

Comparison of MA Degrees in Clinical Psychology, Clinical Mental Health Counseling, & School Counseling

Area	Clinical Psychology	Clinical Mental Health and School Counseling
Graduation Requirements, Accreditation, and Credentials		
Tracks	Clinical Psychology	Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) School Counseling (SC) Play Therapy Certificate (PTC)
Accreditation	The American Psychological Association (APA), the accrediting body in psychology, does not offer accreditation for its MA programs. Only Ph.D. and Psy.D. programs are accredited by the APA. There are no accreditation agencies for MA Psychology Programs.	Both counseling tracks are CACREP equivalent programs, which aids credential portability across state lines. The SC program is accredited by Texas Education Agency (TEA) and The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). The PTC program meets the instructional requirements established by the Association of Play Therapy.
Degree Requirements	60-credit hour program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 51 credits (17 classes) ▪ 6 credits of practicum (300 hours over two semesters that includes a total of 100 direct service contact hours with clients), and ▪ 3 credit hours of Thesis (data driven) or non-thesis Project (theory driven) 	CMHC and SC are 60-credit hour program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 51 credits (17 counseling classes) ▪ 9 credits of clinical experience (700 hrs. over three semesters; 280 direct client hours): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Practicum: 100 hrs. (40 direct client) – Internship I: 300 hrs. (120 direct client) – Internship II: 300 hrs. (120 direct client) ▪ Pass the Comprehensive Counselor Exam ▪ Pass the Practice TExES Exam (SC only) ▪ Meet counseling “fitness to practice” standards ▪ Thesis Option Play Therapy Certificate: 12 credit hours
Clinical Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Practicum typically occurs in the UTPB counseling & psychological services clinic but may also occur off-site. ▪ Hours are supervised by a Licensed Psychologist (Ph.D. or Psy.D.). ▪ Students will lead individual, family, and/or couples with a variety of populations (e.g., child, adolescents, adults). ▪ Students conduct formal evaluations and gain experience in testing procedures. 	Students provide counseling and play therapy services to individuals, couples, families, and groups ages 4 and up. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Practicum occurs in the UTPB Counseling Clinic under live supervision of faculty (Ph.D.) and/or credentialed mental health professional. ▪ Internships I & II are completed off-campus, at an approved site, and under the supervision of a credentialed mental health professional.
Obtaining Credentials	<u>Licensed Psychological Associate (LPA)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pass the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP) ▪ Pass Texas Jurisprudence Examination ▪ Complete 3000 hours of supervised hours under a Licensed Psychologist (LP) ▪ The LPA may practice independently. <u>Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pass: National Counselor Examination, NCE ▪ Pass: Texas Jurisprudence Examination ▪ Apply to become an LPC-Associate ▪ Complete 3000 post-grad hours under LPC-S ▪ The LPC may practice independently. 	<u>Licensed Professional Counselor (CMHC Track)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pass: National Counselor Examination, NCE ▪ Pass: Texas Jurisprudence Examination ▪ Apply to become an LPC-Associate ▪ Complete 3000 post-grad hours under LPC-S ▪ The LPC may practice independently <u>Certified School Counselor (SC Track)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service record of two years of teaching ▪ Pass: TExES 252 School Counselor Exam ▪ Obtain certification through the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) ▪ Are eligible to obtain state licensure as LPC <u>Registered Play Therapist (PTC)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete 350 post grade hours under RPT-S ▪ Submit application to Association for Play Therapy
Doctoral Study	Successful completion of a MA thesis may enable students to be competitive in gaining acceptance to Ph.D. or Psy.D. programs.	Graduates are eligible to pursue a Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision, Educational Psychology, and other specializations in Education and Counseling.

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Focus	The science of psychopathology and psychological theories relevant to social-cognitive theory, development, culture, and social justice. Application of psychological evidence and theory to mental health practices.	The preparation of competent and ethical professional counselors who demonstrate the counseling identity, knowledge, skills, and disposition necessary to support the mental health needs of a culturally diverse society.
Model	Scientist-Practitioner	Practitioner: Holistic and Wellness Model
Clinical Practice	Assessment (via multiple methods, including use of psychometric tools) and treatment of specific mental disorder, including severe mental disorders, allowing students to work in in-patient and out-patient treatment settings.	Assessment and diagnosis are two metrics of the many variables used to measure a client's mental health and to tailor treatment, allowing students to work in schools, community agencies, treatment, university, and private practice settings.
Education & Training of Students	Involves training in the application of science-based principles to the provision of psychological services. Coursework includes research methods and statistics. Students learn about psychological science and theory, how to counsel patients, and how to assess intelligence, achievement, and other clinically relevant factors.	Involves training in the application of counseling theory and evidenced-based practices to assess, diagnose, and treat a culturally diverse society. Coursework includes core counseling areas: professional, ethical, and legal practice; social and cultural diversity; lifespan development; career development; counseling practice and relationships; group counseling; and research and program evaluation.

Area	Clinical Psychology	Clinical Mental Health & School Counseling
Faculty		
Faculty Training	Clinical, Cognitive, Counseling, Sport, Developmental, Health, and Social Psychology; Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Counselor Education & Supervision	Counselor Education and Supervision; Clinical Mental Health and School Counseling, Educational Psychology, Special Education, Trauma-Focused Counseling, and Ethical and Legal Issues
Professional Credentials of Faculty	Ph.D. Psychologists; Ph.D. holding Licensed Psychologists; Ph.D. in Counselor Education & Supervision holding: Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) Nationally Certified Counselor (NCC) Certified Mental Performance Consultant (CMPC) Association for Applied Psychology Approved Mentor; Licensed Professional Counselor-Supervisor (LPC-S)	Ph.D. Educational Psychology, Ph.D. Counselor Education & Supervision holding Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), Licensed Professional Counselor-Supervisor (LPC-S), National Certified Counselor (NCC), Certified School Counselor (CSC), Registered Play Therapist (RPT), Certified Clinical Trauma Professional (CCTP), NBCC Subject Matter Experts, & Legal & Ethical Counseling Specialist
Faculty Research	Psychology department faculty are active in research involving clinical, counseling, sport, cognitive, health, developmental, social, and legal psychology. See faculty webpages for more detailed and specific research interests.	Counseling faculty are active in research involving play therapy, sexual assault prevention, trauma from mass shootings, dance movement therapy, child and adolescent counseling preparedness, social justice counseling, Spanish-speaking counseling students, ethical and legal issues, online counseling, and the mental health and wellness needs of marginalized and underserved populations. See faculty webpages for specific research interests.

Note. Both programs require 60 credit hours and provide a path toward licensure as a Professional Counselor (LPC) and enable students to pursue a doctoral degree (in psychology or counseling respectively).