Frequently Asked Questions about the CSUDH School and College Counseling program:

About the Program ~

1) Q: What degrees or credentials are offered in the CSUDH Counseling program?

A: Effective Fall 2015, we offer a Master of Science degree in Counseling with two options to choose from: School Counseling or College Counseling. Our program also offers the Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) credential in School Counseling, with an authorization in Child Welfare and Attendance (CWA).

- The MS Counseling, College Counseling option will prepare you to work as a College Counselor in various higher education settings.
- The MS Counseling, School Counseling option will prepare you to work as a School Counselor in pK-12 settings. To be employed as a public school counselor in the state of CA, you must also earn the PPS credential.
- The PPS credential is required by the state of California to work as a School Counselor in the public school system. The PPS credential is not required for College Counseling work.
- The CWA is an optional specialization that is added as an authorization to the PPS credential once it is completed. The CWA authorization will provide additional employment opportunities as a school counselor to work specifically with truancy remediation and prevention.

2) Q: Do I have to choose between School or College options, can I earn both?

A: Due to the University graduate degree requirements, you have to choose one option: School Counseling or College Counseling. Applicants should choose according to which option interests them most and which educational setting they eventually hope to work in. After admittance, it is possible to change your option to the other focus should you later decide to switch.

While one option must be selected, the program is designed to allow students in either option to gain specialization in the other area. The PPS credential in School Counseling is open to all MS Counseling program students who have passed the CBEST and have declared the PPS on their objective of study. Additionally, we expect to offer a Certificate in College Counseling in the near future which will allow School Counseling students to also specialize in College Counseling work.

3) Q: What is the timeline for completion of your program?

A: It typically takes full time students 2 years to earn their MS degree (for either option). The MS degree for both options is 48 units, so this timeline would be accomplished by taking 12 units for 4 consecutive Fall and Spring semesters or by taking summer courses and lightening the Fall and Spring loads. We do not permit students to take more than 12 units a semester.

Note that it is also completely acceptable to finish the MS program at a slower pace by taking between 6-9 units each semester. The PPS credential takes an additional semester(s) of Fieldwork (600 hours) following the completion of the MS exam and MS coursework.
Students who enter the program with a prior Master’s degree in Education, Counseling, Psychology, or Social Work are not required to earn our MS degree and can apply for just the PPS credential. However, depending on your professional goals, it may be in your best interests to earn a second Master’s degree. If there are transferrable courses from previous graduate work, then students may be able to complete the program earlier. If you are in this situation it is recommended that you see a faculty advisor to determine the best program plan for you.

4) Q: When are your classes offered?

A: Our classes are offered Monday through Thursday evenings at both 4pm and 7pm time periods. Each course is 3 units and meets once during the week for a 3 hour period. For example, a course scheduled for Monday at 4pm would meet once a week each Monday from 4:00 - 6:45pm. Please note that everyone must take both 4pm and 7pm classes throughout the program, therefore work schedules must be planned accordingly. Most of our classes are offered in the Fall and Spring semesters with a few available in the summer if one wishes to take summer classes. Most of our courses are offered in a traditional face-to-face format on campus, however a few that do not contain an intensive counseling component are also available on-line.

About Eligibility and the Application Process:

5) Q: Do I need to be a teacher to be eligible for admission into the program?

A: While it is beneficial to have work experience in education or counseling, these backgrounds are not required for admission to the program. We have many students who have come from outside these fields and are equally successful as those who have a teaching background.

6) Q: Are there prerequisite courses required before I can apply to the program? Does my undergraduate degree have to be in a particular major?

A: No, there are no required prerequisite courses or particular majors required for admission to the program. A Bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited university must be obtained by the time of admission, however, the undergraduate degree can be earned from any field of study.

7) Q: Do I need to take the CBEST to be admitted to the program?

A: If you wish to be admitted to the PPS portion of the program, all sections of the CBEST must be passed. If you have no intention of earning the PPS and just want to earn the MS degree, then you do not need to take the CBEST. The CBEST is a credentialing requirement for School Counseling work and does not pertain to College Counseling.
8) Q: What if I haven’t passed the CBEST yet, can I still apply just for the MS degree?

A: Yes, you can apply for just the MS and formally add the PPS objective to your program of study once you pass the CBEST. However, it is strongly encouraged that you have the CBEST passed prior to application if you intend on eventually applying for the PPS credential. Note that students will not be able to begin their final fieldwork for the credential unless the CBEST has been passed and the PPS has been formally added to the objective of study.

9) Q: What is a Certificate of Clearance and how do I get one? Do I need to get this if I want to pursue the College Counseling option?

A: The Certificate of Clearance verifies that you have completed CCTC’s fingerprint, character, and identification process, which is required for students working with minors. Because all of our program students will be working with minor students (even at the college level), all applicants must be cleared. If you have a valid teaching credential or current emergency teaching permit you do not need to get the Certificate of Clearance. Students cannot be accepted into the program without the Certificate of Clearance (or a teaching or substitute teaching credential). The Certificate of Clearance must be valid and not expired by the time of application to the program.

Livescan fingerprinting applications can be picked up on campus at either the GED office (COE 1410) or the Student Services Center (SCC 510). There are several places to have the fingerprints taken, including the CSUDH University Police Station. For more information, please go to [www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/fee-and-fingerprint.html](http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/fee-and-fingerprint.html)

10) Q: Can a family member, friend, or an individual from my church write one of my letters of recommendation?

A: While these people may know you well, we need to have the letters of recommendation be written by those who have served as your employer, supervisor, or professor so that they may speak to your potential as a future counselor based on their supervisory role with you. Letters must be on official letterhead of the referee’s place of employment and be written specifically for the Counseling program within one year of application date. Letters can either be sent directly to the Student Services Center or enclosed within your program application. In both cases, letters must be sealed with the referee’s signature across the back of the seal.

11) Q: Can I receive assistance in writing my statement of purpose?

A: Our program does not offer writing assistance for applications. If you are a current student at CSUDH or another university or college, writing help is typically offered through various campus tutoring programs. If you are not currently enrolled in a university and feel you need assistance, it can be useful to ask a trusted individual who writes well for their input. For the best consideration of your statement of purpose, be sure to answer the prompts as thoroughly and honestly as you are able.
12) Q: Do I need to take the GRE?
A: The GRE is not required for program application, but rather is an option for applicants whose GPA is less than the minimum 3.0 required.

13) Q: I'm not sure what my GPA is for my last 60 units of study, can you calculate it for me? How can I calculate it myself?
A: Unfortunately we do not have the resources to calculate GPA for applicants. However, it is fairly easy to do yourself by reviewing the most recent courses you have taken and calculating by hand or by using a GPA calculator (for example, http://gpacalculator.net/)

   If you have taken graduate coursework (i.e., any courses taken after your BA in a post-bac or graduate program), then these would be the most recent courses taken, and you would start from there and go backwards until you reach 60 semester units (or 90 qtr. units). Note that we do not include lower division courses in this total IF such coursework was taken after the BA degree (e.g., if you took a community college course after you received your BA degree, it would not count towards the GPA of your last 60 units of study because it is not part of a degree objective).

   If you have not taken any graduate coursework, then you would start by reviewing the most recent courses of your undergraduate record until you reach 60 units.

14) Q: What if my GPA is less than a 3.0?
A: If you have less than a 3.0 GPA in your last 60 units of study, then you can either take the GRE (revised) and earn a minimum combined score of 300 on the Verbal and Quantitative Tests, or take the MAT and earn a target score of 500 in order to compensate for low academic performance on your transcript.

15) Q: Can I take courses to bring up my GPA?
A: Taking as many graduate courses necessary to bring your GPA up to a 3.0 prior to applying is not recommended due to time and cost, and due to the lack of certainty that doing so would cause your application to eventually be accepted. Additionally, because application to the program is competitive, meeting the GPA requirement alone does not guarantee admission to the program. Taking lower division courses (e.g., community college coursework) will not count towards building your GPA.

16) Q: Can I take any of your program courses before I apply or am admitted?
A: No, counseling courses are only open to currently admitted students in the program.
17) Q: What is the GWAR?

A: The GWAR stands for the Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement. It is a writing assessment required of all students earning a Master’s degree at CSUDH and it can be met by either taking the GWE (the Graduate Writing Exam) or earning a B or higher in English 350.

In many cases incoming students have already fulfilled the GWAR from their undergraduate work. If you have not met the GWAR, then you will need to satisfy the requirement in your first semester of studies. It is not necessary to satisfy this requirement during the application process.

For more information please go to the following University websites:
http://www4.csudh.edu/graduate-studies/graduation/requirements/gwar/index
http://www4.csudh.edu/testing-center/gwe/options-for-meeting-gwar/index

Note that PPS Credential-only candidates are exempt from the GWAR as this requirement only pertains to Master’s degree students.

18) Q: What happens after I submit my application?

A: Assuming that you submit both a complete program application to the College of Education Student Services Center AND the University application online through CSU Mentor, your application will be reviewed by the admissions committee. Application review begins once the program deadline date occurs. Approximately one month after this deadline, selected applicants will be invited for personal interviews on campus for the final part of the admissions process. The committee will then make final admissions decisions and letters of notification mailed to all applicants.

19) Q: What are my chances of being accepted / how many students do you accept?

A: The chances of acceptance vary each semester depending upon how many applications we receive and how many courses we are able to offer for the newly admitted class of students, which is affected by budget and staffing. We typically range between accepting 15-20 students per term.

20) Q: If I don't get accepted, can I reapply for the following term?

A: While you are welcome to reapply if you do not get accepted from your initial application, it is usually within one’s best interests to reapply to a new program that may be a better fit altogether. Typically, when applicants widen their opportunities by applying to multiple programs, it increases their chances of acceptance to a counseling program in general and allows for the time, effort, and costs involved in the application process to prove more worthwhile.
About Application Fees, Tuition, Scholarships, and Internships ~

21) Q: Is it possible to get the application fees waived?

A: Unfortunately neither the CSUMentor graduate student application or the Counseling program application fees can be waived. There are two primary fees associated with applying to the program: $55 for graduate admission as part of the University (CSUMentor) application and $50 for the Counseling program application.

22) Q: How much is tuition and is Financial Aid available?

A: Exact tuition information for the most current term can be found on the CSUDH website: http://www4.csudh.edu/financial-aid/cost/index

Tuition fees are based on whether you attend graduate school on a half-time or full-time basis. Half-time graduate student status refers to taking between 1-6 units (the equivalent to 1 or 2 classes in our program) and costs approximately $2275 per semester.

Full-time graduate student status refers to taking 7 or more units (the equivalent to taking 3 or 4 classes in our program) and costs approximately $3700 per semester. The fees for PPS Credential-only candidates (students who have completed the MS degree and are only pursuing the PPS) are slightly lower.

Most of our students do receive some form of Financial Aid, and some competitive scholarships are available for current students through the University and the College of Education. Please go to the University’s Financial Aid website for more information: http://www4.csudh.edu/financial-aid/index

23) Q: Can I get a paid internship when I start my Fieldwork?

A: Possibly! Funding for paid internships is entirely up to the school, district, or college where you choose to earn your fieldwork hours. Students in our program complete their Fieldwork at the conclusion of the program so there is plenty of time to plan, budget, and apply for both paid or unpaid positions. Funding availability in both the public schools and colleges for paid counseling internships tends to fluctuate with the economy as well as with any additional resources available to that particular school. Our program is fully supportive of our students applying for any available internships once they are eligible to do so and announces internship and employment opportunities as they become available.

For further information about our application procedures or course requirements, please request a MS Counseling program flatsheet, available in the CSUDH College of Education Graduate Education Office (310) 243-3524 or on our website: http://www4.csudh.edu/coe/programs/grad-prgs/school-counseling/index