

EMU Graduate Counseling Program

A Guide for Working Professionals



GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

Welcome to the EMU Graduate Counseling Program

- A supportive, cohort-based graduate program designed for **working professionals and career changers**.
- Focused on **Clinical Mental Health Counseling**, accredited by **CACREP**.
- **Two tracks:** 3-year (recommended for students with work and/or family obligations) or 2-year (intensive).
- Emphasis on personal reflection, applied training, and social justice in counseling.

Graduate School as a Non-Traditional Student

- Many of our students are **mid-career professionals** pursuing a new career or **paraprofessionals** who want to expand their opportunities in the mental health field.
- Classes are held **two days per week** to support work-life balance and commuting.
- Students may complete **internship hours** at their place of employment (if supervision meets requirements and if it allows for skill development).

How to Apply

- Submit **application form, personal essay, undergraduate transcripts, and three references by January 15.**
 - *Two of the three references must be academic or professional.*
- **International students** may need to submit a foreign degree translation and TOEFL score.
- **No GRE required.**
- **All applicants welcome**, no psychology degree or prerequisite courses required.
- **Interviews** for selected applicants: **February 7.**

Exciting News! \$2.37 Million HRSA Grant

- Awarded July 2025 through HRSA's Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training for Professionals (BHWET-PRO) Grant.
- Supports EMU's Project: Interdisciplinary Education in Action: Valley Counseling Expansion (IDEA: VCE).
- Benefits for eligible students (U.S. Citizens in their final year of training):
 - **\$25,000 internship stipends** (Fall 2025 - Spring 2029)
 - Funding for **conference registration & travel**
 - Specialized training in telehealth, Integrated behavioral health in primary care, and trauma-informed care
 - Expanded placement options in **rural and underserved communities.**

This grant underscores EMU's commitment to preparing counselors to serve where they're needed most.

Program at a Glance

- **60-credit-hour CACREP-accredited** Clinical Mental Health Counseling program
- **3-year track** recommended; **2-year intensive track** available.
- **In-person & Cohort-Based Learning:** Classes meet two consecutive days each week, providing a rigorous learning environment and fostering strong relationships with classmates.
- **Hands-on, real world experience** through practicum and internship experiences in local agencies, hospitals, and schools.
- **First-year student mentor pairing** for support and connection.
- **Faculty mentorship and advising** every semester.

Path to Licensure

- Degree meets **Virginia LPC residency requirements** and is transferable to most states.
- Many of our graduates are hired by their internship sites as residents-in-counseling.
- Virginia Counseling Compact allows practice reciprocity in participating states.
 - Learn more: counselingcompact.gov

Benefits of Licensure

- **Faster-than-average job growth** for behavioral health professionals (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021–2031).
- In Virginia, a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) generally earns a higher salary than a Qualified Mental Health Professional (QMHP), though this can vary significantly based on experience, location, and specific role (Indeed).
 - **LPC salary in Virginia**
 - **Average:** ~\$85,650 per year (Starts around \$66,295 per year and can earn up to \$97,415 per year with experience).
 - QMHP salary in Virginia
 - **Average:** ~\$50,969 per year
- **Key differences:**
 - **Licensing:** The LPC license requires a higher level of education and clinical hours than the QMHP certification.
 - **Scope of Practice:** As a result of the higher level of training, LPCs have a broader scope of practice, which is often reflected in a higher salary.
 - **Overall Earning Potential:** While individual salaries can overlap, the LPC generally has a significantly higher earning potential than the QMHP.

Funding your Graduate Education

- **HRSA Grant (BHWET-PRO)**, \$25,000 internship stipends for eligible students in their final year.
- **Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant (VTAG)**, for full-time Virginia residents.
- **Church Match Grants.**
- **MAC Grant Fund**, established by program alumni.
- **Laymon H. & Ruth S. Lantz Scholarship**, available to EMU counseling and seminary students.
- **Loan repayment and loan forgiveness programs** for LPCs in high-need areas.

Learn more at: emu.edu/graduate-counseling/admissions

Graduate Success

Graduates of EMU's Graduate Counseling Program are high achievers who are sought after by regional employers.

- **82% graduation rate** (most recent cohort)
- **83% licensure exam pass rate** (compared to the 54% national pass rate)
- **100% job placement** within three months of graduation (most recent cohort)

Curriculum

Required, **foundational courses** including:

- Counseling Techniques
- Human Growth and Development
- Psychopathology
- Multicultural Counseling
- Group Counseling
- Counseling Children & Adolescents

Electives course options including:

- Mindfulness & Psychotherapy
- Expressive Therapies
- Sexual Health in Counseling
- Clinical Practice in Neurobiology

Field Experiences (Practicum and Internship)

All students are required to complete:

- A one-semester practicum
 - Includes 40 hours of direct client contact within a 100 hour clinical experience
- A two-semester internship
 - Includes 240 hours of direct client contact within a 600 hour clinical experience

A variety of local partnering field placement sites that you can choose from, including schools, health centers, and other community organizations.

Assistance from the department's Professional Practice Coordinator to help you find a field placement.

Ready to Begin Your Journey?

Our goal is to guide you through self-reflection, experiential training and skill mastery to **become best counselor you can be.**

You will graduate ready to launch a career as a professional counselor, doing depthful and healing work in the world.

Apply or **contact a recruitment specialist** today