



COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCES

# MASTER OF ARTS IN COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY (CA)

## Help Guide Families, Couples, and Individuals to Mental Wellness

If you are committed to the practice of professional counseling, the Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology degree from National University provides you with a solid academic pathway. You will complete Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT) coursework, which is designed for students who are committed to the practice of individual, couples, family, adolescent, and child psychotherapy. Upon completion, you will be prepared to sit for the Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT) License mandated by the Board of Behavioral Sciences in the state of California.

If you are interested in also pursuing the Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (PCC) pathway, you will complete three additional courses that emphasize counseling techniques and theories, including those related to career development and individual and group counseling. This version of the degree meets

the academic requirements to be eligible for licensing as a professional clinical counselor by the Board of Behavioral Sciences in the state of California.

### Program Highlights:

- Demonstrate core psychological concepts and therapeutic skills that underpin counseling, psychotherapy, and mental health counseling
- Critically evaluate the relevant methods of research used in the study of behavior and their limitations
- Understand and demonstrate current professional standards of ethics, values, and laws related to the practice of professional psychotherapists
- Evaluate psychological distress and/or impairment, mental disorders, and problems in diverse individuals and systems within various mental health settings

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## MASTER OF ARTS IN COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY

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The Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology degree provides an academic pathway for students who are committed to the practice of professional counseling. All students must complete the course work in Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT) during their program. The MFT sequence emphasizes Marriage and Family Therapy and is designed for students who are committed to the practice of individual, couples, family, adolescent, and child psychotherapy. This course work meets the academic requirements necessary to sit for the Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT) License mandated by the Board of Behavioral Sciences in the state of California.

Students who are interested in also pursuing the Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (PCC) pathway will complete three (3) additional courses at the end of their program, or where appropriate in their individual schedule, upon consultation with their Faculty Advisor. Students who participate in both the MFT and PCC pathways will be allowed to sit for licensing as both an LMFT and an LPCC (Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor). The PCC courses emphasize counseling techniques and theories, including those related to career development, and is designed for students who are committed to the practice of individual and group counseling. This version of the degree meets the academic requirements to be eligible for licensing as a Professional Clinical Counselor by the Board of Behavioral Sciences in the state of California.

The degree may not meet requirements in other states. Students should consult the licensing boards of the appropriate states for information about licensure outside of California. The degree also prepares students for the pursuit of doctoral studies in practitioner-oriented programs such as counseling or clinical psychology.

### Application Requirements

Students interested in enrolling in this program should contact the appropriate campus for further information regarding the application process.

To be considered for admission, applicants must meet the University graduate admission requirements listed in the general information section of the catalog, as well as the MAC program criteria. All applicants are evaluated for the psychotherapy profession, regardless of career goals. Students must submit an application packet, pass a personal interview, and attend the program orientation before they may begin classes.

Students for whom English is not their primary language must take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam and receive one of the below scores before beginning the program:

- Paper-based: 550
- Computer-based: 213
- Internet-based: 79

### Students must submit their TOEFL score with their application.

Students should consult the regional faculty to determine at what point in the sequence they may enter the program. Entrance points may differ in each region.

### Program Fees

There is a fee of \$350 assessed during PSY 611B for materials that are integrated into program courses and designed to assist students in the preparation for the California licensing examination for LPCC or LMFT.

### Program Requirements

- Students who do not have an undergraduate degree in psychology must take PSY 501A and PSY 501B as the first two courses in their program.
- Students must complete a minimum of 10 hours of individual, marital, family, and group psychotherapy before taking PSY 611B and another 15 hours before graduation for a total of 25 hours.
- Students must obtain a total of 225 hours (MFT Option) or 280 hours (Combined Option) of face-to-face counseling experience at an approved practicum site with a designated practicum site supervisor during the practicum class.
- Under exceptional circumstances requests for independent studies in courses without experiential clinical work may be considered for approval by the department.
- Students seeking licensure in California must register with the Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) after graduation and fulfill all BBS licensing requirements for the license relevant to the student's MAC sequence option.
- Students are also urged to join a professional association. Students in the MFT track should consider joining the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapy and/or the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists. Students in the PCC track should consider joining the American Counseling Association and/or the California Association for Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors. Students must obtain malpractice insurance, which may be obtained through the relevant association listed above or another professional organization.

- Students must complete all coursework within seven years. Any courses taken more than seven years ago must be repeated.
- In regional offerings of the program where applicable, students in the Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology may choose to take a regular evening course simultaneously with PSY 680A or PSY 680B.

**NOTE:** The courses in the online version of the program are designed to be completely asynchronous. However, there are two exceptions: the skills development residencies and practicum consultation. The practicum sequence in the online program includes a required video presentation and live consultation with faculty each week. The schedule for these requirements differs by instructor and situation; online students are encouraged to reach out to practicum instructors to learn more about the specifics of the consultations.

The program is guided by the standards of the California Board of Behavioral Sciences for academic training relevant to licensing as a Marriage and Family Therapist in the State of California (MFT Sequence) or as a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (Combined Option), and by contemporary scientific, professional, and public practice. At the completion of the program students will achieve the following outcomes required for successful practice of Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT Sequence) or Professional Clinical Counseling (PCC Sequence).

### Program Disclosure Information

The MA in Counseling Psychology degree is designed for California only, and either option may not meet requirements in other states. Students should consult the licensing boards of the appropriate states for information about licensure outside of California. Students who reside outside of California and wish to take this program must gain special permission to do so.

For up-to-date information on program licensure eligibility requirements for a state, please visit: <https://www.nu.edu/licensuredisclosures/>

### Program Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this program, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate core psychological concepts and therapeutic skills that underpin counseling, psychotherapy, and mental health counseling.
- Critically evaluate the relevant methods of research used in the study of behavior and their limitations.
- Understand and demonstrate current professional standards of ethics, values, and laws related to the practice of professional psychotherapists.
- Demonstrate cultural competence in addressing the mental health needs of people of diverse backgrounds and circumstances, including an appreciation for the wide cultural diversity among California's multiple diverse communities.
- Evaluate psychological distress and/or impairment, mental disorders, and problems in living in diverse individuals and systems within various mental health settings.
- Develop culturally appropriate strategies, treatment plans, and professional relationships for successful interventions with diverse client groups in various clinical contexts.
- Apply related therapeutic interventions with diverse clients using a variety of psychotherapeutic models.
- Apply a working knowledge of a range of topics important to mental health practice including (but not limited to) psychopharmacology, addictive and compulsive disorders, structured psychological assessment, relational violence, gender and sexuality, and trauma/crisis.
- Understand norms and principles of public mental health work including (but not limited to) case management, collaborative treatment, evidence-based practice, strength-based model, resiliency, and recovery-oriented care to work with clients.
- Integrate professional development through self-reflection emphasizing personal capacities such as self-awareness, integrity, sensitivity, flexibility, insight, compassion, imagination, and personal presence.

### Degree Requirements

To receive the Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology, students must complete at least 90 quarter units of graduate work. A total of 13.5 quarter units of graduate credit may be granted for equivalent graduate work completed at another institution, as it applies to this degree and if the units were not used in earning another advanced degree. Students for whom English is a second language must take and pass an English Language Proficiency exam prior to beginning any coursework. Students should refer to the section on Graduate Admissions for specific information regarding additional application and evaluation requirements.

### Prerequisites for the Major

(2 courses; 9 quarter units)

Students who hold a bachelor's degree in Psychology may request these courses to be waived. Please contact the Lead Faculty.

- PSY 501A Foundations in Counseling I
- PSY 501B Foundations in Counseling II

### Core Requirements I

(6 courses; 27 quarter units)

Students will take classes from this sequence, then take 3 area of specialization courses, Core Course Sequence II.

- PSY 605 Lifespan Development  
*Prerequisite: Bachelor's Degree in Psychology, or PSY 501A, and PSY 501B*
- PSY 620 Perspectives on Psychology  
*Prerequisite: Bachelor's Degree in Psychology, or PSY 501A, and PSY 501B*
- PSY 610 Case Management  
*Prerequisite: Bachelor's Degree in Psychology, or PSY 501A, and PSY 501B*
- PSY 611A Counseling Paradigms I  
*Prerequisite: Bachelor's Degree in Psychology, or PSY 501A, and PSY 501B*
- PSY 612A Clinical Assessment I
- PSY 612B Clinical Assessment II  
*Prerequisite: PSY 612A*

### MFT Core Requirements II

(3 courses; 13.5 quarter units)

Students interested in becoming a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist will take these courses between Core Sequence I and III.

- PSY 636 Child and Adolescent Therapy
- PSY 632A Family Therapy
- PSY 632B Couples Therapy

### Core Requirements III

(11 courses; 49.5 quarter units)

- PSY 627 Legal & Ethical Issues
- PSY 611B Counseling Paradigms II
- PSY 680A Counseling Practicum I  
*Prerequisite: PSY 611B with a minimum grade of S*
- PSY 628 Group Therapy
- PSY 637 Cultural Competencies
- CHD 640 Treatment of Addictions
- PSY 626 Human Sexuality
- PSY 679 Psychology of Trauma
- PSY 680B Counseling Practicum II  
*Prerequisite: PSY 680A*
- PSY 678 Clinical Biopsychology
- PSY 638 Wellbeing & Wellness

### Optional Sequence IV: PCC Option

(3 courses; 13.5 quarter units)

Students interested in becoming a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor will take these courses between Core Sequence I and III.

- PSY 653 Research and Evaluation
- PSY 624A Testing and Assessment
- CED 612 Career & Academic Counseling