

Frequently Asked Questions

PREREQUISITES

- Q:** Do I have to complete all of my prerequisites before applying to your program?
- A:** No, but it is to your advantage to do so since admission to our programs is very competitive. See Next Question for further information.
- Q:** Do I have to complete all of my prerequisites to be admitted to the program?
- A:** Prerequisite courses must be completed prior to beginning a graduate program in a Fall semester, but don't necessarily have to be completed by the time you apply to the program – they can still be in progress at that time. Remember that you will be competing against other applicants who may have all of the prerequisites completed, so it behooves you to have as many completed or in progress at the time of application as possible.
- Q:** What are the **prerequisite** required courses?
- A:** Each of our programs may have differing prerequisite courses. The prerequisites for each program are:
- Career Counseling EPC 430, EPC 451, & EPC 600
 - College Counseling/
Student Services EPC 430, EPC 451, & EPC 600
(PSY 310 is recommended)
 - Marriage & Family
Therapy EPC 430, EPC 451, EPC 600, &
PSY 310
 - School Counseling EPC 430 **or** 314
& EPC 451 & EPC 600
 - School Psychology EPC 314 **or** 315, EPC 430,
EPC 451, & EPC 600
 - Development, Learning
and Instruction EPC 314 & EPC 600
 - Early Childhood Educ. EPC 430 **or** EPC 314 & EPC 600

- Q:** How can I take prerequisite classes at CSUN before I'm admitted to the graduate program?
- A:** Current CSUN undergrads may enroll in the pre-requisite courses in the EPC department without further application. Non-CSUN students may take pre-requisite courses by applying to the university as a Pre-Major in EPC. To do this you apply to the University on www.csumentor.edu <<http://www.csumentor.edu>> at least one month before the semester in you wish to take the courses and then also submit the EPC Department Pre-Major Application to our Department Office, ED 1218. Be sure that transcripts from past institutions are submitted to Admissions & Records as early as possible for appropriate review.
- Q:** May I substitute courses I took elsewhere for the prerequisite courses?
- A:** Possibly. You may also access a list of approved prerequisite substitutions on our website at: www.csun.edu/edpsy/prereqs.html.

If you believe that you have taken equivalent courses that are not on the pre-approved list, complete the 'Request for Prerequisite Course Substitution' form and submit it with your department application. You may check with our Graduate Advisor, Todd Wolfe, for approval of substitutions before the application period. Courses used as substitutions for a prerequisite must have been taken in the within the last seven years. You must also have earned at least a 'B-' grade in the course.

- Q:** Is it enough simply to have *taken* the prerequisites for the program?
- A:** No. Prerequisites must be completed with a grade of "B-" or better.
- Q:** May I take my prerequisites concurrently with the first term of my Masters' program?
- A:** No. All prerequisites must be completed prior to starting the program.
- Q:** Do I have to have a Psychology degree to apply to the Masters Program?
- A:** No. Most undergraduate degrees will be considered. However, if you have a psychology degree, you are more likely to have completed the prerequisites.

TESTING REQUIREMENTS

- Q:** Do I have to take the GRE? Can I still be admitted if I don't "pass" it?
- A:** If you are applying for the School Psychology program, you must take the GRE. For applicants to all other programs, if your Cumulative Undergraduate GPA is less than 3.00 you must take the exam. Yes, it is possible to be admitted if you don't have a 50th percentile score on the test.
- Q:** Do I have to take the CBEST?
- A:** Yes, if you are applying to either School Counseling or School Psychology, you must take the CBEST. For School Counseling the test should be taken prior to applying, for School Psychology the test may be taken before or during the first year in the program.
- Q:** Do I have to submit my test scores with my application or can I turn them in later?
- A:** Any required test scores must be submitted with your department application by the application deadline.

TRANSCRIPTS

- Q:** I already submitted transcripts with my University application; do I need to submit them again with my department application?
- A:** Yes, the department also needs a copy of transcripts from all colleges and universities attended. The dept. will accept *either* official or unofficial transcripts.
- Q:** If I received my bachelor's degree from CSUN, do I have to include transcripts with my department application?
- A:** Yes. The department will need transcripts from all colleges or universities attended, including CSUN.
- You would *not* need to submit official transcripts to CSUN, though, if you graduated from CSUN. As well, if you already submitted transcripts to CSUN as an undergraduate, you do not need to re-submit them to the university.

ACCREDITATION

- Q:** What accreditations do your master's programs hold?
- A:** All programs are regionally accredited thru the Western Association of Colleges and Schools – along with the rest of the university.
- The M.S. in Counseling programs (Career, College, School, and MFT) are also accredited by CACREP (Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs).
- The M.S. in Counseling (School Psychology) is accredited by NASP (National Association of School Psychologists).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Q:** Do the recommendation forms have to be from professors?
- A:** Not necessarily. A suitable person would be someone who can meaningfully address the questions on the recommendation form.
- Q:** May I just submit letters of recommendation and not the form in the application?
- A:** We prefer that the forms are used in addition to letters if the recommender wishes to write a separate letter.
- Q:** My undergraduate university has a service for submitting recommendations; I won't be communicating directly with my former professor? What should I do?
- A:** If the service allows you to submit information for use in writing recommendations, submit either our form or the information contained in our form. If not, have the letters from the service sent directly to our Department Office: EPC Department 18111 Nordhoff Street Northridge, CA 91330-8265
- Q:** May recommendations be sent directly to the department by the person writing the recommendation?
- A:** No, unless being sent by a recommendation service (see previous answer above) recommendations should be included with your department application when you mail it. If the person writing a recommendation wishes for it to be confidential, ask him/her to place it in a sealed envelope with his/her signature across the flap, and then give it to you for inclusion with your department application.
- Q:** May I include more than two recommendations with my application?
- A:** Yes.
- Q:** Are there any differences between programs for this requirement?
- A:** The School Psychology program prefers recommendations to be in letter format, rather than on our department forms. All other programs will accept either, though prefer if a letter is submitted, the recommendation form is also completed and submitted.

ONLINE COURSES

- Q:** Does CSU Northridge offer online programs?
- A:** At this time, the only program and courses offered online are for the Development, Learning and Instruction program. This program is offered through Extended Learning and is not state-supported.

OTHER APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Q: How can I obtain a copy of the departmental application?

A: The application is on our departmental webpage.

Q: Can I apply to more than one of your Master's programs at the same time?

A: No, unless you are interested in a joint program for MFT & School Psychology or the one for MFT & School Counseling.

Q: May I apply for a Certificate program when I am applying for a different Master's program in counseling from this department?

A: Yes, you may apply for the Career Counseling or the College Counseling/Student Services certificate when applying for your master's degree in another specialization.

Q: How do I apply for the concurrent MFT master's with School Counseling credential program?

A: On item # 2 of the department application, check the 'Joint Program' option.

Q: Can I submit transcripts, test scores, or recommendations separately from my department application or after the application deadline?

A: No, due to the volume of applications we receive and the short period of time between the application deadline and admission interviews, we require that all materials listed on the 'Application Instruction Sheet' be submitted together in one envelope, and must arrive by the application deadline.

Q: Can I submit my department application in person?

A: Yes, applications may be submitted directly to our Department Office in the Education bldg, Room 1218.

Q: What's the mailing address for the applications?

A: CSUN – EPC Department
18111 Nordhoff Street
Northridge, CA 91330-8265

Q: What's the application deadline?

A: The application deadline is subject to change and may vary from year to year. It is specified on the departmental web page at <http://www.csun.edu/edpsy/applicants.html>

Q: Are there any exceptions to the deadline?

A: No, there are no exceptions to the deadline. Applications must arrive by the application deadline.

Q: If my application package is postmarked by the application deadline but arrives later, will it be accepted?

A: No. Applicants must ensure that the package is mailed early enough *to arrive in the EPC office by the application deadline.*

Q: What happens after I apply?

A: Interviews of selected applicants will be conducted in March. Admission notifications will be sent approximately six to eight weeks after the interview date.

Q: If I already have a Master's degree in Counseling, may I take courses to obtain a School Counseling or School Psychology Credential without completing the entire program?

A: Yes. This is referred to as being admitted with 'Advanced Standing.' You must still apply through the regular department application procedure. Advanced standing students require two years of full-time coursework, though the first year may possibly be taken over a two year period. Courses required are those mandated by the California Teacher's Credential Commission. Some courses may possibly be applied from your master's degree program, but restrictions do exist. Consult with Dr. Hanson or Dr. Tarver-Behring.

Q: How long should my personal statement be and what format is required?

A: Your personal statement should be no longer than two sides of single or double spaced typing. There is no required format; we just ask that it be clear and easy to read. There is an outline of the information we would like addressed on the Department Application form.

Q: Do you admit students for the Spring Semester?

A: We admit students in the fall and spring semesters for ECE and DLI, in Summer (School Counseling and College Counseling) and for the Fall Semester (Career, MFT, School Counseling and School Psychology).

Q: Do all of the programs start in the fall only?

A: School Counseling and College Counseling/Student Services each have required summer course(s) the summer before matriculation. For that reason, it is particularly important for to complete pre-requisites in the spring or sooner to be prepared for the summer courses if accepted to School Counseling or the CC/SS master's program.

Q: May I attend as a part-time student?

A: Most of our Masters in Counseling degree programs only admit students on a full-time basis. However, the MFT and Career Counseling programs will sometimes admit part-time students. Students may attend the M.A. (either DLI or ECE) programs part-time.

QUESTIONS ABOUT INTERVIEWS

- Q:** Do all of the graduate programs in the department interview their applicants?
- A:** Yes. Specific dates for these are listed on the Application Checklist.
- Q:** Are all applicants interviewed?
- A:** No. Depending on the pool, applicants with GPAs in the 2.5-3.2 grade point average range may not all be invited. This may vary by graduate program and by year. You will be notified if you are to be interviewed or not in writing.
- Q:** When are the interviews?
- A:** Dates of interviews for each program are listed on the Application Checklist. Because we are posting this information more than three months in advance of the interviews, no alternative interview dates will be scheduled.
- Q:** What if I am invited to interview, but have a schedule conflict or chose not to come for some other reason?
- A:** Your application will be evaluated on the basis of the documentation you have submitted. It is unusual to be admitted to one of the counseling programs without an interview given the applicant pool size.
- Q:** What will I be asked in the interview, what should I expect?
- A:** Although each program structures their interviews differently, in general you can expect the following: most interviews are conducted with groups of applicants; you will be asked to share something about your background, and why you want to enter the graduate program; you might be asked to provide a short writing sample; you might be asked to participate in a mock counseling session with another applicant; you might be asked to perform a group activity with other applicants; and you might be asked to discuss your knowledge about the field that you are interested in.

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PROGRAM/POST ADMISSION QUESTIONS

- Q:** Can I take fewer than 12.0 units in any given semester?
- A:** Yes. You must take at least 6.0 units though in your first two semesters of any of the counseling programs. This would require you to attend classes a minimum of one evening a week from 4-7 and 7-10 p.m. Counseling students in their first year would minimally attend on Monday or Tuesday evening, depending on your graduate program specialization.
- Q:** May I have other employment while I'm in the program?
- A:** Yes, all of our classes are scheduled from 4-7 p.m. or 7-10 p.m. An important consideration to keep in mind is that most of our programs will require fieldwork and/or internship outside of the class hours, and generally during daytime hours (other than the MFT program which may have more flexibility.) It is important to remember, though, that attending graduate school is more time-consuming than most undergraduate programs. Counseling students will be required to complete group projects, individual supervision, videotaping, and other activities as a part of your first year experience. The general recommendation is that if you are employed thirty or more hours per week, you should plan on taking our minimum load of six units, at least in the first semester. If you are employed between 20-30, you might be comfortable with nine units. Generally, we recommend that those with 20 or fewer hours are the most likely to succeed with 12 units. While you may be able to enroll in more units than recommended above, graduate school is not a race, but, instead, an opportunity to develop into a professional. For that to optimally occur, you need time to reflect and consider.
- Q:** How long will the program take?
- A:** Most of the M.S. programs take about two and a half years to complete. School Counseling & College Counseling can take two calendar years to complete, though that includes summer session(s). School Psychology is a three-year, year-round (fall, spring, summer) program. The M.A. programs require one and a half to two years to complete.
- Q:** Who can I speak with if I have further questions?
- A:** Todd Wolfe, our graduate advisor. Call (818) 677-5719 to find out his current office hours or e-mail him at todd.wolfe@csun.edu.