

MA Program in Counseling Psychology
(Specialization: Clinical Mental Health Counseling)
Department of Psychology

Admission Policies and Procedures

The Master of Arts Program in Counseling Psychology (Specialization: Clinical Mental Health Counseling) is offered by the University of Hawaii at Hilo's Department of Psychology. The program began in 2005 and has been awarding degrees since 2007.

Each year, the MA in Counseling Psychology program (Specialization: Clinical Mental Health Counseling) seeks candidates who meet the UHH Graduate Council's and program's minimum requirements (see <http://counseling.uhh.hawaii.edu/admissions.htm>) and whose application materials indicate that they are a good fit for the program's goals and objectives. Successful applicants should be able to matriculate through the program's curriculum and obtain the necessary skills to become effective master's-level clinical mental health counselors. The program also recognizes that some students have a strong interest in developing their research skills and pursuing a doctoral degree in applied psychology. Given this background information, the Department of Psychology has established the following admissions policies and procedures for the MA Program in Counseling Psychology (Specialization: Clinical Mental Health Counseling).

1. Applicants are initially evaluated based on four criteria: Grade Point Average (GPA; last 60 credits), Letters of Recommendation, Statement of Interest, and Resume/Curriculum Vitae. Each of these criteria is equally weighted. Applicants are rated on a 5-point scale on each criterion as shown below.

Based on these criteria, each member of the Admissions Committee (which has a minimum of four faculty from the Department of Psychology) independently completes the Applicant Rating Form (Pre-Interview); see Appendix A. Once the ratings of all completed applications are completed by each of the Admissions Committee members, the committee convenes and discusses each applicant across the four criteria. Specifically, the total score from each committee member's Applicant Rating is averaged and an overall average is calculated. Based on the average scores, the applicants are then rank ordered. Then, the committee determines the minimum baseline for which applicants will be interviewed, based on their experience with successful graduates of the program.

	Scale					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
GPA (last 60 credits)	<2.75	2.75-2.99*	3.00-3.24	3.25-3.49	3.50-3.74	3.75-4.00
Letters of Recommendation	Does Not Qualify	Weak	Fair	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Statement of Interest	Does Not Qualify	Weak	Fair	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Resume/Curriculum Vita	Does Not Qualify	Weak	Fair	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent

*Under rare circumstances, applicants with a GPA between 2.75 and 2.99 may be admitted on a provisional status after approval by the Counseling Psychology Admissions Committee and the Graduate Council.

2. The applicants chosen for an interview in Step 1 above are invited to participate in a video interview with at least two members of the admissions committee. Applicants are asked to respond to seven predetermined questions (see Appendix B: Admission Interview Questions; *not available to the public*). The responses are evaluated based on the following five criteria with

each of the interviewers giving a score of 1 (weak), 2 (fair), 3 (satisfactory), 4 (good), or 5 (excellent) per each criterion.

Interview Response Rating Criteria:

- The applicant's goals are consistent with program's goals (see <http://counseling.uhh.hawaii.edu/>)
- Clarity and maturity of professional vision
- Personal maturity and interpersonal skills
- Relevant past experiences
- Awareness of importance of human diversity in the field of mental health counseling

At the end of the interview, each interviewer completes the Applicant Interview Rating Form (Appendix C) and a recommendation to the entire committee is made.

3. Based on the outcome of the interview, the Admissions Committee determines whether or not to admit the applicant. The Admissions Committee decision is considered final.

NOTE: If a member of the admissions committee offers a letter of recommendation for an applicant, that member must recuse her/himself from participating in the deliberation process for that applicant.

4. Application Materials, Timeline, and Minimum Enrollment: There may be instances in which applicants submit materials that are not required as part of the M.A. Program in Counseling Psychology application process and are not relevant to the admission review. Before the Admissions Committee members will begin reviewing the application materials, the Office of Admissions will remove such materials from applicants' files and will return them to the applicant.

The *priority* deadline for applications is in mid-January and committee review will commence after this date, with admission decisions finalized by February 28 and notifications sent soon thereafter. The accepted applicants will have a deadline of March 15 to indicate acceptance of the offer of admission. The *final* deadline for submission of applications is February 28. Applications received between mid-January and February 28 will be considered on a space available basis; notification of acceptance status will be mailed by April 1. For these applicants, they will have a deadline of April 15 to indicate acceptance of the offer of admission.

All admissions are conditional upon enrolling a cohort with a minimum of 14 students. Students will be informed by April 30, if a sufficient number of students have accepted offers of admission to offer the program in the coming academic year. Students who have been accepted into the program in years without an offering will be given first priority for admission in the next academic year.

5. Record-keeping Matters: The chair of the Admissions Committee will coordinate with the Graduate Division to maintain all records of the committee's work, including the ratings forms, the votes taken for each applicant, and reasons for accepting or denying an applicant. For students accepted to the program, these records will be kept in the office of the Graduate Division during the student's enrollment at UH Hilo, and thereafter in the Office of the Registrar for a period of five years. For students who are not accepted to the program, these records will be kept in the Graduate Division for two years, and thereafter will be purged.

6. Communication Issues: There may be occasions when an applicant who has been denied entrance into the program will make contact with a UHH psychology faculty member to ask why they were denied admission. When such a situation arises, the faculty member must ask the applicant to contact the Director of the MA program in counseling psychology. At no time should a faculty member communicate to the applicant why the applicant was denied.

*This policy was revised on April 18, 2024. It may be further revised without notification.

Appendix A:

**MA Program in Counseling Psychology
Application Rating Form (Pre-Interview)**

Applicant Name: _____

Based on your review of the application materials, please rate the applicant using the following rating scale. In determining the ratings for the letters of recommendation, statement of interest, and resume/CV, please base them on your assessment of how well the applicant will be able to meet the mission of the program, which is to "train students to become knowledgeable, skillful, ethical, and reflective mental health counselors, and to serve as a foundation for students interested in pursuing advanced graduate studies"

- 5 = Excellent
- 4 = Good
- 3 = Satisfactory
- 2 = Fair
- 1 = Weak
- 0 = Does Not Qualify

	0	1	2	3	4	5
Undergraduate GPA (last 60 credits)	N/A	2.75–2.99	3.00-3.24	3.25–3.49	3.50–3.74	3.75–4.00
Letters of Recommendation (based on all letters)	Does Not Qualify	Weak	Fair	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Statement of Interest	Does Not Qualify	Weak	Fair	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Resume/Curriculum Vita	Does Not Qualify	Weak	Fair	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent

Mean Score: _____

Appendix B:

Admission Interview Questions

The interview questions are not available to the public.

Appendix C:

MA Program in Counseling Psychology

Applicant Interview Rating Form

Applicant Name: _____

Based on the interview, please rate the applicant using the following rating scale. In determining the ratings, please consider how well the responses from the interviewee meet the criteria below, which reflects the overall mission of the program: "To train students to become knowledgeable, skillful, ethical, and reflective mental health counselors, and to serve as a foundation for students interested in pursuing advanced graduate studies"

- 5 = Excellent
- 4 = Good
- 3 = Satisfactory
- 2 = Fair
- 1 = Weak

	1	2	3	4	5
Applicant's goals are consistent with program's goals	Weak	Fair	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Clarity and maturity of professional vision	Weak	Fair	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Personal maturity and interpersonal skills	Weak	Fair	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Relevant past experiences	Weak	Fair	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Awareness of importance of human diversity in counseling	Weak	Fair	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent

Total Score: _____

Recommendation: