

Master of Education in School Counseling Student Handbook

Program Mission

The Master of Education degree in School Counseling prepares students to become effective K-12 professional school counselors. The program aims to promote student engagement in scholarly work, and experiential learning that upholds the mission of Faulkner University. The Master of Education School Counseling degree will prepare and produce counselors of character, who are committed to moral excellence, individual freedoms, diversity, personal, and social responsibility, and the pursuit of academic growth and professional development. Hence, Faulkner University graduates will be fully equipped with the necessary knowledge and skill to promote the profession of school counseling through development and implementation of data driven school counseling programs that are designed to promote academic, personal/social, and career success of those attending the schools where Faulkner graduates serve as school counselors.

The Master of Education School Counseling Program prepares students to serve as professional school counselors. The degree is developed to meet the standards of the Alabama Department of Education and best practices of the profession outlined by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling, and Related Programs (CACREP) standards. Student preparation is provided through academic course work, and experiential learning opportunities during clinical training, observations, practicum, and internship. The following program objectives guide student

Program Oversight

The Master of Education in School Counseling program is in the Graduate Counseling Department under the College of Education. The Graduate Counseling Programs Department Chair and the School Counseling Program Director administer the program, including admissions and scheduling. Current and prospective students may contact the program at counseling@faulkner.edu. Program oversight is led by:

- Vice President of Academic Affairs - Dr. Dave Rampersad
- Dean of College of Education - Dr. Sandy Ledwell
- Department Chair of Graduate Counseling Program - Dr. Heath Willingham

Master of Education in School Counseling Faculty

Core Faculty

- Willingham, Heath; Chair of Graduate Counseling Programs; Director of Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program; B.S. Auburn University; M, A., Lipscomb University; M.S., University of South Alabama; Ph.D., Auburn University
- Jones, Christi Associate Professor; Director of School Counseling Program; B.S., Auburn University Montgomery; M.Ed., Auburn University; Ph.D., Auburn University
- Willingham, Shanna; Associate Professor of Counseling; B.S., Lipscomb University; M.Ed., Auburn University; Ph.D., Auburn University

Adjunct Faculty

- Norwell, Jeanell; Adjunct Professor; B.S., Troy University; M.S., Troy University; Ph.D., Amridge University
- Cates, Paul Adjunct Professor; B.A., Abilene Christian University; M.Ed., Auburn University; Ed.D., Auburn University
- Fletcher, Penny Lane. Adjunct Professor: B.S., University of Louisiana at Monroe; M.Ed., , William Carey University; Ph.D., Amridge University
- Tidwell, Patrick, Adjunct Professor; B.S., Faulkner University; M.S., Amridge University; Ph.D., Amridge University

Certification Track Admission Requirements

The Department of Graduate Counseling at Faulkner University seeks school counseling program applicants who hold a Class B or Class A certificate in teaching or instructional support areas. Applicants should also have two years of full-time acceptable educational work experience and proof of a criminal background check. A Supplement EXP form must be submitted to the Alabama State Department of Education to document the two years of educational work experience. Per state code this will change to one you in the fall of 2025. Prospective students should also have a 2.75 GPA or higher for degree held. Faulkner University also seeks students who will be a credit to Faulkner University through service to their communities and the school

counseling profession. Admission to this program is granted by the Graduate Counseling Committee. The committee, in accordance with the standards of the Alabama State Department of Education decided on the following criteria for admittance to the Master of Education School Counseling Program.

Applications

All applicants must complete an application to the program. Applications cannot be processed until ALL required materials are received. As soon as they are received, the applicant will be notified that his/her file is complete. It is appropriate to assume that an application is incomplete until such notification is received. Admission, when granted, will be valid for one year after which time the student will need to re-apply. All application materials become the property of Faulkner University; none will be returned to the applicant.

Academic Credentials

Applicants of the Master of Education School Counseling Program must have a valid Class B or Class A teaching certificate or other instructional support areas, two full years of full time acceptable professional work experience, and transcripts from undergraduate/graduate degree with a minimum of a 2.75 GPA.

Criminal Background Check

Applicants must complete and provide proof of a criminal background check as part of the admissions process. This is a requirement of the State Department of Education.

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)

A score of 500 on the TOEFL is required of all students for whom English is a second language. Official TOEFL or IELTS score reports are required for admission to the program and may be ordered from Educational Testing Services (ETS) or IELTS. The TOEFL code number for Faulkner University is 1034. The minimum requirements for graduate admission on the TOEFL is 550 (on the paper test), 213 (on the computer-based test), or 79 (on the internet-based test).

Goal Statement

Applicants must submit a statement of approximately 400 words specifying personal goals for their life and how earning a Master of Education in School Counseling at Faulkner University will contribute to those life goals.

Proof of Teaching Experience

Applicants must have letter(s) from school systems/districts where they work or have worked stating their time of service with the school system. These letters are needed as evidence of qualification for certification in school counseling at the end of the program. These letter(s) should indicate a total of two years of full-time service in education. A Supplement EXP Form must be submitted to the Alabama State Department of Education at the time of program application to verify the required two years of teaching experience which is one of the requirements for certification at program completion.

Summary of Required Application Materials for Consideration for Admission

1. Application form
2. Official copy of transcript(s)
3. Copy of Class A/ Class B teaching or educational support area certificate
4. Criminal background check
5. If applicable TOEFL Results
6. Goal Statement
7. Proof of teaching experience /Supplement EXP Form submitted to Alabama State Department of Education (In-state applicants). Out of state applicants must meet the criteria of their state certification office.

Curriculum Requirements

The Master of Education in School Counseling degree is a 60-hour on-line and on-campus hybrid program. The program utilizes a variety of on-line resources and tools for course management, conferencing, online discussions, student assignments, and assessments/evaluations, etc. These program tools include Canvas, Tevera, GoReact, and Zoom. Most of the

courses in the program are completed in the on-line environment. The Counseling Field Experience Courses are an exception. COU 6311 Introduction to School Counseling provides school counseling students with their first field experience (observation, and school counselor interview). The clinical training course, COU 6596 meets on Faulkner University's Montgomery campus for face-to-face skills training, supervision, and counseling topic sessions for four days. COU 6596 also requires school counseling students to complete a pre-practicum field experience in addition to their on-campus visit. The on-campus portion of COU 6596 is a four-day training that school counseling program students only attend once. The two clinical experience courses, COU 6390 Counseling Practicum, and COU 6695 Internship in Counseling, are designed to allow students to demonstrate practical application of their school counseling training in the school setting. There are four total courses that are linked to field experiences in the program. See the embedded chart outlining field experience progression in the program below.

FAULKNER UNIVERSITY SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM FIELD EXPERIENCE PROGRESSION CHART
<p>Field Experience One – COU 6311 Introduction to School Counseling</p> <p>Field Experience Time Commitment: 8 hrs. (one hour interview with school counselor, and seven hours of observation in the school setting; with observation of at least three large group sessions in the classroom conducted by host school counselor.</p> <p>The Field Experience Application Assignment (1) is designed to introduce the school counseling student to considerations related to meeting the needs of all students.</p> <p>The School Counselor Interview and Professional Self-Reflection Paper is designed for students to consider what professional attributes are important to possess as a professional school counselor.</p> <p>Students must seek diversity in school settings and in student populations served. School site choices are pre-approved by the school counseling program director to ensure diverse settings are chosen for each experience. Site diversity is documented on the field experience form and diversity in student population is documented and addressed in the field experience assignment (see documents in field experience folder).</p> <p>Assignments connected to field experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Counselor Interview and Professional Self-reflection Paper.
<p>Field Experience Two – COU 6596 Clinical Training</p> <p>Field Experience Time Commitment at Site: 18 hours in the school setting (6 hours in elementary, middle, and high school settings.)</p>

Students in the school counseling program complete the course, COU 6695 Clinical Training for School Counseling. This course provides training in individual and group work skills development on campus for four days. Students also have course work in Canvas to complete across the clinical training course semester. There is a field experience requirement in this course where students complete a field experience requirement in the elementary, middle, and high school setting for six hours in each of the three settings. These experiences are separate from the on-campus visit. Students are expected to find three schools for their field experiences where they will observe school counselors conducting large group for each of these settings. Students will respond to self-reflection prompts for all three settings that challenge them to consider differentiation of large-group counseling delivery in each of these settings. Then at one of the three schools the school counseling student will secure permission to co-lead one large group session with the school counselor on the day of the field experience. The student will develop a lesson plan based on the large group session topic and answer self-reflection questions related to the co-leading experience and meeting diverse student population needs. This assignment introduces the school counseling student to diverse school settings and student populations, and the consideration and planning needed to meet all students' needs. This 2nd field experience takes place in the 2nd semester of the program.

Students must seek diversity in school settings and in student populations worked with in field experiences. School site choices are pre-approved by the school counseling program director to ensure diverse settings are chosen. Site diversity is documented on the field experience form and in the field experience assignment.

Assignment Connected to field experience:

- Field Experience Application Assignment

Field Experience Three –

COU 6390 Counseling Practicum

Field Experience Time Commitment at Site: 100 hours

This is the first long-term field placement for students in the school counseling program. Students in this course complete 100 hours in a university approved school setting. This field experience consists of 40 hours of direct counseling service in individual counseling, large group, and small group counseling. Students must have direct counseling experiences in all three of these areas. Students receive three forms of supervision during the practicum experience: (1) individual supervision from a university supervisor (one hour weekly), (2) individual supervision from site supervisor (one hour weekly), and (3) group supervision class in Zoom 1 ½ hours weekly. These supervision experiences assist students in professional growth and counseling skills development. This third field experience takes place in the fourth semester in the program. Students must inform the school counseling program director prior to the practicum semester if they plan to do their practicum field experience in elementary or middle/high school. They must complete time in both settings. For example, if practicum is in the elementary setting, then internship would be in the middle/high school setting. This ensures students are prepared to work in all grade level configurations.

Students must complete at least 8 recorded sessions with clients or provide 8 I session observation forms completed by the site supervisor if recording is not allowed. To record sessions, a permission to record form must be signed by a consenting client.

GoReact, an encrypted phone app is used to record sessions, and also provides university supervisors with access to the student recordings for the purpose of feedback related to counseling skills development.

Students must seek diversity in school settings and in student populations served School site choices are pre-approved by the school counseling program director to ensure diverse settings are chosen.

Students in the practicum semester are required to develop a comprehensive school counseling plan based on their site placement, and the ASCA National Model, submit lesson plans, and self-reflect on their professional experiences in large group, small group, and individual counseling experiences.

Assignments Connected of field experience:

- School Counseling Plan
- Lesson Plan Submissions
- Large Group, and Small Group Experience Self-Reflections

Students must pass the Praxis II (School Counseling) to be able to progress to Internship.

Field Experience Four

COU 6695 Internship in Counseling

Field Experience Time Commitment 600 hours

240 direct counseling service hours, 360 indirect counseling service hours

Internship in Counseling is a 600 hour intensive clinical experience in the school setting where school counselors-in-training complete 360 indirect counseling hours and 240 direct counseling hours. Direct counseling experiences include large group, small group, and individual counseling services. School counselors-in-training receive one and a half hours of weekly group supervision via Zoom from the course instructor, and one hour of individual supervision from their site supervisors. The cumulative project for this course is the Internship Final Project: School Counseling Intervention and Leadership Plan.

Students must seek diversity in school settings and in student populations served. School site choices are pre-approved by the school counseling program director to ensure diverse settings are chosen.

Assignment Connected to Field Experience:

- Internship Final Project
- Lesson Plan Submissions

Program Matriculation, Time Limits, and Completion Requirements

Students must complete the School Counseling program within 5 years of their first semester enrolled in courses and meet the following criteria to become a School Counselor in the State of Alabama:

1. At least a valid Class B Professional Educator Certificate in a teaching field, a valid Class A Professional Leadership Certificate, or a valid Class A Professional Educator Certificate in a teaching field or in another area of instructional support.
2. An official transcript from an institutionally accredited institution documenting an earned master's or bachelor's degree.
3. Meet Rule 290-3-3-.47(4) (b).
4. A minimum GPA of 3.25 on all courses in the Alabama State Board of Education approved school counseling program.
5. A Practicum of at least 100 clock hours in a school-based setting, including a minimum of 40 clock hours of supervised, direct service work in individual and group counseling with early childhood/elementary or secondary school students.
6. A supervised elementary or secondary school-based internship of at least 600 clock hours, begun subsequent to the completion of the practicum and including a minimum of 240 clock hours in direct service work with early childhood/elementary and secondary school students.
7. Students must have experience in both the elementary, middle, and high school setting across their field experiences. Practicum and Internship should have one field experience in the elementary setting, and one in the secondary setting. (Ex. Practicum at an elementary school would then require the student to have internship experience in a secondary school setting.)

8. Must meet the Praxis II requirements of the Alabama Educator Certification Assessment Program (AECAP). A passing score is 159 or higher. The Praxis must be passed before the semester of internship.

Application for Degree

Application for graduation should be made when registering for the last semester of course work and the student should notify Chair of the Graduate Counseling Department of his/her intention. The application date and form can be obtained in the Registrar's Office.

Academic Policies Pertaining to Grading, Transcripts, and Transfer Policies

Faulkner University, by its mission statement, is well known as a Christian university. Each student should know, understand, and accept the academic expectations as policies of the University. Each student is responsible for meeting the different requirements for the Master of Education in School Counseling Program. Students with matters of concern should consult with the Chair of the Department of Graduate Counseling.

Transcripts

Faulkner University has authorized Parchment to provide transcript ordering via the Web. You can order transcripts using any major credit card. Your card will only be charged after your order has been completed.

To order an official and/or unofficial transcript(s), go to [Parchment.com](https://www.parchment.com). The site will walk you through placing your order, including delivery options and fees. You can order as many transcripts as you like in a single session. A processing fee will be charged per recipient

Audit

Students are permitted to audit a course provided that there is room in the classroom and the number of auditors is not more than 20% of the class enrollment. A fee of \$300.00 per course is charged, but no credit is granted. With permission of the professor, a student may change his or her registration from credit to audit or audit to credit during the first three weeks of the semester. After this time, his or her options are to continue as registered or withdraw from the course.

Transfer Credits

A student who has earned graduate credit in a master's program from other institutions will be evaluated by the graduate counseling program committee to ascertain courses which can be applied to Faulkner's program. Students from an institutionally accredited institution may transfer a maximum of 12 semester hours for four courses into the Master of Education in School Counseling program. The director of the school counseling program must approve transfer hours.

Units of Credit

The unit of credit is the semester hour. One semester hour of credit represents approximately fifteen hours of lecture /discussion activity and examinations.

Student Load

Full-time load: For academic purposes, a student enrolled for six graduate semester hours is classified as a full-time student in the master of school counseling program.

Maximum Load

Maximum Load: No student may register for more than four courses per semester. The only exception is the first semester of the program which requires four 3 hour courses, and the 1 hour school counseling orientation course.

Advisement

The Chair of the Graduate Counseling Program will assign an advisor to provide the student with assistance in planning for his or her program, with registration and with evaluation of his/her progress. The advisor should approve each semester's schedule and any changes made or for seeking written approval of any exceptions. It is the student who bears responsibility for directing his or her progress through the program.

Grade Point Average

Scholarship level is expressed in terms of grade point average (GPA) calculated by dividing total quality points earned by credit hours attempted. Semester and cumulative averages are recorded on the permanent academic record and on semester grade reports. Averages are used to determine honors, academic probation, and suspension, renewal of academic scholarships, and eligibility for certificates and degrees.

Grade Reports

Final grade reports will be posted on-line. The student should review low grades promptly with his or her advisor. Official notice of academic honors, probation, or suspension will be reported by the Registrar's Office.

Class Attendance

Regular class attendance is a requirement of the degree program. Because of the theoretical, experiential, and social learning that will take place in the program, students are strongly encouraged to be in the on-line classroom several times during each week of the semester. Class attendance is an academic matter and absences will result in academic penalty.

Good Academic Standing

Students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.25 in all courses in the Alabama State Board of Education approved school counseling program.

Academic Review and Remediation

Should the student's GPA on the first six (6) hours of graduate work be below 3.0, he or she will be placed on academic probation. A student on academic probation will not be able to enroll for more than six hours during any term in which the probation applies. The student on academic probation must achieve a 3.00 cumulative GPA by the time they have earned the next six hours of graduate work. Failure to do so will result in suspension for the next regular term. A course in which the student has earned a grade of C or below may be repeated. In addition to maintaining an acceptable GPA, students are evaluated based on their skills growth, knowledge and disposition (see below). Each disposition is measured at 3 different points in the master of education school counseling program. At the first and last points of evaluation the students are expected to self-assess. In the orientation course students

are first introduced to expected dispositions and asked to rate themselves. Dispositions are evaluated by core faculty at the student evaluation meeting following the Clinical Training experience. The evaluation feedback from this faculty evaluation is shared in follow up meetings with students who attended clinical training. Dispositions are also measured at the end of student's practicum experience. Students are again asked to evaluate themselves and they are also evaluated by their University Supervisor.

Dispositions Assessment Schedule

COU 6100 School Counselor Orientation	Student Self-Assessment (First Semester of Program)
COU 6595 Clinical Training for School Counseling	Faculty Assessment (Second Semester of Program)
COU 6390 Practicum	Student Self-Assessment & Faculty Assessment (Prior to Internship)

Eight Measures of Disposition

1. Integrity
2. Emotional stability
3. Professionalism
4. Awareness of self and others
5. Openness to growth
6. Flexibility
7. Compassion
8. Coping and Self-Care

If during the student's matriculation through the program the faculty concludes that the student's progress is unacceptable, a formal Remediation Plan may be required.

The expectations for the Remediation Plan may vary by case but would typically include special projects related to the remediation issue, repeated coursework, or outside continuing education and/or participation in personal counseling. The Remediation Plan must be successfully completed for the student to progress to graduation.

Remediation also occurs at the University level through the office of Online Student Success (OSS) office using a program called SOAR. Each term, faculty work with OSS to identify students who are falling behind in attendance and participation. The following is an outline of the steps taken to reengage students:

1. Professors (online or ground classes) who have students who are not attending classes regularly or struggling academically in a course log into SOAR. The professors look up the student and answer a few questions to let us know what the issue is.
2. Once the referral (Send Alert) or non-attendance is submitted it generates an email that comes to OSS. We are the online student success advisors.
3. OSS reads through the information and follows up with the student.
4. Staff in the OSS office is trained as case managers and attempt to reach out to the student up to 3 times (via email and phone).
5. Once OSS staff communicate with students, they attempt to advise them on their potential options and help them get in touch with any resources or offices on campus that are appropriate. The OSS office will follow up with students as needed.

On the departmental level, students are reviewed on an ongoing basis and faculty regularly communicate about students who are struggling or in need of remediation. Also, each program student is reviewed in an official capacity at the late Fall and late Spring department meetings. Program faculty develop a remediation plan specific to the student's needs and issues.

School Counseling Specific Program Checkpoints

School Counseling Faulkner University Student Performance Checkpoints

Spring Semester (Year 1)

Clinical Training 1

At the conclusion of Clinical Training for School Counseling, students are evaluated by the core faculty based on their skills, knowledge, and professional dispositions (see above). A letter is sent to students in need of support and/or a remediation plan.

Fall Semester (Year 2)

Counseling Practicum

- Mid-term Evaluation Form
- Final Evaluation Form
- Hours Log
- Passing Score on School Counselor Praxis II required for matriculation to internship experience as well as satisfactory completion of course work, and site hours.

Spring Semester (Year 2)

Internship

- Mid-term Evaluation Form
- Final Evaluation Form
- Hours Log

Academic Monitoring

- If a student's GPA drops below a 3.25, a letter is sent to them offering support and/or remediation.

M.Ed. in School Counseling Courses

Instructional Support Area: (39 hours)

COU 6100 Orientation to School Counseling
COU 6310 Counseling Theories
COU 6311 Introduction to School Counseling
COU 6320 Lifespan Development
COU 6325 Career and Guidance Counseling
COU 6330 Counseling Diverse Populations
COU 6335 Child and Adolescence Counseling
COU 6350 Group Counseling
COU 6360 Measurement and Assessment
COU 6375 Legal and Ethical Issues
COU 6385 Substance Abuse
COU 6355 Crisis Intervention in Counseling
COU 6596 Clinical Training i

Survey of Special Education Course: (3 hours)

(If course was taken for prior level certification, another approved diversity course is required.)

FED 6345 Differentiated Instruction
or
FED 6342 Multicultural Education

Additional Courses (6 hours)

FED 6380 Action Research
COU 6380 Diagnosis and Treatment

Electives (Choose One): (3 hours)

COU 6315 Marriage and Family Therapy
COU 6370 Integrations of Theology and Counseling

COU 6345 Counseling in the Community
COU 6340 Analysis of the Helping Relationship

Practicum for School Counseling (3 hours) and Internship: (9 hours)

COU 6390 Counseling Practicum
COU 6695 Internship in Counseling

Total Hours Required for Graduation 60