

SCHOOL OF MENTAL HEALTH ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (MSCMHC)

Prospective students who wish to enter a master's program must complete and submit the following requirements prior to matriculation.

1. A completed online application and application fee payment, see Tuition and Fees.
2. A current resume.
3. A personal statement.
4. Official transcript from the institution that conferred the student's highest awarded degree. Coursework/degree must be completed at a regionally accredited or candidate college or university. Applicants can verify if their institution qualifies using the U.S. Department of Education's database of accredited postsecondary institutions. Official transcripts should be sent electronically from the institution directly to Sonoran University at transcripts@sonoran.edu.
5. A cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.75 on a 4.0 scale is preferred. However, Sonoran uses a holistic admissions process for the MSCMHC program, and all applicants with a GPA below 2.75 are encouraged to apply to be considered on a case-by-case basis.
6. International Applicants must submit foreign transcripts from the institution that conferred the student's highest degree earned. This transcript must undergo a course-by-course evaluation by a member organization of either the National Council on the Evaluation of Foreign Education Credentials (NACES) or the Association of International Credential Evaluators (AICE). Fees for this service are the responsibility of the applicant.
7. All military transcripts for former members of the armed services.
8. Video conference interview (qualified applicants selected for an interview will be contacted by the Admissions Office).

Additional Requirements

Students may submit optional letters of recommendation if they wish to strengthen their application.

Post-admit MSCMHC Enrollment Requirements

1. Criminal background check - Sonoran University requires applicants who are offered admission to undergo a criminal background check. Sonoran University has contracted with Certiphi Screening, Inc., to facilitate the criminal background check. There is a fee for the service, payable directly to Certiphi. The applicant's offer of admission will not be considered final, nor will the applicant be permitted to enroll, until the completion of a background check with results deemed acceptable by Sonoran University. Convictions of a criminal offense, other than a minor traffic offense, are required to be disclosed, including the nature of the offense, and what disposition occurred as a result

of that offense. This disclosure must be made whether or not a sentence was served and/or civil rights have been restored, or whether the conviction(s) were expunged from the record. A prior felony conviction does not necessarily preclude an applicant from being admitted to Sonoran University, but professional licensing boards in the state of Arizona and elsewhere may refuse to issue a clinical license if an individual has a felony or other conviction on their record.

2. Successful completion of Sonoran University's safety and training courses.
3. Transfer Credit Evaluation* (if applicable) - Students admitted to an MS program who have completed graduate-level coursework or have graduated from a domestic or foreign accredited graduate school or program may apply for transfer credit. To comply with VA requirements, all U.S. Veterans with any graduate-level coursework must be evaluated for potential transfer credit, see VA Benefits for more information. Transfer credit will be determined during the admissions process and will not be considered after matriculation, see Transfer Credit Policy.
4. Technology Requirements - Laptop and reliable high-speed internet for use in completing college coursework. For a complete listing of Sonoran University's technical requirements, please visit our Technology Check site (<https://techcheck.sonoran.edu/techreqs.html>) (<https://techcheck.sonoran.edu/techreqs.html>).

*At this time the MSCMHC program of study is not approved for VA Benefits.

Technical Standards

Students in Sonoran University of Health Sciences' Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (MSCMHC) program must possess aptitude, abilities, and skills in all four areas listed below and be able to meet them with or without accommodation. These standards must be met throughout the program in order for students to make satisfactory progress and graduate. Any intention of the student to practice only a narrow part of the curriculum upon graduation does not alter the requirement that all students perform satisfactorily in the full curriculum and meet all graduation requirements. If at any time the candidate can no longer meet these technical standards or requires additional accommodation, the Dean of Students must be notified immediately.

Observation

A student must be able to observe clients accurately at a reasonable distance and close at hand, noting non-verbal as well as verbal signals. Specific observational requirements include but are not limited to the following abilities: detecting emotional mood; noting non-verbal communication (e.g., lack of eye contact); recognizing distress; observing trauma-based reactions; noting discrepancies in verbal and non-verbal communication.

Communication

Students must be able to actively listen and relate effectively and sensitively to clients of all genders, ages, races, lifestyles, sexual orientations, and cultural backgrounds and be able to convey both understanding and empathy.

Students must be able to observe and clearly communicate with clients in order to elicit information, accurately describe changes in mood, activity, and posture; and be able to perceive verbal as well as nonverbal communications. Communication includes verbal and/or nonverbal

communication as well as reading and writing. Counselor education presents exceptional challenges in the volume and breadth of required reading and the necessity to utilize evidence-based strategies with clients.

Students must be able to communicate quickly and effectively in oral and written English with all members of the health care team. Specific requirements include but are not limited to the following abilities: documenting sessions through case notes, developing and updating the client's treatment plan, communicating rapidly and clearly with the team during a case report, eliciting a thorough intake history from clients, and communicating complex findings in appropriate terms to clients and various members of the healthcare team.

Students must learn to recognize and promptly respond to emotions such as sadness, worry, and agitation, as well as a lack of comprehension of a provider's communication. Students must be able to read and record observations and plans, legibly, efficiently, and accurately in documents such as the client record. Students must be able to prepare and communicate concise and complete summaries of individual sessions. Students must be able to complete forms manually and on the computer keyboard, according to directions, in a complete and timely fashion.

Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities

These abilities include analysis, judgment, and synthesis of complex human behaviors. The student must also be able to recognize patterns in clients and signs of progress or regression. Clinical reasoning and problem-solving, critical skills demanded of counselors, require all of these intellectual abilities and must be performed quickly, especially in crisis situations. Moreover, the effective counselor often must deal complicated cognitive, emotional and behavioral issues simultaneously.

Students must be able to identify significant findings from history, presenting issues and current presentation of client; provide a reasoned explanation for likely mental health diagnostic impressions; construct a reasoned and evidence-based treatment-plan; and support clients in incorporating psychotropic medications with therapy, recalling and retaining information in an efficient manner.

Students must be able to identify and communicate their scope of competence to others when appropriate. The ability to incorporate new information from peers, teachers, and literature in formulating mental health diagnostic impressions and treatment plans is essential. Good judgment in client assessment and therapeutic planning is essential.

Behavioral and Social Attributes

Empathy, integrity, honesty, concern for others, good interpersonal skills, ethical decision-making, interest, and motivation are all required personal qualities.

Students must be able to fully utilize their intellectual abilities, exercise good judgment, and promptly complete all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of clients in all clinical and academic settings. They must be able to develop mature, professional, and effective relationships with patients of all genders, ages, races, lifestyles, sexual orientations, and cultural backgrounds, as well as with their families, with other healthcare providers, and with all members of the learning and working community. At times, this requires the ability to be aware of and appropriately react to one's own immediate emotional responses. For example, students must maintain a professional demeanor and be able to function at a high level in the face of personal fatigue, dissatisfied clients and their families, and tired colleagues.

Students must be able to develop professional relationships with clients, providing comfort and reassurance when appropriate while protecting client confidentiality. Students must be able to maintain professional conduct when interacting with clients suffering from severe mental illness trauma, and complicated grief and loss. Students must possess adequate endurance to tolerate physically taxing workloads and function effectively under stress. At times, all students are required to work for extended periods, seeing clients one after another through the day. Students must be able to adapt to change, display flexibility, and learn to function with the uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. Students are expected to accept appropriate suggestions and criticism and, if necessary, respond by modifying their behavior.