

Mission Statement—Department of Counselor Education

The University, College, and Department are committed to recruiting, retaining, and graduating a diverse student population. Graduate students in the Department of Counselor Education are representative of students and clientele served by schools and agencies in Northwest Alabama, Northeast Mississippi, and South Tennessee.

For the Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling programs, the faculty are dedicated to the development of skilled practitioners who are committed to continuous personal self-awareness, personal growth, and professional development. Through a systematic series of academic activities, experiential exercises, and clinical and field experiences, students engage in a rigorous process of inquiry, evaluation, and reflection. The faculty believes that this systematic process leads to a synergistic effect in which quantitative improvements in knowledge, skills, and practices interact to create qualitative growth in these areas and professional counseling dispositions. The ultimate goal of this mission is to inspire students to embrace a life-long pursuit of personal and professional growth in their identities as professional counselors.

The clinical mental health counseling and school counseling programs adhere to the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards. Both programs prepare students to receive certification as National Certified Counselors. The clinical mental health counseling program prepares students to meet the educational requirements for licensure as Licensed Professional Counselors in Alabama. Ultimately, clinical mental health counseling graduates possess the professional knowledge, abilities, and dispositions necessary to provide appropriate prevention, education, and counseling through the following interventions: advocacy, outreach, consultation, crisis, brief (symptom-focused) counseling, intermediate counseling, and long-term counseling.

The school counseling program prepares students to meet the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) requirements for certification as school counselors. Ultimately, graduates possess the professional knowledge, abilities, and dispositions necessary to plan, implement, evaluate, and manage comprehensive school counseling programs in order to serve all students in the context of their communities.

Program Objectives

Students in the clinical mental health counseling and school counseling programs will be expected to meet the following objectives:

1. Demonstrate understanding and application of knowledge and skills related to professional counseling orientation and ethics.
2. Demonstrate understanding and application of knowledge and skills related to social and cultural diversity.
3. Demonstrate understanding and application of knowledge and skills related to human growth and development.
4. Demonstrate understanding and application of knowledge and skills related to career development.
5. Demonstrate understanding and application of knowledge and skills related to counseling and helping relationships.
6. Demonstrate understanding and application of knowledge and skills related to group counseling.
7. Demonstrate understanding and application of knowledge and skills related to assessment and testing.

8. Demonstrate understanding and application of knowledge and skills related to research and program evaluation.

Students in the clinical mental health counseling program will be expected to meet the following objective:

9. Demonstrate understanding and application of foundational and contextual dimensions of clinical mental health counseling and the ability to engage in effective, ethical clinical mental health practices across diverse settings and client populations.

Students in the school counseling program will be expected to meet the following objective:

10. Demonstrate understanding and application of foundational and contextual dimensions of school counseling practices and the ability to develop, manage, assess, and implement ethical school counseling programs in P-12 schools.

Students in the clinical mental health counseling and school counseling programs will be expected to meet the following objective:

11. Demonstrate expected levels of professional dispositions essential to the roles and functions of professional counselors: conscientiousness, coping and self-care, openness, cooperativeness, moral reasoning, interpersonal skills, cultural sensitivity, self-awareness, emotional stability, and ethical behavior.