Master of Education in School Counseling

Admission, Retention, Suspension, and Dismissal (ARSD) Policy

Program Admission Requirements

Admission to the School Counseling Master of Education Program is a two-step process. First, prospective students must complete an application for admission to the Southeastern Oklahoma State University (SE) School of Graduate and University Studies. After being successfully admitted to the SE School of Graduate and University Studies, application must be made to the Graduate Counseling Coordinating Committee (GCCC) for acceptance into the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program. Please note that successful admission to the SE School of Graduate and University Studies does not guarantee that the prospective student will be admitted to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program. Students may be admitted to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program on a provisional, conditional, or unconditional basis. Students must be granted unconditional admission status to complete more than three (3) graduate-level counseling courses, unless they have been granted conditional admission status as defined below. Provisional, Conditional, and Unconditional admission requirements are outlined as follows:

Provisional Admission Requirements for the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program:

Provisional admission to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program requires the following:
1. At least a 2.75 cumulative undergraduate GPA or a 3.00 GPA in the last 60 hours of undergraduate coursework.
2. Successful admission (conditional or unconditional) to the SE School of Graduate and University Studies.

Conditional Admission Requirements for the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program:

Conditional admission to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program requires the following:
1. Successful admission to the SE School of Graduate and University Studies
2. An earned baccalaureate degree from a regionally-accredited college or university
3. At least a 2.75 cumulative undergraduate grade point average (GPA) or a 3.00 GPA in the last 60 hours of undergraduate coursework
4. An earned GPA of 3.00 or higher on all graduate courses taken while provisionally admitted to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program at SE
5. Formal application for admission to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program. This application must include the application form included in the School Counseling Application Packet, an official copy of all college/university transcripts, and verification of a baccalaureate degree from a regionally-accredited college or university. Please note that there
are no prerequisite undergraduate majors or courses required, or recommended for admission to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program.

6. Completion of a Statement of Personal and Professional Goals following the specific guidelines outlined in the School Counseling Application Packet.

7. Acceptable recommendations from three individuals who are qualified to rate the applicant’s academic and/or professional potential and motivation for completing the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program. Recommendations must be completed on the forms included with the School Counseling Application Packet and submitted in a sealed envelope with the recommender’s signature over the seal. These recommendations must come from the following sources and may not be prepared by individuals who are related to the applicant by blood, law, marriage, or intimate personal relationship (past or present):
   a. An individual who knows the applicant on an academic level (may not be completed by a member of the GCCC).
   b. An individual who knows the individual on a professional level (i.e., a current or former employer or supervisor, not a co-worker).

8. Acceptable scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test. The successful applicant must earn one of the following cutoff scores if the GRE General Test is taken prior to August 1, 2011 (please note that GRE scores are only valid for 5 years from the test date):
   a. A combined raw score of 700 earned on Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning sections of GRE General Test; or
   b. A score of 700 earned on GRE General Test calculated as follows: Verbal Reasoning (VR) raw score combined with an Analytical Writing (AW) raw score multiplied by 100 (VR + AW[100]).

The successful candidate must earn one of the following cutoff scores if the GRE revised General Test is taken, starting August 1, 2011 (please note that GRE scores are only valid for a period of 5 years from the test date):
   a. A combined raw score of 285 earned on Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning sections of the GRE revised General Test; or
   b. A score of 540 earned on the GRE revised General Test calculated as follows: Verbal Reasoning (VR) raw score combined with an Analytical Writing (AW) raw score multiplied by 100 (VR + AW[100]).

9. Appropriate personal, interpersonal, emotional, and maturational fit for the profession of School Counseling, based upon the judgment of members of the GCCC.

10. All completed application packets to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program must be submitted to the School Counseling Program Coordinator for review at the next regularly scheduled GCCC Meeting. Upon application review, if a student does not meet one of the above requirements for unconditional admission to the program, at the discretion of the GCCC, the student’s grade point average on undergraduate and graduate courses, involvement in professional and/or community service-oriented endeavors, and other factors may be considered in order to waive one of the above requirements. This process will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the GCCC. A student who does not meet more than one of the above required admission criteria will be denied conditional or unconditional admission to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program and will not be allowed to complete more than nine (9) graduate credit hours under the status of a provisionally admitted student.
Students who are conditionally admitted to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program will be given instructions, including a predetermined timeline, detailing what must be completed to be reconsidered for unconditional admission by the GCCC.

Students may complete no more than nine (9) graduate credit hours while holding conditional admission status in the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program as they complete any and all requirements for unconditional admission status. Students admitted conditionally to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program must maintain a minimum of a 3.00 GPA to remain in the program as they work to obtain unconditional admission status. (See further information in the Retention and Dismissal Conditions section that follows.)

Unconditional Admission Requirements for the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program:

Unconditional admission to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program requires the following:
1. Successful admission to the SE School of Graduate and University Studies.
2. An earned baccalaureate degree from a regionally-accredited college or university.
3. At least a 2.75 cumulative undergraduate grade point average (GPA) or a 3.00 GPA in the last 60 hours of undergraduate coursework.
4. An earned GPA of 3.00 or higher on all graduate courses taken while provisionally admitted to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program at SE.
5. Formal application for admission to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program. This application must include the application form included in the School Counseling Application Packet, an official copy of all college/university transcripts, and verification of a baccalaureate degree from a regionally-accredited college or university. Please note that there are no prerequisite undergraduate majors or courses required, or recommended for admission to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program.
6. Completion of a Statement of Personal and Professional Goals following the specific guidelines outlined in the School Counseling Application Packet.
7. Acceptable recommendations from three individuals who are qualified to rate the applicant’s academic and/or professional potential and motivation for completing the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program. Recommendations must be completed on the forms included with the School Counseling Application Packet and submitted in a sealed envelope with the recommender’s signature over the seal. These recommendations must come from the following sources and may not be prepared by individuals who are related to the applicant by blood, law, marriage, or intimate personal relationship (past or present):
   a. An individual who knows the applicant on an academic level (may not be completed by a member of the GCCC).
   b. An individual who knows the individual on a professional level (i.e., a current or former employer or supervisor, not a co-worker).
8. Acceptable scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test. The successful applicant must earn one of the following cutoff scores if the GRE General Test is taken prior to August 1, 2011 (please note that GRE scores are only valid for 5 years):
   a. A combined raw score of 700 earned on Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning sections of GRE General Test; or
b. A score of 700 earned on GRE General Test calculated as follows: Verbal Reasoning (VR) raw score combined with an Analytical Writing (AW) raw score multiplied by 100 (VR + AW[100]).

The successful candidate must earn one of the following cutoff scores if the GRE revised General Test is taken, starting August 1, 2011 (please note that GRE scores are only valid for a period of 5 years):

a. A combined raw score of 285 earned on Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning sections of the GRE revised General Test; or

b. A score of 540 earned on the GRE revised General Test calculated as follows: Verbal Reasoning (VR) raw score combined with an Analytical Writing (AW) raw score multiplied by 100 (VR + AW[100]).

9. Verification of the possession of a current and valid Teaching Certificate in any state or all of the following:

a. A letter from the Oklahoma State Department of Education verifying eligibility for the Alternative Placement Program; and

b. Verification of passing scores on the following state-level examinations:
   i. The Oklahoma Subject Area Test (OSAT), in the student’s area of undergraduate studies; and
   ii. The Oklahoma General Education Test (OGET).

10. Appropriate personal, interpersonal, emotional, and maturational fit for the profession of School Counseling, based upon the judgment of members of the GCCC.

11. All completed application packets to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program must be submitted to the School Counseling Program Coordinator for review at the next regularly scheduled GCCC Meeting. Upon application review, if a student meets or exceeds all above admissions criteria, he or she will be granted unconditional admission status in the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program. The unconditionally admitted student will be required to meet the Retention and Dismissal Conditions outlined below, on a semester-by-semester basis, to maintain unconditional admission status in the program.

Application Review Process:

All applications for admission to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program will be reviewed by the GCCC at the next regularly scheduled meeting. The GCCC meets at least once during each academic semester (spring, summer, and fall) and other times as deemed necessary by committee members. The GCCC reserves the right to require any applicant to appear before the committee for a face-to-face interview for a variety of reasons (e.g., unfavorable letter[s] of recommendation, low undergraduate and/or graduate GPA, responses provided on School Counseling Program application form, issues presented at biannual student review meetings, etc.). Following the review of a completed application, and possibly a face-to-face interview, each applicant will receive a letter from the chairperson of the GCCC informing him or her of the GCCC’s admission decision and, for those admitted to the program, the name and contact information of the applicant’s appointed advisor. The GCCC may choose to admit students unconditionally (all requirements are met at acceptable levels), admit students conditionally (requiring certain conditions to be met for later review of possible unconditional admission status), or deny admission. Students who are denied admission to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program are not permitted to take any further graduate counseling courses and
must wait one full calendar year prior to reapplying to either the School or Clinical Mental Health Counseling Master’s Degree Programs.

Students who have completed nine (9) graduate credit hours under provisional admission status (see requirements above), but who have not completed the necessary requirements for conditional or unconditional admission to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program, will not be allowed to matriculate further in the program until conditional or unconditional admission is granted by the GCCC. Conditionally admitted students (see requirements above) may not complete more than nine (9) hours after the date conditional admission is granted prior to attaining unconditional admission status.

**Admission to Candidacy**

Students must apply for Candidacy to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program upon completion of nine (9) credit hours of graduate coursework. Per University policy, acceptance in a graduate program at SE does not assure admission to candidacy in that master’s degree program. The student must make application for admission to candidacy in the designated master’s degree program. Correspondingly, students may not enroll in or complete more than eighteen (18) hours in the program until they are granted Admission to Candidacy status in the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program. The qualifications for Admission to Candidacy in the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program include the following:

1. Unconditional Admission Status in the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program.
2. Maintenance of a 3.00 GPA on all graduate coursework prior to completion of the SE Application for Admission to Candidacy document. Students not meeting this requirement may not enroll in more than nine (9) hours in the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program.
3. Successful completion and approval of the student’s Application for Admission to Candidacy Form by the School Counseling Program Coordinator and through the SE School of Graduate and University Studies.

**Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirements for Students enrolled in the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program**

A GPA of 3.00 or higher on all graduate coursework completed at SE, or transferred in from another university (in compliance with SE transfer of credit and residency guidelines, and with prior approval of the School Counseling Program Coordinator and the Chair of the Department of Behavioral Sciences), for the School Counseling Master of Education Degree is required for graduation. If a course is retaken, the last grade will be counted in the computation of the overall GPA. No grade of “D” or “F” will count toward the School Counseling Master of Education Degree and must be retaken. Students may not apply any “pass/fail” courses toward their Master of Education Degree in School Counseling at SE.
Retention and Dismissal Conditions

Retention and dismissal conditions for the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program are as follows:

1. Due to the critical nature of the School counselor’s role, continued enrollment in the program is predicated upon the student maintaining an appropriate level of social and emotional maturity, the ability to communicate effectively, and other personal attributes believed by the faculty to be necessary for success in the counseling profession.

2. Students are required to abide by ethical standards of the American Counseling Association, the American School Counselor Association, and other generally accepted standards of the profession. Further, students are strongly encouraged to become members of these professional organizations both during graduate school and following graduation.

3. Students must earn a grade of “B” or higher in each of the following four courses required of the School Counseling Counselor Clinical Training Sequence to move forward in the sequence and to graduate from the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program: (a) COUN 5423: Counseling Pre-Practicum and (b) COUN 5543: Counseling Practicum.

4. Students granted unconditional admission status who fail to achieve and maintain an overall graduate GPA of 3.00 at any point during their graduate program of study will be placed on academic probation by the SE Registrar. A student who fails to achieve a 3.00 GPA during each term of enrollment while on graduate probation and achieve a cumulative graduate GPA of 3.00 after completion of the next nine (9) hours of graduate coursework from the time at which the probationary status commenced will be placed on academic suspension by the SE Registrar for a period of one semester. After the mandatory period of academic suspension has been completed, the student will be required to apply and be approved for readmission to the SE School of Graduate and University Studies. Once readmitted to the SE School of Graduate and University Studies, the student may be allowed to re-enroll in graduate courses only after completing and signing a new Application for Admission to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program and upon approval of the GCCC. Failure to achieve a 3.00 cumulative graduate GPA during any subsequent semester of enrollment will result in a second period of academic suspension by the SE Registrar. If a student fails to achieve a 3.00 GPA during each term of enrollment while on a second term of graduate probation and achieve a cumulative graduate GPA of 3.00 after completion of the next nine (9) hours of graduate coursework from the time at which the second term of probationary status commenced will be automatically dismissed from the University (per the policy of the SE School of Graduate and University Studies).

5. Students granted conditional admission status who fail to achieve a 3.00 graduate GPA after the completion of nine (9) graduate semester hours will be immediately suspended from the School Counseling Program and will not be allowed to pursue further graduate studies in the Clinical Mental Health or School Counseling Master’s Degree Programs at SE for a period of no less than one (1) calendar year. After the mandatory period of academic program suspension has been completed, the student will be required to reapply to the SE School of Graduate and University Studies for graduate school readmission. Once readmitted to the SE School of Graduate and University Studies, the student may be allowed to re-enroll in graduate courses only after completing and signing a new Application for Admission to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program and upon approval of the GCCC. Once
readmitted to the SE School of Graduate and University Studies and the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program, the student will be required to retake any courses in which he or she earned a “C,” “D,” or “F” before the GCCC will consider the student’s application for unconditional admission status.

6. A student granted unconditional admission status who receives a grade of “C” in three (3) graduate courses will be immediately placed on School Counseling Program suspension and will not be allowed to pursue further graduate studies in the Clinical Mental Health or School Counseling Master’s Degree Programs at SE for a period of no less than one (1) calendar year. A student receiving a grade of “D” or “F” in any graduate course will immediately be placed on graduate suspension and will not be allowed to pursue further graduate studies in the Clinical Mental Health or School Counseling Master’s Degree Programs at SE for a period of no less than one (1) calendar year. After the mandatory period of academic suspension has been completed, the student will be required to reapply to the SE School of Graduate and University Studies for graduate school readmission. Once readmitted to the SE School of Graduate and University Studies, the student may be allowed to re-enroll in graduate courses only after completing and signing a new Application for Admission to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program and upon approval of the GCCC. If readmitted to the SE School of Graduate and University Studies and the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program, the student must retake the course(s) in which he or she received the third “C” or any “D” or “F,” and must maintain a cumulative graduate GPA of 3.00 or higher in that semester and all subsequent semesters until completion of the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program. These provisions apply to all courses taken, with the exception of duplicated courses (courses with the same prefix, number, and title), in which case only the most recent grade will be used in GPA calculations. No course(s) from another college or university in which a student has earned a grade of “C,” “D,” or “F” will be considered for transfer to the School Counseling Degree Plan at SE.

7. No student may graduate from the CMHC or School Counseling Master’s Degree Programs with a cumulative GPA of less than 3.00.

8. A student who fails to meet the legal, ethical, and professional expectations of professionals preparing for entry into the field of School Counseling (before or during a student’s program of study), as outlined by the codified legal statutes of Oklahoma or any other state or jurisdiction, the current version of the Oklahoma LPC Act and Regulations, the current version of the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics, the current version of the American School Counselor Association Ethical Standards for School Counselors, the current version of the Southeastern Oklahoma State University Code of Student Conduct, the current version of the Southeastern Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog, the current version of the School Counseling Student Manual, the syllabi from any courses in the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program of Study (including elective courses), and/or other generally accepted standards of the profession of School Counseling may be: (a) a required meeting before the GCCC to discuss the matter; (b) the required completion of a remediation plan with specific requirements as determined by the GCCC, commensurate with the nature and seriousness of the personal and/or professional misconduct or other issues; (c) the refusal to endorse (see below for more information) a student for graduation, credentialing, or employment pending completion of any remedial activities or due to program suspension or dismissal; (d) the required completion of a research or personal reflection paper or papers addressing matter(s) of concern outlined by the GCCC; (e) mandatory cessation of the
student’s clinical service delivery, in the case of courses in the School Counseling Counselor Clinical Training Sequence; (e) referral for recommended or mandated professional counseling services; (f) referral for recommended or mandated psychological evaluation to determine fitness for the profession (g) temporarily suspension from the program (necessitating reapplication to the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program, which may require additional documentation verifying fitness for the profession as required by the GCCC); and/or (h) expulsion from the program

9. Courses taken from other institutions will not be transferable if taken during a period of suspension or dismissal from Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

**Student’s Right to Due Process:**

Due process in higher education refers to the provision of a fair and just opportunity for students to explain and defend their actions against charges of misconduct or to challenge decisions made on their behalf with regard to university and/or program admission, retention, suspension, or dismissal decisions. In essence, due process provides the student with an established course of action and proceedings designed to safeguard his or her rights.

**Academic Appeal Process for Decisions Rendered by the Graduate Counseling Coordinating Committee:**

Students retain the right to appeal any decisions rendered by the GCCC related to (a) ethical issues or legal issues; (b) admission, retention, suspension, or dismissal issues; (c) issues pertaining to the *SOSU Student Code of Conduct*; (d) issues pertaining to the *School Counseling Student Manual*; or (e) issues uncovered in ongoing student progress review meetings. Students have one (1) calendar year (from the date the student is notified in writing) to appeal any decisions rendered by the GCCC, or the decision of the committee will stand. The preferred steps of appeal are as follows:

- It is recommended that the student first discuss his or her concerns with the Chairperson of the GCCC.
- If satisfactory resolution is not found with the Chairperson of the GCCC, it is recommended that the student discuss his or her concerns with the Chair of the Department of Behavioral Sciences.
- If satisfactory resolution is not found with the Chair of the Department of Behavioral Sciences, it is recommended that the student discuss his or her concerns with the Dean of the School of Education and Behavioral Sciences.
- If satisfactory resolution is not found with the Dean of the School of Education and Behavioral Sciences, it is recommended that the student file a formal appeal through the School of Graduate and University Studies.

If a student believes that he or she has a conflict of interest with regard to any of the parties outlined in the above four-step process, he or she may bypass that step in the review process. It should be noted that though discouraged, students always retain the right to appeal directly to the School of Graduate and University Studies without first speaking with any of the parties in the aforementioned preferred appeal process.
Please Note: Admission to the Master of Education Degree Program in School Counseling does not guarantee graduation. Success in academic coursework is only one component of becoming a successful counseling student. Any of the following nonacademic conditions may result in formal intervention by the GCCC if they are observed to impair the student’s ability to work with others in classroom, pre-practicum, practicum, or internship settings: (1) personal issues, untreated psychopathology, or personality-disordered behavior; (2) dysfunctional or disruptive interpersonal relationship issues; (3) personal attitudes or value systems that conflict with the ability to establish effective counseling relationships; and/or (4) failure to meet the ethical, legal, and professional expectations of professionals preparing for entry into the field of School Counseling (before or during a student’s program of study), as outlined by the codified legal statutes of Oklahoma or any other state or jurisdiction, the current version of the Oklahoma Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) Act and Regulations, the current version of the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics, the current version of the American School Counselor Association Ethical Standards for School Counselors, the current version of the Southeastern Oklahoma State University Code of Student Conduct, the current version of the Southeastern Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog, the current version of the School Counseling Student Manual, the syllabi from any courses in the School Counseling Master’s Degree Program of Study (including elective courses), and/or other generally accepted standards of the profession of School Counseling.