skills necessary to be a master's-level professional counselor.
Pre / Co requisites: EDC 605 requires prerequisite of EDC 540 and EDC 580.
Typically offered in Fall & Spring. Repeatable for Credit.

EDC 620. Advanced Counseling Interventions. 3 Credits.
This seminar will stress the application of clinical skills and will include a field component as well as a case conferencing format. Emphasis will be placed on treatment planning using multiaxial diagnosis, implementation, and evaluation. Distance education offering may be available.
Typically offered in Spring.

EDC 630. Systems Concepts & Skills Prof Counselor. 3 Credits.
Contact department for more information about this course.
EDC 650. Advanced Counselor Internship. 3 Credits.
Contact department for more information about this course.
Distance education offering may be available.
Typically offered in Summer.
Repeatable for Credit.