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GRADUATE STUDIES

GRADUATE ADMISSION POLICY AND REQUIREMENTS

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING DEGREE PROGRAM

Accreditation

In the spring of 2010, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC) awarded membership to Victory University at Level III and granted approval to the University to offer a Master of Science in Professional Counseling degree. This is the first graduate degree program in the 70-year history of Victory University and its predecessors. The program is approved by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission for both traditional and distance education delivery.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Master of Science degree in the Professional Counseling program is to enable students to become competent professional counselors within the context of a Christian worldview and to develop entry-level clinical skills for potential employment.

Description

The M.S. in the Professional Counseling program will be available both on campus and online. At the conclusion of 48 hours of coursework, students earn a Master's degree in the field of counseling. These 48 hours of coursework *do not* include the necessary postgraduate hours needed to apply for licensure as a professional counselor in the state of Tennessee and thus is considered a "non-licensure" program. However, an additional 12 graduate credit hours of clinical field experience (practicum and internships in mental health settings) are available to provide the total of 60 hours needed as one component of the application for state licensure. It should be understood that the process of licensure in the state of Tennessee includes nationally board-certified exams in counseling ethics and mental health. The student who successfully completes both the 48-hour Master's degree and the 12 hours of clinical field experience offered at Victory University may be eligible to apply for status as a Licensed Professional Counselor as well as Licensed Professional Counselor with Mental Health Service Provider designation. Although every effort is made to assist students in the process of researching their individual state requirements for licensure, it is the students' responsibility to investigate the requirements applicable to the state in which they plan to practice as a Licensed Professional Counselor.

Student Cohort Admission

Approximately 30 students are admitted into the cohort program each year, 15 during the T1 term beginning in August, and 15 during the T4 term beginning in March. The online program is

also a “non-licensure” program. The MS Professional Counseling program offered online is separate from the MS Professional Counseling program offered on campus (ground/cohort model) in that it does not follow the cohort model or enrollment ceiling. Students who enter the campus (ground/cohort model) MS Professional Counseling program can only transfer to the online delivery model of the program once. Similarly, students who enter the online MS Professional Counseling delivery program can only transfer to the campus (ground/cohort model) once. Thus, the campus (ground/cohort model) and online delivery of the MS Professional Counseling degree are separate and differ in that students are not permitted to transfer from campus (ground/cohort model) to online at will.

Graduate Admission Procedures and Deadlines

No specific undergraduate major or minor is required to qualify for entry into the Master’s in Professional Counseling degree program. However, some pre-requisite course work in psychology is required. These pre-requisites are listed below (i.e., #4 Pre-requisite Coursework). An undergraduate major or minor in psychology or a behavioral sciences-related field provides the best academic foundation for student success in this degree program. The small class size for the on-campus cohort program is based upon the maximum number of students who can be optimally supervised in clinical experiences. Graduate application forms are available online and may be downloaded from the VU website at www.victory.edu. Prospective students may also contact the VU admissions office to receive an application by mail. All application materials must be submitted by the deadlines indicated below to the Director of Graduate Studies, Victory University, 255 North Highland Street, Memphis, TN 38111.

Admission to the University graduate school does not guarantee acceptance into the Master’s in Professional Counseling degree program. Additional criteria must be met. These criteria are described below and include evaluation of the candidate’s academic records, performance on the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), and a personal interview with two or more members of the graduate faculty. Decisions regarding acceptance into the degree program are made by the Graduate Council.

Admission to the Master of Science in Professional Counseling degree program is competitive. Cohort groups of fifteen (15) applicants are admitted to the program during each entry term. Since meeting minimum requirements does not guarantee acceptance, prospective students should aim to exceed all requirements prior to applying for this Master’s program.

All admissions requirements must be completed and submitted by **February 15th** for the following March entry term, and **July 1st** for the following August entry term. Applications received after these dates will not be reviewed. Applicants who do not meet a given deadline may request that the application materials be used to apply for acceptance into the next scheduled cohort group.

Admissions decisions cannot be made until all required application materials have been submitted and evaluated by the Graduate Council. Prospective students are responsible to ensure that the Graduate Council has received all required admission materials by deadlines set forth in the graduate catalog. Admission to the program is based on a profile developed from all the required data submitted: GRE scores, overall academic achievement, performance on psychology/counseling courses taken previously, motivation, aptitude for graduate-level study, career goals and their relevance to the program, potential as a Professional Counselor, potential success in forming effective and interpersonal relationships in individual and small-group contexts, letters of recommendation, the entrance essay, and commitment to explore counseling from a Christian worldview.

Victory University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, disability, or military service in the admissions process or in any other area of its administration. Victory University reserves the right to deny admission to any applicant or to forbid any student's continued enrollment without assigning reason. It also reserves the right to change any of its regulations, charges, rules, and courses without notice, and to make such changes applicable from that date forward, for new students as well as for students already registered.

Application Requirements

Applicants are required to submit the following:

1. Graduate Admission Application. Applicants must submit a Victory University graduate admission application along with a non-refundable application fee of \$35.00. The State of Tennessee requires that a record of current immunizations is on file for each student who enrolls in the traditional classroom program.
2. Baccalaureate Degree. Applicants must submit evidence of an earned baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Official transcripts from all post-high school institutions must be sent directly from the institution to the Director of Graduate Admissions at Victory University.
3. GPA. Prospective graduate students must demonstrate achievement of a GPA of 3.0 (minimum) in the last 60 semester hours of undergraduate and/or graduate work attempted. A student applying for admission to the M.S. in the Professional Counseling program who has earned a 2.75 to 2.99 GPA on the last 60 semester hours of undergraduate and graduate work may be admitted *conditionally*, assuming the student meets all other admission requirements. A student admitted as a "*conditional admit*" will be permitted to continue in the program until 12 hours of graduate work have been completed. At that time, the student's performance will be formally assessed. If the student has attained a 3.0 GPA in the 12 hours attempted, the student will be permitted to continue in the program as an "*unconditional admit*," assuming all other requirements have been met.

4. Prerequisite Coursework. A minimum of twelve (12) semester hours of undergraduate or graduate credit, including the following courses: Psychological Research (3 semester hours), Statistics (3 semester hours), and a minimum of 6 semester hours in upper-division undergraduate or graduate-level psychology (or closely related field). Students must have earned a grade of “C” or higher in these prerequisite courses. All prerequisite courses must have been completed within the 5-year period prior to enrollment at VU. Exceptions to this requirement will be considered in cases where the applicant has had significant related work experience since the completion of prerequisite coursework. Courses with equivalent content will be considered when applicants submit course descriptions from syllabi or from College or University catalogs. Students admitted to the program are expected to be familiar with the most recent edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. Students are also expected to be proficient in computer applications. Those who lack prerequisite undergraduate courses may enroll in them within Victory University’s undergraduate psychology program and will be allowed one calendar year for their completion.

Application to the program may be made prior to completion of some prerequisite courses. If this is the case, the applicant should specify on the application when and where the prerequisite courses will be completed. Such candidates for the program may be accepted as a “conditional admit.”

5. Graduate Record Exam (GRE). GRE Scores (Verbal Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning, and Analytical Writing sections of the Graduate Record Exam) are required. A minimum combined score (Verbal and Quantitative) of 1000 is required with a minimum score requirement on each scale of 400 (e.g., minimum Verbal 400 and minimum Quantitative 400. Scores such as 300 Quantitative and 700 Verbal, which equal 1000, do not meet the minimum score requirements). In addition, a 3.0 is required for the Analytical Writing portion of the exam. In November 2011, the GRE was revised and re-normed. This activity, however, will not affect the GRE requirements for admission to Victory University; newly scaled GRE scores will be reported along with existing scaled GRE scores for the next five years. For more information on the revised GRE or for current test centers and dates, follow the links provided below. Only GRE scores from tests taken within the past five years will be considered. The GRE requirement is waived for students who have already completed a master’s degree in another field.

[Learn more about the content and structure of the GRE revised General Test.](#)

http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/about/content/

See [Test Centers and Dates](#) for all regions.

http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/register/centers_dates/

The GRE Designated Institution Code Number (DI Code) for Victory University is 1122.

6. Entrance Essay. An essay is required for all applicants to the MS Professional Counseling program at Victory University. This essay should be at least 500 words in length and should address the applicant's 1) Career goals; 2) Reasons for desiring the M.S. in Professional Counseling at Victory University; and 3) Reasons for pursuing graduate education from a Christian perspective.

7. Letters of Recommendation. Three (3) letters of recommendation attesting to the applicant's ethics, Christian character, ability to pursue graduate study at the Master's level, and potential effectiveness as a Licensed Professional Counselor should be submitted. Two (2) of these letters should come from educators who can attest to the applicant's academic abilities. The third may be submitted by someone who has supervised the applicant's work, has been a colleague, or has known the applicant for at least three years (other than family members). Letters from supervisors who have direct knowledge of the applicant's abilities and potential as a counseling professional are particularly helpful. These recommendation letters may be submitted using the recommendation form available online at www.victory.edu.

8. Pre-acceptance Interview. Graduate Council members will review all completed application files and, if minimal requirements are met, will arrange for a pre-acceptance personal interview to help provide additional information that would contribute to a positive acceptance experience and to the student's future success.

Conditional Admit Status. Students who have earned a baccalaureate degree but do not meet all the other admission requirements prior to the beginning of classes are classified as "conditional admit." Unmet requirements (other than GPA and prerequisite courses, as noted above) must be removed within 16 weeks of enrollment to remain in good standing. Students who are classified as "conditional admit" will be notified in writing and asked to acknowledge their understanding of the conditional admit requirements.

Transfer Credit

A maximum of twelve (12) semester hours of graduate credit may be transferred into the Professional Counseling degree program at Victory University. This credit must directly satisfy specific course requirements in the program of study leading to the M.S. in Professional Counseling degree. The credit must have been earned from a Master's degree granting institution holding regional accreditation. A student must make a formal request in writing as part of the application process and the request must be **submitted at the same time as the Graduate Application for Admission**. Graduate Council members will review all requests and submit a recommendation to the Director of Graduate Studies for final approval. All transfer credit must have been completed within five (5) years of beginning a graduate program of study at Victory University. Only courses in which a student has earned at least a grade of B (3.0 on a 4.0 point scale) will be considered for transfer.

Students with Disabilities

Victory University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and to upholding the applicable provisions of Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act (1973). Please contact the Student Success Center 901-320-9700 for more information regarding the required documentation of disability.

International Student Graduate Admission Information

In addition to the admissions requirements above, a prospective international student who plans to attend the traditional, on-campus program must submit the following:

1. Entrance exam scores on a standard English language test. One option is the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) for applicants whose native language is not English. Proficiency should be attained in all communication skill areas such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Specifically, a TOEFL IBT (Internet Based Testing) score of at least 87 for non-native speakers of English is required, with these minimum section requirements: Reading, 21; Speaking, 26; Listening, 20; and Writing, 20.
2. Proof of financial responsibility. The applicant must provide evidence of sufficient financial support for tuition, fees, and personal living expenses such as room and board, educational supplies, and transportation. This proof may take the form of a current bank statement from the student's sponsor.
3. Transcripts from all educational institutions attended outside the United States. The student can request a course-by-course report on international transcripts through such services as World Education Service, Inc., PO Box 5087, Bowling Green Station, New York, NY 10274.
4. Copies of Passport ID and Visa pages.
5. Health Insurance. International students are required to submit proof of health insurance that will cover them for a minimum of 12 months while studying in the United States.

An international applicant will not be reviewed for acceptance and will not be issued an I-20 until all of the application requirements are completed to the satisfaction of the Office of Graduate Admissions at Victory University.

Diversity

Cultural diversity is valued at Victory University and promotes recruitment and retention of all races and cultural backgrounds to maximize student diversity and to provide educational opportunities for all.

University Admission and Master's Program Acceptance Status

Notification of admission to the University is the first step in the Graduate School admissions process. Notification of acceptance to Victory University is made promptly after all required paperwork has been received by the Director of Admissions at Victory University. The second step in the admissions process occurs once the student's admission file is complete. At that time, the student's file is forwarded to the Graduate Council, which will decide whether or not an applicant may be accepted into the MS Professional Counseling degree program.

Notification of the Graduate Council's decision regarding the student's acceptance into the MS Professional Counseling program for the next entry term is made within 30 days of the receipt of the applicant's *completed* admission packet, any additional required supporting documents, and completion of the pre-acceptance interview. Admitted students will have two (2) weeks to respond to the offer of acceptance into the degree program. A non-refundable fee of \$200.00 is required to secure a place in the upcoming class. This fee is applied to the student's tuition upon matriculation.

Students meeting all admission requirements prior to the beginning of classes are classified as "*unconditional admit.*" Students who for any reason do not meet all admission requirements prior to the beginning of classes are classified as "*conditional admit.*" All conditions—other than GPA requirements—must be removed within 16 weeks of enrollment to remain in good standing.

Degree Completion Requirements

The Master of Science in Professional Counseling is a professional degree program designed to serve individuals who seek to hold counseling positions within social, human service, community, or related agencies. Receiving this degree requires that a student 1) complete the appropriate credit hours; 2) maintain a "good standing" status; 3) be continuously enrolled in the program; 4) observe overall program time limits; and 5) monitor progress toward actual graduation. The Master's degree is awarded upon successful completion of 48 semester hours of graduate course work.

Applications for Licensure and Mental Health Provider Status

Qualifications for LPC Licensure. The Health Related Boards in the State of Tennessee require a total of 60 semester credit hours as a part of the application procedure to become a Licensed Professional Counselor. Licensure also requires evidence of moral character, earning an acceptable grade on a comprehensive written exam, passing an oral exam on professional ethics, and successfully completing a minimum of two years of post-master's professional

experience. As of July 1, 2009, individuals who desire licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor, Pastoral Counselor, Marriage and Family Therapist or Licensed Professional Counselor with a Mental Health Service Provider designation must complete (3000) hours of supervised post-masters professional experience, including one hundred and fifty (150) contact hours of supervision obtained pursuant to Rule 0450-01-.10:

1. One thousand and five hundred (1500) of the three thousand (3000) hours of supervised post-masters professional experience shall be face-to-face client contact hours.
2. One thousand and five hundred (1500) of the three thousand (3000) hours of supervised post-masters professional experience shall be clinically-related activities.
3. Pass the examination pursuant to Rule 0450-01-.08.
4. For the purpose of mental health service provider designation pursuant to T.C.A. 63-22-150, "has completed a minimum of nine (9) graduate semester hours of coursework specifically related to diagnosis, treatment, appraisal and assessment of mental disorders" will be interpreted to mean passing nine (9) semester hours, either during the course of a graduate degree or as post-graduate work, in courses which include diagnosis, treatment and treatment planning, appraisal and assessment of mental disorders, psychopathology, and the use of the DSM, were the entire focus of the course or comprised a substantial portion of the course work (Source: TN Health Related Boards).

The Senior Director of Field Experiences and Faculty advisors at Victory University help guide students through these licensure requirement processes.

Academic Work. The minimum number of credit hours in traditional academic and professional courses required for this Master's degree is 48 graduate credit hours, earned in classroom experiences. The Master's degree is awarded upon completion of these 48 semester credit hours.

Non-Licensure Program. Students who complete the 48 hour (non-licensure) program of studies may qualify to work within occupations that will enable students to enter fields that require expertise in human relationships. Some examples include public relations specialist, college admissions recruiter, residence manager, youth worker, caseworker, personnel coordinator, customer service representative, probation officer, daycare center director, human services director, sales personnel, trainers, consultants and other related fields. They may also work in the mental health field under supervision by a licensed professional.

Field Experience Requirements for Licensure Application. After graduating with the Master's degree in Professional Counseling at Victory, students who choose to pursue state licensure may subsequently complete 12 additional credit hours in field experiences at Victory. These clinical practicum and internship experiences are required to apply for licensure in Tennessee. Students who intend to practice in Tennessee and who complete the Master's degree (48 hours of classroom experience) as well as the 12 hours of field experience (60 credit hours total) may meet the educational requirements for licensure as a professional counselor. Students who

reside in or plan to practice in other states should consult appropriate state health-related boards for field experience requirements that may apply.

Further information about licensure in Tennessee can be found at the Board of Professional Counselors website at <http://www.state.tn.us/sos/rules/0450/0450-01.pdf>

Professional Considerations. Candidates for the Master of Science degree program at Victory University are specializing in a profession. Attainment of a Professional Counseling degree signifies much more than completion of a specified set of courses. The student has an ethical responsibility to the public and to the counseling profession to ensure that they have attained satisfactory levels of professional and research competencies.

Graduate School faculty members at Victory University also have an ethical responsibility to protect both student career interests and the counseling profession. The M.S. in Professional Counseling program includes assessments of each student's progress throughout the program, including academic performance and professional and personal development.

To be consistent with professional codes of ethics and standards of professional practice, if these periodic evaluations indicate that a student is not appropriate for the program, faculty members will help facilitate the student's transition out of the program and, if possible, into a more appropriate area of study. For example, careful screening of applicants during the admissions process is an early part of this systematic assessment. Yearly evaluations of student progress and professional capabilities will be conducted. Similarly, before students will be accepted for the optional field experiences, they will, at a minimum, be expected to demonstrate appropriate levels of professional clinical judgment, exhibit healthy emotional functioning, display competent use of counseling skills, and behave ethically.

Summary. Students who wish to apply for licensure as a professional counselor in Tennessee will be required to complete both the 48 hours of coursework required to receive the Master's degree and an additional 12 hours of clinical field experience as required by the State of Tennessee Board of Licensed Professional Counselors, Marital & Family Therapists, and Clinical Pastoral Therapists. After completion of the MS Professional Counseling degree and post-masters clinical field experience offered at Victory University, students may meet minimum academic requirements necessary in Tennessee to apply for licensure as a Professional Counselor (LPC) with Mental Health Services Provider (MHSP) designation.

Good Standing

A graduate student at Victory University must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or better (using a 4.0 grading scale) in all coursework attempted in order to remain in good standing. Any student failing to maintain a 3.0 GPA (B average) will be placed on probation. The student will be permitted to enroll in coursework for two additional 8-week

terms, at the end of which a 3.0 GPA must be attained. If a student is on probation for more than four 8-week terms, the student will be unable to continue in the program.

Continuous Enrollment

The Master's degree on-campus program offered at Victory University uses a cohort model. Admitted students are placed in a cohort that follows a specific sequence of courses leading to program completion within a specific time frame. The program will be offered on a one-night-per-week basis, and will typically take approximately 33 months to complete the entire sequence (48 credit hours) of classroom courses. Graduate students are required to maintain continuous enrollment in their program of study. Students may not drop courses and continue in the program. A student who wishes to interrupt his or her program of study must make a formal request in writing to an assigned advisor for a leave of absence. The advisor will make a recommendation for approval/disapproval to the Graduate Council for final resolution. Similarly, students who are enrolled in the online delivery program must follow the entire sequence of courses.

Readmission

Graduate students who plan to re-enter (after missing less than a calendar year) should file a re-admission form by the deadlines for regular admission: December 15 for the following March entry term, and April 15 for the following August entry term. A student readmitted after an interruption in the course of studies will be required to fulfill all graduate requirements in the catalog in force at the time of readmission. Students who have been placed on academic probation and wish to be re-admitted must first file a written appeal with the Graduate Council for reinstatement and then, if approved, complete the application form for readmission. Students who have been out of school for more than one (1) calendar year must have their entire re-admission file sent to the Director of Graduate Admissions. In all cases of readmission, a letter of explanation with a request to be readmitted to the program is required.

Degree Completion Time Limit

The program of study leading to the 48-credit hour M.S. in Professional Counseling degree awarded by Victory University must be completed within five (5) years.

Graduation Requirements

All degree requirements must be met before graduation. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all graduation requirements are completed. This is best accomplished by maintaining contact and frequent communication with the student's academic advisor.

To qualify for graduation, students must follow the following guidelines:

1. Follow the approved course of study

2. Complete all courses with a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 and with no grade below a C
3. Demonstrate adequate clinical skills on competency assessments
4. Settle all financial accounts with the University
5. Successfully complete the oral and written Comprehensive Exams

A formal "Intent to Graduate" form must be submitted to the University Registrar's Office by the deadlines published by the University. Specific due dates are posted and communicated to students through announcements on the University website (www.victory.edu), in graduate classes, consultations with faculty advisors, email, and other media.

GRADUATE ACADEMIC POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Accreditation and Core Competency Goals

Victory University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC) to offer the Master of Science in Professional Counseling. The instruction leading to the Master of Science in Professional Counseling is approved by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC).

A future program goal is to seek formal approval by the Council of Accreditation for Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). In the interim, the M.S. in Professional Counseling degree program strictly follows CACREP curricular guidelines.

CACREP has established eight common core areas that provide the foundation for development of training programs for professional counselors. These common core program objectives also are the basis for developing measurable student learning outcomes for both cognitive and competency domains. In adhering to the principles of CACREP, the M.S. in Professional Counseling program at Victory University has been designed to develop counseling professionals by equipping them with a knowledge base in the behavioral sciences along with essential skills in research and counseling to help remove debilitating obstacles and encourage healthy growth in individuals and groups.

The eight CACREP common core program objectives are as follows:

1. *Human Growth and Development*—An understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels
2. *Social and Cultural Foundations*—An understanding of issues and trends in a multicultural and diverse society
3. *Helping Relationships*—An understanding of counseling and consultation processes
4. *Group Work*—An understanding of group development, dynamics, counseling theories, group counseling methods and skills, and other group work approaches
5. *Career and Lifestyle Development*—An understanding of career development and related life factors

6. *Appraisal*—An understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation

7. *Research and Program Evaluation*—An understanding of types of research methods, basic statistics, and ethical and legal considerations in research

8. *Professional Orientation and Ethics*—An understanding of all aspects of professional functioning, including history, roles, organizational structure, ethics, standards, and credentialing

Evaluating Student Learning Outcomes

Student evaluations include assessment of the student's cognitive knowledge base and attainment of certain counseling competencies.

In addition to CACREP program objectives, the Victory University Mission Statement articulates student learning outcomes and competencies. Student learning outcomes for the program are as follows:

1. Think critically about and apply a Christian worldview perspective to aspects of human nature: cognitions, behaviors, emotions, relationships, and spirituality
2. Understand the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels
3. Understand issues and trends in a multicultural and diverse society
4. Understand concepts and theories of professional counseling and consultation processes
5. Understand group development, group dynamics, group counseling theories, and group counseling methods/skills
6. Demonstrate competency in counseling skills as applied to individuals, families, and groups
7. Implement appropriate intervention strategies to help alleviate human problems and encourage growth
8. Understand career development and related life factors
9. Understand individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation, including data collection, analysis, testing, and interpretation of data about human functioning

10. Understand types of research methods, basic statistics, and ethical and legal considerations related to research

11. Understand all aspects of professional functioning and practice, including history, roles, organizational structure, ethics, legal considerations, standards, and credentialing

Modes of Instruction: Traditional, Online, Blended, Weekend, and Internship

Traditional classroom-based instruction is the primary mode of instructional delivery for the cohort model for the 48 hours of coursework leading to the master's degree. These courses may also be taken online. Some courses may utilize blended course delivery (involving both live lecture and online components). Some courses may require intensive weekend, on-campus seminar experiences. The optional field experience courses require placement in community mental health and counseling agencies. More detailed information is available below.

Grading Standards and Practices

Grades in graduate courses applicable toward a Master's degree at Victory University are posted as follows:

A (4.0) (Outstanding/Exemplary)

B (3.0) (Entirely satisfactory graduate work)

C (2.0) (Limited acceptability in meeting requirements for a Master's degree)

D (1.0) (Grades of D are not awarded.)

F (0.0) (Work has not satisfied minimum requirements.)

No more than two courses with a grade of C may be applied to any graduate degree.

W indicates the student has withdrawn. It does not influence grade point average (GPA).

I indicates incomplete work or the instructor's inability to assign a grade at the end of a course due to student emergency or unusual life circumstances. The student must complete this work within the six week period after grades are issued at the end of the term or the "I" will not be removed from the student's transcript. If the work remains incomplete, the "I" grade will not automatically convert to an F. "I" grades are not used in calculating GPA.

Grade Point Average (GPA)

A graduate student's GPA is calculated on the student's total graduate record at Victory University.

Assignment to Academic Advisor

Graduate students pursuing the M.S. in Professional Counseling degree are assigned to a faculty advisor who, in addition to being a graduate studies professor, is an experienced mental health professional (e.g. Psychologist, Senior Psychological Examiner, Licensed Professional Counselor with MHSP designation, etc.). Advisors act as mentors who help students with their professional development. During the first 12 months of graduate study, a faculty advisor works with a student to develop a planned program of study which includes selection of courses, general academic guidance, preparation for the student's annual assessment, and guidance toward development as a licensed counseling professional. Students in the program are free to consult with and receive guidance from professionals other than program faculty.

It is the student's responsibility to meet with the advisor each semester to keep current on degree program information, class scheduling, and professional development. If the advisor is unavailable during a given period of time, the program Administrative Assistant can refer a student to a temporary advisor.

Competency Assessment

Competency Grading

Throughout the program students are evaluated on the attainment of expected competencies. These formative competency evaluations are included in course examinations.

Annual Competency Assessment

In addition, graduate students are reviewed and assessed annually. Specific information about the annual review process is provided to graduate students through printed materials and information sessions. The annual review and assessment of competencies are done by a student's advisor and/or a committee composed of graduate faculty members. The graduate faculty is strongly committed to a student's success as a counseling professional. Students who pass the annual competency assessment are allowed to continue in the program. Faculty members will help students who fail to pass the competency review to transition to a more suitable program of study.

The annual assessment includes such items as evaluating progress in each of the 8 CACREP competency areas, evaluating progress toward degree completion, examining and reviewing grades earned, assessing whether a student is meeting or exceeding expectations, addressing

areas of personal and/or professional development and improvement, and assessing scholarly and professional activities (such as attendance at conferences, presentations, publications, grants, professional organization participation, or community recognition).

Attendance Regulations and Student Work

Regular, if not perfect, attendance is expected of graduate students who aspire to become counseling professionals. Each course syllabus contains information about attendance policies and grading related to attendance for that course. Faculty members are not expected to give make-up exams for unauthorized absences.

Credit is not awarded in any course where absences exceed 20% of the class meetings. All course exams must be taken. Exam schedules and course requirements appear in course syllabi.

Probation

Students whose Grade Point Average (GPA) falls below a 3.0 are placed on probation and given one academic semester (two 8-week terms) to increase the GPA to 3.0 or higher.

Repetition of Courses

Students who receive a grade lower than a “B” may repeat the course one time. The grade for the repeated course is used to re-calculate the student’s GPA. However, the student’s transcript will reflect this course repetition.

Student Load

Students maintain a load of no more than 6 hours of graduate-level or other coursework per 8-week term. Students who attempt to work during their graduate school experience are encouraged to limit their work load to accommodate this number of credit hours. A full-time graduate student is one who carries 18 credit hours of graduate course work per calendar year.

Time Limit

Students have five (5) years after the date of initial enrollment to complete all requirements for the 48 hours of coursework leading to the master’s degree. Exceptions may be considered by the Graduate Council when there are justifiable reasons and when graduate faculty members recommend exceptions.

Comprehensive Examinations

The graduate program in Professional Counseling at Victory University requires both a written comprehensive examination and an oral examination. These exams are taken during the final semester before the intended graduation date. The student’s advisor and two members of the Graduate faculty prepare the examination.

Written Comprehensive Examination

The written comprehensive examination is administered during a four (4) hour period. Two (2) hours are used to assess the student's knowledge of factual content from the student's course of study; one (1) hour addresses professional practice issues in the field of professional counseling; and one (1) hour is focused on the student's knowledge of assessment, diagnosis, and treatment planning.

Oral Comprehensive Examination

Students are also required to sit for an oral examination covering knowledge of legal and ethical issues in counseling.

Grading of Comprehensive Examinations

Each section of the examination is graded Pass/Fail (P/F). An "F" grade on any of the sections results in failing the comprehensive examination. A student may apply to take the examination a second time, but must wait for at least thirty (30) days after the initial attempt. This examination may be taken no more than two (2) times. Failure to pass the comprehensive exam on the second try will result in withdrawal from the Graduate School and the program of study. Any exception to this "twice-only" rule must be approved by the Graduate Council. In order to take the comprehensive examination, a student must have earned a cumulative GPA of 3.0 (B average) or better in all graduate work attempted at Victory University.

GRADUATE PROGRAM OF STUDIES

Program of Studies/Curriculum

Since this program aims to prepare students to apply for licensure in Tennessee, state requirements mandate core subject areas. Individual courses may address more than one of these core areas:

- 1) Theories of human behavior, learning, and personality
- 2) Abnormal behavior
- 3) Theories of counseling and psychotherapy
- 4) Evaluation and appraisal procedures
- 5) Group dynamics, theories and techniques
- 6) Counseling techniques
- 7) Professional Ethics
- 8) Research
- 9) Clinical practicum or internship

Courses Leading to the Masters Degree

First Year

- COUN 500 Professional Counseling and Christian Values (3)
- COUN 501 Counseling through the Life-Span (3)
- COUN 502 Cross Cultural Counseling (3)
- COUN 511 Psychopathology and Relational Dysfunction (3)
- COUN 512 Personality Theory and Counseling (3)
- COUN 513 Seminar: Counseling Theories and Techniques (3)

Second Year

- COUN 621 Legal and Ethical Issues in Professional Counseling (3)
- COUN 622 Concepts of Research Design and Statistics (3)

COUN 623 DSM Diagnosis and Treatment Planning (3)
COUN 631 Assessment in Counseling (3)
COUN 632 Vocational Development and Life Planning (3)
COUN 633 Seminar: Clinical Counseling Skills (3)

Third Year

COUN 741 Advanced Clinical Counseling Skills (3)
COUN 742 Seminar: Group Dynamics and Therapy (3)
COUN xxx Elective (3)
COUN xxx Elective (3)

Total Credit Hours for the degree: 48

The MS degree in Professional Counseling is awarded at the conclusion of the 48 credit hours. Traditional students typically meet on one unchanging night per week, completing one course every 8 weeks.

Optional Field Experiences

Students must complete required courses, pass comprehensive exams, and receive faculty approval to be admitted to the field experiences:

COUN 751 Practicum in Clinical Practice (4)
COUN 752 Internship in Clinical Practice I (4)
COUN 753 Internship in Clinical Practice II (4)

Total Credit Hours of Optional Field Experience: 12

PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS FOR THE M.S. IN PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING PROGRAM

COUN 500 Professional Counseling and Christian Values (3). A history and overview of counseling as a profession, including an introduction to philosophical foundations, multicultural factors, services, theories and systems, and ethics. The course also examines professional goals and objectives, professional organizations and associations, and application of Christian values and ethics in the counseling process.

COUN 501 Counseling through the Life-Span (3). A survey of clinically significant physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development from infancy through adulthood—including counseling implications and issues for each developmental period.

COUN 502 Cross Cultural Counseling (3). A study of multicultural trends, including characteristics and concerns of diverse groups and attitudes and behavior based on factors such as age, race, religious preference, physical disability, social class, sexual orientation, ethnicity and culture, family patterns, and gender. This course will increase counselor awareness and understanding of individuals from diverse backgrounds.

COUN 511 Psychopathology and Relational Dysfunction (3). An introduction to the study of maladaptive behavior. This course includes a review of the definitions of disorders in the DSM-IV-TR along with etiology and methods of treatment. Systems theory explanations of relational dysfunctions are also explored.

COUN 512 Personality Theory and Counseling (3). Students will examine theories and explanations of the development of normal and abnormal personalities, including personality theories in the psychodynamic, humanistic, behavioral, and cognitive traditions. Treatment modalities and possibilities for a Christian model of personality will also be explored.

COUN 513 Seminar: Counseling Theories and Techniques (3). The course provides a broad understanding of the philosophic bases of the helping process and introduces students to applications of counseling theories through media presentations, demonstrations and role play experiences.

COUN 621 Legal and Ethical Issues in Professional Counseling (3). This course examines legal and ethical standards involved in the practice of professional counseling. Professional codes of

ethics and HIPAA requirements will be studied, and students will be challenged to think through ethical and legal dilemmas commonly faced by counselors in professional settings.

COUN 622 Concepts of Research Design and Statistics (3). An introduction to research methods, statistical analysis, needs assessment, and program evaluation. The use of applied research, computer applications, and the role of the counselor as “scientist-practitioner” will be emphasized.

COUN 623 DSM Diagnosis and Treatment Planning (3). This course will review and closely examine DSM-IV-TR disorders. Students will experience the procedures and methods of treatment planning. Systems theory treatment considerations will also be explored.

COUN 631 Assessment in Counseling (3). Students will learn principles of test construction, administration, scoring, and interpretation in a clinical setting through an introduction to basic assessment tools: achievement, aptitude, and intelligence tests; interest and personality inventories; and clinical interviews, case conferences, and observations.

COUN 632 Vocational Development and Life Planning (3). Students will be introduced to career development models, occupational and educational information sources, assessment instruments, and counseling techniques relevant to career planning. Included will be a consideration of decision making processes, lifestyle and leisure counseling, and career development program planning and evaluation.

COUN 633 Seminar: Clinical Counseling Skills (3). This course is an experiential integration of counseling methods and strategies. Through media resources, live demonstrations, and role-play situations, students will explore interviewing techniques, goal setting, the creation of a therapeutic alliance, session structuring, and other relevant skills.

COUN 741 Advanced Clinical Counseling Skills (3). A continuation of COUN 533, this course will broaden and deepen counseling skills including psychodynamic, behavioral, humanistic, and cognitive treatment modalities. Techniques useful in Christian counseling will also be explored.

COUN 742 Seminar: Group Dynamics and Therapy (3). This course explores processes in group development and stages, group dynamics, and group counseling theories. Group leadership styles are discussed along with basic and advanced group counseling methods and skills.

COUN 751 Practicum in Clinical Practice (4). This course provides a supervised counseling experience and an appropriate work environment. The practicum will have a seminar meeting on a weekly basis. Prerequisite: Admission to the Field Experiences Program and program

faculty approval; the application for entrance into the Field Experiences Program must be completed one term prior to the beginning of the practicum experience.

COUN 752 Internship in Clinical Practice I (4). Supervised counseling internship in an approved site. Prerequisites: COUN 751—Practicum in Clinical Practice—and approval of program faculty members and field experience site supervisors.

COUN 753 Internship in Clinical Practice II (4). A continuation of COUN 751, a supervised counseling internship in an approved site. Prerequisites: COUN 752 and approval of program faculty members and field experience site supervisors.

FACULTY RESOURCES AND QUALIFICATIONS

FULL TIME FACULTY

Christine M. Browning, Ph.D. (2006). Associate Professor of Psychology and Chair, Department of Behavioral Sciences. Degrees: B.S. Crichton College; M.A. and Ed.S., University of Memphis; Ph.D., University of Mississippi.

William L. Chaney Ed.D. (1987). Professor of Psychology and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Degrees: B.S., Philadelphia Biblical University; M.Div., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School; M.A. and Ed.D., University of Memphis.

Yolanda Y Harper, Ph.D. (2010). Associate Professor of Psychology and Chair, Department of Arts and Sciences. Degrees: B.A., University of California; M.A. and Ph.D., University of Arkansas.

Timothy R. Holler, Ed.D. (1994). Associate Professor of Psychology. Degrees: B.A., Crichton College; M.S. and Ed.D., University of Memphis.

William Pat Travis, Ph.D. (2010). Associate Professor of Psychology. Degrees: B.S., Spring Hill University; M.A. and Ph.D., University of Alabama.

ADJUNCT FACULTY

William Bellican, D.Min. (2011). Adjunct Instructor in Counseling. Degrees: B.S., University of Memphis; M.A., Harding University; D.Min., Ashland Theological Seminary.

David M. Deason, Ph.D. (2009). Adjunct Instructor in Psychology. Degrees: B.S., University of Alabama; M.S. and Ph.D., University of Southern Mississippi.

Nikel Ayana Rogers Wood, Ph.D. (2010). Adjunct Instructor of Psychology. Degrees: B.A., University of the South; M.S. and Ph.D., University of North Texas.

GRADUATE TUITION AND FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION

FINANCIAL AID

Graduate students are encouraged to discuss student loan policies with the Financial Aid Office and/or local banks. Students eligible for veteran's benefits should contact the Veterans Certification Officer in the Registrar's Office

Application for financial aid or Veterans' Administration benefits cannot be processed until the applicant has been admitted and fully registered in a degree program. A conditional admission in some cases will allow one semester of financial aid with full admission required before financial aid will be processed for the subsequent terms.

FEDERAL STUDENT AID

Eligibility for Stafford Loans

In order to receive Stafford Loans a student must meet the following requirements:

1. He/she must have a valid FAFSA on file.
2. He/she must be enrolled at least half time, which is 5 credit hours per semester for graduate students.
3. He/she must be pursuing a degree or certificate.
4. He/she must maintain satisfactory academic progress.

Students who are in default on a previous or current federal student loan are not eligible for additional Stafford Loans. If the student has a loan in default, the student should contact his/her lender to make payment arrangements. Once VU receives confirmation that the student's loan is in good standing, the student will once again be eligible for federal student loans.

Loan Application Process

The student must file the 2011-2012 FAFSA. The student will need a PIN to sign his/her form electronically. The student must sign his/her Direct Loan Master Promissory Note (MPN), which is the actual loan application. The student must also complete Direct Loan Entrance Counseling, which is an exercise that will explain his/her rights and responsibilities as a student loan borrower. The student will need his/her FAFSA PIN to access these documents. VU will receive them electronically upon completion. Both of these items, the MPN and Entrance Counseling, must be received by the VU Financial Aid Office before the student's loan can be processed.

Subsidized Stafford Loans

Under the subsidized Stafford Loan program, a low interest rate is charged and is paid by the government while the student is attending school at least half time (i.e. carrying 5 graduate credit hours or more). Financial need must be demonstrated to qualify for the subsidized Stafford loan. Repayment of principal and interest begins 6 months after the student ceases to be enrolled at least half time.

Unsubsidized Stafford Loans

If the student is ineligible for a subsidized Stafford loan, an unsubsidized loan may be available. The interest rate is typically low, and interest will accrue from the time the loan is disbursed until it is completely repaid. Interest may be repaid by the student while enrolled at the University. Similarly, repayment of principal and interest begins 6 months after the student ceases to be enrolled at least half time.

PRIVATE LOANS

In addition to Stafford Loans, students may pursue private loans. Private loans are credit-based. Some students will need a creditworthy cosigner to be approved for this type of funding. Interest rates and repayment terms vary by lender and are not as favorable as the Federal Stafford Loans. Payments typically begin six months after the student has graduated. However, some lenders will require payments while the student is enrolled. The length of repayment is generally 10 years.

Loan funds will post electronically to the student's Victory University student account approximately 30 days after the term begins. The student will receive an email when the funds have been posted to his/her account. If his/her financial aid exceeds the charges, he/she will receive a refund check for the credit on his/her account. Notice of refunds will also be made via email.

GRADUATE TUITION REFUND POLICY

This refund policy applies to students who receive no federal or state financial aid and who officially withdraw within

The second week of a term 100% of tuition

The third week of a term 80% of tuition

The fourth week of a term 60% of tuition

The fifth week of a term 50% of tuition

No refunds will be available after the fifth week of a given term.

Refunds for textbooks are governed by the policies of the VU campus Bookstore. Students receiving federal or state financial aid should check with the Financial Aid Office regarding the refund policy.

GRADUATE TUITION, FEES, AND EXPENSES (2011-2012)

Tuition and fees are determined on a yearly basis by the University Board of Trustees. The University reserves the right to change tuition and fees at any time without prior notice.

TUITION

Tuition is \$400.00 per credit hour.

Tuition for members of the military is \$325.00¹ per credit hour. Military tuition includes the cost of course textbooks.

Tuition for the 48-hour Master's degree program is \$19,200.00.

Tuition to complete the optional 12-graduate semester hours of field experiences is \$4,800.00.

FEES AND EXPENSES

Graduation fee: \$150.00

Textbooks, software and other materials will be required based on the syllabus for each course.

Health Insurance: The student must have proof of medical insurance before enrollment. Furthermore, all students must have health insurance while enrolled in the program; it must be maintained throughout the program.

Additional Expenses: Other expenses may occur during the program and are the responsibility of the student. These may include travel to assigned clinical sites, meals, etc.

Professional Liability Insurance is required of all students and must be maintained throughout the Field Experience. The major reason for this requirement is to help protect students from malpractice claims. The amount of insurance required is \$1,000,000 per incident/minimum \$100,000,000 aggregate. Fees for this insurance vary by company. Students are encouraged to contact several companies before deciding on a carrier.

¹ This rate is available to the following qualified military students: active duty; National Guard; reservists; retirees; honorably discharged veterans (DD Form 214 required); spouses of active duty, National Guard, reservists and retirees; Department of Defense employees (non-contractors); and dependents using VA education or survivor benefits.

Immediately after the student has selected an insurance carrier and acquired professional liability insurance coverage, the student must file a copy of the declarations page of the insurance policy with the office of the Director of Graduate Studies. When deciding on insurance carriers, the student should remember that it takes time to locate and process insurance applications.

Some possible sources of coverage:

American Counseling Association Trust: <http://www.hpsso.com> (800-347-6647).

American Professional Agency: <http://www.americanprofessional.com> (800-421-6694).

Healthcare Providers Service Organization: <http://hpsso.com/professional-liability-insurance/student-coverage-description.jsp>.

Licensure Fees for testing and licensure vary by state. Further information about licensure in Tennessee can be found at the Board of Professional Counselors website at <http://www.state.tn.us/sos/rules/0450/0450-01.pdf>.