

Master of Science in Education (M.S.Ed.) in Counseling



Mission Statement

Counselors teaching counselors: Knowledge, development, inspiration and transformation.

Degree Options and Requirements

The Western Illinois University Department of Counselor Education offers two high-quality programs in counselor training: the Master of Science in Education in Counseling, with specializations in School Counseling, or Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC).

School Counseling

- The School Counseling option prepares graduate students to promote the academic, career and personal/social development of K-12 students, including collaboration, consultation, leadership, counseling, prevention and intervention skills.
- The School Counseling option requires 60 semester hours.
- Non-teacher certified applicants are required to take an additional nine semester hours, as mandated by state licensure.
- All school counseling applicants must provide evidence of passing Basic Skills Test scores in order to be eligible for admission, according to state requirements.

Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC)

- The CMHC option prepares graduate students in the development of professional knowledge, skills and practices necessary for the diagnosis, treatment, referral and prevention of mental and emotional disorders.
- The Clinical Mental Health Counseling option requires 60 semester hours, as mandated by licensure.

The curriculum for both options offers a blend of courses designed to provide the skills and knowledge necessary to become a competent

counseling professional. Solid academic performance and experiential mastery are required. All students must register for a comprehensive examination to be given during the student's final internship semester. A passing score is required to advance to degree completion.

Admission Requirements

Admission consideration for graduate training in Counseling requires multiple steps. First, applicants must be admitted to Western Illinois University's School of Graduate Studies. Next, the applicant must complete and submit the Department of Counselor Education application packet by the required deadline. The application packet requires references, transcripts, Basic Skills Test Scores (for school counseling applicants) and an essay.

A Departmental Selection Committee will review and recommend applicants for an admission interview with the WIU Department of Counselor Education. Considerations for screening interviews will not take place unless all required documents are received and approved by the deadline. We are a selective admission department. Meeting minimum requirements does not guarantee an invitation for screening or admission.

To be considered for admission, applicants must:

- Have completed a bachelor's degree in any field from a regionally-accredited university.
- Have a cumulative undergraduate grade point average of 3.0 or higher (includes all undergraduate work attempted at all institutions), or 3.25 for the last two years (60 semester hours) of undergraduate work.

Program Location:
Quad Cities

Contact Information

Questions about the program:
Department of Counselor Education
Department Chair Holly Nikels, Ph.D.
Room 2427
(309) 762-1876
HJ-Nikels@wiu.edu
wiu.edu/counselored

General admission questions:
School of Graduate Studies
(309) 298-1806 or (877) WIU GRAD
Grad-Office@wiu.edu
wiu.edu/grad



- Applicants failing to meet the minimum undergraduate requirements may be considered for probationary admission with a cumulative GPA of 2.75 to 2.99.
- Applicants with a cumulative undergraduate GPA between 2.6 and 2.74 may request consideration for probationary admission—an additional portfolio must be submitted at the time of application.
- Applicants not meeting the above requirements may request individual consideration based upon exceptional circumstances. This is done only in rare cases. Applicants must contact the department chairperson prior to submitting application.
- All applicants admitted as probationary students must petition for full admission after completing nine semester hours from specified courses
- All application materials (both online and mailed) must be received by the WIU Department of Counselor Education by the **Feb. 1** deadline in order to be considered for **Spring screening interviews and possible Fall admission.**



Background Check

Applicants offered admission into the department will be required to complete a criminal background check.

- Students may be prohibited from completing field work or obtaining licensure if background investigations reveal certain criminal charges, arrests and/or convictions.
- It is important to be aware that some schools/agencies may have additional background investigations prior to acceptance at their field site.
- If there are further questions, email the department chair at HJ-Nikels@wiu.edu.

Accreditation

The Counseling programs are accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

The School Counseling option is also accredited by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistantships are awarded through a competitive process to full-time Counselor Education students enrolled in nine semester hours of coursework. Recipients of graduate assistantships receive a tuition waiver and a stipend in exchange for working for the department.

Western Illinois University is an Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity employer with a strong commitment to diversity. In that spirit, we are particularly interested in receiving applications from a broad spectrum of people, including, but not limited to, minorities, women and individuals with disabilities. WIU has a non-discrimination policy that includes sex, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, religion, age, marital status, national origin, disability and veteran status.



“The Department of Counselor Education provided me with many opportunities to get involved and grow as a person and a counselor! Getting involved helped me learn valuable leadership and professional skills that will benefit me throughout my career.”

*— Alicia Means
CNE Graduate, 2018*