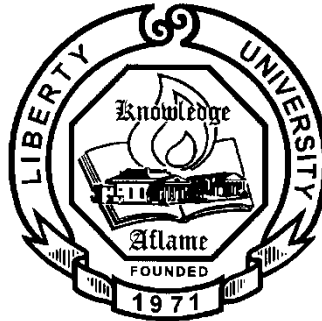


LIBERTY UNIVERSITY



MASTER OF ARTS IN HUMAN SERVICES COUNSELING HANDBOOK

Department of Community Care & Counseling

School of Behavioral Sciences

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Authority of the Handbook

The policies and procedures described in this handbook supersede those described in previous handbooks and replace all other communications on issues addressed herein. Particular policies and procedures are specific to the Department of Community Care and Counseling, and these policies and procedures apply to current and newly accepted students. Students who are currently taking Master's courses in Human Services Counseling must adhere to these guidelines with the exception of any changes in the academic program.

Purpose of the Handbook

Whether you are a current MA in Human Services Counseling student or a prospective student, the information in this handbook is a useful summary of the requirements, structure, and particulars of the MA in Human Services Counseling program. It is essential that all students become familiar with the handbook as it contains key information to successful completion of the degree. Prospective students will find information that will assist them in determining if this program is right for them.

Liberty University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern
Association of Colleges and Schools
(1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097; 404-679-4501)
to award Associate, Bachelors, Masters, and Doctoral degrees

Contacts for the School of Behavioral Sciences

To view our faculty and staff positions and their contact information, please go to our Faculty & Staff webpage at:

<http://www.liberty.edu/academics/behavioralsciences/communitycare/index.cfm?PID=32580>

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

From the MAHS Program Director:

A goal of Community Care and Counseling, a department of the School of Behavioral Sciences at Liberty University, is to acknowledge the need for qualified professionals in the field of human services counseling, and to promote Christian values as the basis of helping others.

Launched in 1981, the Graduate Counseling program is committed to providing quality professional training for healing human hurts from a perspective permeated by Christian faith. The Human Services Counseling students receive classes in theory and the practice of working in the human services field, as well as in several specializations that is of interest to the student to pursue. The MA in Human Services Counseling degree is a *professional* degree, meaning it was designed for those who desire additional knowledge and understanding in their field, but are *not interested* in pursuing state licensure to become a licensed professional counselor. The degree is useful for those pursuing promotion, and for certain career opportunities in mental health agencies, hospital programs, private practices, church-related counseling centers, and other public and private facilities that do not require state licensure.

Liberty University has always endeavored to produce “Champions for Christ,” and enable our students to go forth from us and produce positive change in a hurting world. Therefore, we take our jobs seriously in seeking to prepare you in the most academic and professional way possible in our programs. With this in mind, I welcome you to the *Master of Arts in Human Services Counseling* program.

Blessings!

Clay E. Peters II, EdD, LPC, CFMHE, NCC, HS-BCP
Director of MA Human Services Counseling Program
Professor of Counseling

Master of Arts in Human Services Counseling

Admission Policies

Mission/Purpose

Community Care and Counseling:

The Department of Community Care and Counseling (DCCC) exists to promote the education and training of future graduates for service and practice in community, agency, and ministry settings. The department is committed to training individuals to be thoroughly competent professionals in the work of community service agencies and pastoral counseling who demonstrate excellence and best practices undergirded by a Christian worldview. Graduates will be trained for career opportunities in human services agencies and ministry settings. Doctoral studies will prepare students to seek leadership positions as educators, administrators, supervisors, pastoral counselors, and researchers.

Specific information about the Department of Community Care and Counseling may be accessed at:

<https://www.liberty.edu/behavioral-sciences/community-care-counseling/>

The MA in Human Services Counseling Program:

The Department of Community Care and Counseling Master of Arts in Human Services Counseling provides students with an academic program designed to educate students in the study of human behavior and application of helping skills. Students will master coursework and review the literature in the field considered essential to the master's level professional preparation of human service workers who seek to offer help in areas such as leadership, families, addictions and recovery, etc., that are consistent with a biblical worldview. Though students are encouraged to evaluate their own specific needs and to take advantage of available resources for personal and professional development, the learning outcomes are applicable to all students as they seek a degree relevant to the vast field of human and community services. **This degree does not lead to state licensure as a professional counselor**, but is instead designed to help those human services workers who are on the front lines helping in their community.

Specific information for the *MA in Human Services Counseling* degree online program may be accessed at:

<https://www.liberty.edu/online/behavioral-sciences/masters/human-services/>

Learning Objectives:

Specific learning objectives of the MA in Human Services Counseling program include:

1. Demonstrate appropriate knowledge in all core curricular areas of human services in preparation for certification and employment.
2. Conduct research and generate reports appropriate to the discipline.
3. Integrate biblical principles with professional human services methods in a variety of contexts.
4. Identify and incorporate ethical and legal standards in the human services field.

Career Opportunities for Human Services Counseling Graduates:

- Behavioral Management Aide
- Career Counselor
- Case Manager
- Child Advocate
- Child Life Specialist
- Christian Counselor
- Community and Social Service Specialist
- Crisis Intervention Counselor
- Dietary Counseling
- Disaster Relief Counselor
- Agency Administrator
- Domestic Violence Counselor
- Family Services Specialist
- Human Services Coordinator
- Juvenile Court Counselor
- Juvenile Probation Officer
- Mental Health Specialist
- Rehabilitation Specialist
- Social Services Director
- Sports Counselor
- Substance Abuse Counselor
- Victim/Witness Advocate

Prerequisites

Applicants to the MA in Human Services program must have:

1. An earned baccalaureate degree or its equivalent from an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
2. An undergraduate cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 (on 4.0 scale). Applicants who do not meet the minimum GPA requirement may be admitted on Academic Probation status.

Application Requirements

Every application is reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and all applicants must submit the following documents and meet the minimum requirements for admission:

- Admission application
- Official bachelor's degree transcripts with a 2.0 GPA or higher
- [Self-certification form](#) (for students who are in the final term of their bachelor's degree)
- Current Liberty undergraduate students seeking preliminary acceptance into a graduate program must complete a [graduation application](#) through their ASIST account

All requirements and procedures stated in the Admissions and Academic Information sections of the Liberty University Catalog will apply unless stated to exclude the MAHS program.

Specific application requirements information may be accessed at:

<https://www.liberty.edu/residential/behavioral-sciences/masters/human-services-counseling/>

Notification of Admission to the program

Admission decisions normally are made within a few weeks following the receipt of all of the student's documentation. Official notification of admission, and of any conditions attached to that admission, is sent by letter to the applicant by the Office of Graduate Admissions. Correspondence or notification from other sources does not constitute official notice of admission. The term for which the applicant is admitted is stated in the official admission letter from the Office of Graduate Admissions.

Program Requirements

A student must maintain a minimum of a 2.5 GPA to remain in the program. While all course grades are averaged into the GPA, course credit toward degree completion is not granted for a grade of D or F. A student may petition the Registrar's Office for permission to retake a course in which he or she received a grade of C or below.

Transfer of Credit

Students may transfer up to fifteen (15) hours of credit towards the degree, leaving a minimum of 15 hours to be earned through LU. For a transferred course to replace a Liberty University course, the following requirements must be met:

1. The institution at which the course(s) were completed is a regionally or nationally accredited institution approved through the Department of Education.
2. The course(s) were taken in another master's program in Human Services or closely-related graduate field.

3. The course(s) were completed within the previous 8 years.
4. The student earned a grade of B or better in the course(s).
5. The course(s) overlap one of Liberty's courses by at least 80%.
6. The course credit must be at least 3 semester hours or five quarter hours.

Courses with a grade of "CR" or "P" will only be considered if the grade equals a B or higher. Courses from a completed bachelor's or master's degree are non-transferable. Credit will not be awarded for life experience or continuing education workshops.

It is the responsibility of each applicant to supply transcripts along with a request to have the credit applied to the degree program. Students may be requested to submit the course syllabus for any course work being considered for transfer along with a rationale of why the student believes the course meets the program's requirements. The office of transcript evaluations will process the information.

Students seeking to change degree programs, or obtain a second degree through Liberty, may do so. However, the number of credits allowed to be applied toward the second degree may not exceed the maximum amount of transfer credit allowed for that degree. In cases where two degrees share required courses in excess of the maximum amount of transfer credit allowed for the second degree, the student must take additional courses and use them as substitutions for the shared courses.

Programs of Study

Refer to p. 19 of this handbook to see the courses students should take and the order and times they should enroll in the courses. Students should understand that this curriculum guide is for planning purposes only and not a substitute for regular consultation with their Online Academic Advisor. This guide is subject to change. Use it for course planning and for discussions with your Online Academic Advisor each semester.

Special Student (Non-Degree) Status

Students who are not seeking degrees but who meet the necessary academic requirements for admission to the University may enroll in master's level courses as Special students. These students are limited to six (6) semester hours in their first enrollment period or semester, and may accumulate no more than nine (9) semester hours under this status.

It is always the responsibility of the student to be aware of University policies and regulations affecting his or her program.

Break in Enrollment

For Liberty Online students, students who discontinue course work for a fiscal year period (ends on the last day of June) will break enrollment. This one-year time period is measured from the date of the last course's original deadline date forward to the same date one year later. Students will be required to follow a reapplication process and will be held responsible for the requirements under the most current graduate catalog.

For example, if a student ends their last class on or before June 30, 2019 and he/she wants to start a class that begins on any date from July 1, 2020 - June 30th, 2021, then he/she will need to re-apply before they can begin classes.

If a student ends their last class on July 1, 2019 or afterwards, then he/she does not need to reapply for any classes they want to start between July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021.

Statute of Limitations

The time limit for completing the Master's degree from the enrollment date of the first course taken is seven (7) years. Coursework dating back prior to the seven years will not be counted toward degree completion. Any courses taken at Liberty, which are over seven years old will need to be repeated in order for a student to graduate with the Human Services degree.

Course Repeat Policy

In order to graduate from the Human Service program, a student must maintain an overall GPA of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale. A course grade of "D" or "F" cannot be used to fulfill the requirements of the program. A maximum of two courses with a grade of "C" can count toward graduation if the student maintains a GPA of 2.5. There is a maximum of TWO course repeats.

Interruption of Study

A grade of FN will be assigned if the student stops participating or attending in a class for a period of 21 consecutive days or longer, unless the student provides official notification of withdrawal.

If graduate study is interrupted by active military service or the equivalent, as much as two years of that time will not count toward the time limit for the degree. In such an event, an official letter from the appropriate agency should be sent to the Registrar's Office and MAHS Program Director to document the interruption.

A student in good academic standing may request two leaves of absence from graduate study for a definite, stated period of time (up to one-year) during which the student does not plan to make academic progress. To be eligible for a leave of absence, a student must not have received an extension of the time limit for the degree. Reasons for a leave of absence could include, but are not limited to, a medical or mental health problem, or a family crisis. If possible, in advance of the leave the student should submit a letter to the Registrar's Office and MAHS Program Director stating the reason for the leave and state the required time needed for the leave. If a medical or mental health problem is the reason, a letter documenting the condition must be sent from one of the treating professionals.

American Psychological Association Writing Format

The Department of Community Care and Counseling requires the APA writing style to be used in all submitted coursework. The most recent edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* is highly recommended for every student. It is imperative that all graduate students become familiar with and use this writing format.

Student Expectations

Professional Organizations

A significant arena in which human service workers can make an impact is within the field through involvement with professional organizations. Students are encouraged to join the American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC), Christian Association of Psychological Studies (CAPS), the American Counseling Association (ACA), and/or the National Organization for Human Services (NOHS). While the last two organizations hold beliefs incompatible with those of Liberty University and the Department of Community Care and Counseling, professionals with a well-grasped biblical worldview can be both salt and light in those arenas. Most professional organizations offer reduced membership rates to students as well as the following benefits: receipt of professional publications (journals and newsletters); reduced registration fees for professional meetings (seminars, conventions, workshops) that are sponsored by the particular organization; eligibility for member services (library resource use, legal defense funds and services, group liability insurance); involvement in activities and issues which are directly or indirectly pertinent to the profession (legislation and professional credentialing including certification); affiliation with other professionals having interests and areas of expertise similar to one's own; and in the case of a Christian organization, the opportunity to fellowship and worship together.

Academic Honesty

As a Christian institution, Liberty University holds its students to high standards of ethics. One significant area of integrity is in academic honesty. It is assumed that students will submit only their own work. Further, it is assumed that students will neither give nor receive assistance of any kind to another student(s) that is not specifically permitted on graded assignments or examination.

Academic honesty, according to Liberty University and the Graduate School Catalog, requires students to be "free from deception in both thought and action" (p. 32). Primarily, academic honesty at Liberty University means that all coursework students complete is entirely their own (except as dictated by specific assignment guidelines), both on examinations and in papers. Academically honest students in no way attempt to take credit for another's words, ideas, or research, and they represent both their own thoughts and those they cite with integrity, accuracy, and respect. Such students do not twist another's words, use another's research without proper citations, or steal information from other students' work. Committing such acts is known as cheating, falsification, and/or plagiarism.

According to the Academic Honesty policy outlined in the Graduate School Catalogue:

"Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, **plagiarism** (a form of intellectual theft), **cheating**, (a form of dishonesty in which a student attempts to give the appearance of a level of knowledge or skill that the student has not obtained), and **falsification** (a form of dishonesty in information used as authority)" (p. 32).

According to the Code of Conduct as outlined in the *Liberty Way*, cheating during testing occurs when a student (a) refers to information not specifically condoned by the instructor; (b) receives information from a fellow student; or (c) steals, buys, sells or transmits a copy of any examination.

Falsification is defined by the *Liberty Way* as the unauthorized signing of another person's name to an official form or document or modifying, copying, or producing a University document without proper authorization. The Graduate Catalog adds to this definition that falsification may also include “invent[ing] or distort[ing] the origin or content of information used as authority” (p. 32). Falsification includes misrepresenting a source’s ideas or arguments, falsely reporting research results, or the deliberate suppression or distortion of information sources.

Plagiarism is perhaps the most well-known violation of academic honesty. It is “a form of intellectual theft” and thus will be taken as seriously as theft of a material item would be (see Graduate Catalog, p. 32). The *Liberty Way* defines plagiarism as occurring when a student: (a) Omits quotation marks or other conventional markings around material quoted from any printed source; (b) paraphrases a specific passage from a specific source without properly referencing the source; or (c) replicates another student's work or parts thereof and submitting it as an original.

It is the professor’s duty to investigate each case as necessary and recommend the appropriate course of acting. Except in very rare cases, academic dishonesty is punishable by an “FD” in the course, which will be coded as resulting from academic dishonesty. For clear and convincing academic dishonesty the student may be dismissed from the program; however, if a case is deemed not to be clear and convincing, the professor and a Department of Community Care and Counseling administrative member will discuss and impose appropriate sanctions, including written reprimands, reduced grades, or additional work (Graduate Catalog, p. 31).

Academic Appeal Policy

To appeal a grade or a decision regarding academic honesty, follow the procedure outlined at the graduate school website:

<http://www.liberty.edu/academics/graduate/index.cfm?PID=19407#luo-gradeappeal>.

Faculty-Student Interaction

The faculty is responsible to interact with human services students in a teaching and advisory role. As such, faculty may provide students professional principles, guidance, and recommendations as it relates to the context of the teacher-student setting. The faculty are responsible to avoid dual relationships with students, such as entering a student-counselor or student-pastor relationship. Thus, the faculty DOES NOT provide personal counseling addressing student personal problems. If a faculty member perceives that a student is in need

of personal or professional counseling then that faculty member will recommend that the student pursue either pastoral or professional assistance from a pastor or counselor in their community.

In the event of a student's disclosure, either verbally or in writing, of either threat of serious or foreseeable harm to self or others, abuse or neglect of a minor, elderly, or disabled person, or current involvement in criminal activity, the faculty, staff, administrator will take immediate action. This action may include, but is not limited to, immediate notification of appropriate state law enforcement or social services personnel in their community, emergency contacts, and notification of the appropriate program chair or distance learning dean. The incident and action taken will become part of the student's permanent record.

Professional Development and Remediation

To successfully complete the Human Services program at Liberty University and be eligible for graduation, a student must be able demonstrate proficiency in four areas:

1. Scholastic competency as evaluated by maintaining an overall GPA of 2.5.
2. Emotional and mental stability and maturity in interactions with others, including the ability to maintain healthy boundaries, communicate appropriately, successfully manage personal anxiety or uncomfortable feelings, work collaboratively with others and resolve interpersonal conflict. This is evaluated throughout the program in all interactions with faculty, staff, administrators, adjuncts, and fellow students, and includes both verbal and written communications.
3. Adherence to the Liberty Graduate Student Code of Honor. This is evaluated throughout the program in all interactions with faculty, staff, administrators, adjuncts, and fellow students and includes both verbal and written communications.

The Human Services faculty will develop and evaluate students on the above areas of proficiency on an ongoing and consistent manner in all settings in which faculty and students interact. This interaction can include formal and informal settings such as online communication, advising, webexes, and personal conversations.

More specifically, it is the desire of the faculty to assist students in the development of personal characteristics that are conducive and vital to the identity and practice of Human Services work. Thus, students will develop and and be evaluated on the following characteristics:

1. *Responsibility* – Includes timeliness in turning work in, owning one's own behavior, feelings and actions; conscientiousness toward work and assignments.
2. *Self-Awareness* – Is aware and assumes responsibility for one's impact on others.
3. *Emotional Regulation* – Aware of one's own emotions and ability to express and manage one's own feelings and anxiety appropriately and effectively.
4. *Openness* – Willingness to receive and use feedback.

5. *Cooperativeness* – Able to work well with others; recognizes and seeks to directly address conflict with the other party(ies) involved.
6. *Integrity* – Adherence to the appropriate professional code of ethics and laws.
7. *Communication* – Honest and respectful oral and written communication with others.

If, during the course of a student's studies, a faculty, staff, or administrator believes a student is impaired or deficient in their behavior as outlined above, that person will begin **remediation** procedures aimed to provide the student with information and actions to correct the impairment/deficiency. **Remediation** may include such things as recommendations for personal counseling, review of the ethics code, completion of particular courses, etc. For more information on this procedure see the Graduate Student Affairs website at:

<http://www.liberty.edu/academics/graduate/index.cfm?PID=19155>.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment, like harassment on the basis of color, race, religion, or national origin, has long been recognized as a violation of Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. Such behavior does not befit a committed Christian. Accordingly, Liberty University strongly disapproves of sexual harassment and intimidation by or against its employees and students.

Personal Counseling

Students are strongly encouraged to seek group and individual counseling as a part of the educational experience. As Christians who are called to serve others with the training in Human Services, it is imperative that we deal with our own personal issues that may interfere with our ability to impact others in meaningful ways. Moreover, experience as a client will help the Human Services worker better understand the client's experience in counseling.

Correspondence

Students are expected to communicate in a professional manner at all times whenever emailing classmates, professors, or any employee of Liberty University. Because there is no accompanying tone of voice, facial expressions, or body language, email communication is more easily misinterpreted than face-to-face. Your emails should be courteous and well thought out to avoid "knee-jerk" responses that will be interpreted as "flaming" or sarcasm. Communicate complaints directly to the individual involved. Do not send a blanket email to everyone in the class or to administrative personnel until you have communicated your concerns directly to the person involved and allowed them time to respond. Do not post a message to the class on Canvas that is more appropriate to an individual. Avoid offensive language of any kind. We follow Jesus' plan as seen in Matthew 18:15-17.

General Information

Course Registration

All Liberty online students will need to contact their Online Academic Adviser who will be more than happy to assist you in course selection. Students paying by credit card can make payment by using their ASIST account. Students must register at least 60 days before the class begins. Full payment is due at the time of registration.

Course Delivery Format

The MA in Human Services Counseling program is designed to be done completely online, with no residential requirements.

The University has adopted *Canvas*®, an online software platform, as its primary delivery method. Students can access individual sessions, have interaction with other students taking the same course, utilize links to online resources, view supplemental streaming video clips, and receive direct feedback from their professors using this innovative means of delivery.

Grades are posted according to the end of 8-week term deadline dates issued by the Registrar's Office.

Instructor Assistantships

The Department of Community Care and Counseling has a limited number of Graduate Assistantships (GA) positions to award on an annual basis. These assistantships are intended to support the instructional and administrative needs of the graduate programs. Some of the responsibilities include assisting faculty and completing administrative duties associated with management of the department. Applicants for GA positions may be obtained from the Program Deans' Administrative Assistant in the School of Behavioral Sciences.

Computer Needs

Each student at Liberty University is expected to demonstrate computer literacy prior to admission to the program. Each course in the MAHS program requires the student to use computer programs, which function in the process of course completion. In order to successfully accomplish the requirements, students **must** have access to a computer that has the capacity to:

- Read and write in **Microsoft Office** ® software (Microsoft Office® is available to Liberty University students for a small charge through the Liberty University Helpdesk or Café).
- Access online sites including the Liberty University website.
- Send and receive email via Liberty Webmail or Microsoft Outlook.
 - *The student is **required** to use Webmail or Outlook in all correspondence with the University and with the faculty of their class.*

Upon admission each student is assigned a computer account and an email address on Liberty University's system. All correspondence from the campus, including the Department of Community Care and Counseling Office will be delivered via this email address.

At the completion of the MAHS program, students should:

1. Be able to use productivity software to develop group presentations, research documents, letters, and reports.
2. Be able to use such audiovisual equipment as video recorders, audio recorders, projection equipment, video conferencing equipment, and playback units.
3. Be able to use email.
4. Be able to help clients search for various types of Human Services-related information via the internet, including information about careers, employment opportunities, educational and training opportunities, financial assistance/scholarships, and social and personal information.
5. Be able to subscribe in, participate in, and sign off Human Services-related listservs.
6. Be able to access and use Human Services-related CD-ROM databases.
7. Be knowledgeable of the legal and ethical codes which relate to Human Services via the internet.

8. Be knowledgeable of the strengths and weaknesses of Human Services provided via the internet.
9. Be able to use the internet for finding and using continuing education opportunities in Human Services.
10. Be able to evaluate the quality of internet information.

Dress Code

Students are expected to comply with the *Liberty Way* when on campus or when using the Webex function for face-to-face meetings via the internet.

MAHS Course Information

Course Descriptions

Descriptions for courses comprising the *MA in Human Services Counseling* degree program can be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.liberty.edu/behavioral-sciences/community-care-counseling/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2018/12/HSCOCourseDescriptions.pdf>

Cognate or Specializations

Descriptions for courses comprising the cognates or specializations of the *MA in Human Services Counseling* degree program can be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.liberty.edu/behavioral-sciences/community-care-counseling/masters/human-services-counseling/>

Degree Completion Plans

Degree Completion Plans for the *MA in Human Services Counseling* degree program can be accessed at the following link:

<http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=41931>

Recommended Course Sequence in 8-week terms:

First Semester <i>(1st 8-weeks)</i>		Second Semester <i>(3rd 8-weeks)</i>	
HSCO 500*	3	HSCO 506	3
HSCO 502	3	HSCO 509	3
<i>(2nd 8-weeks)</i>		<i>(4th 8-weeks)</i>	
HSCO 508	3	HSCO 511	3
Cognate Course	3	Cognate Course	3
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	12		12
 Third Semester <i>(5th 8-weeks)</i>			
Cognate Course	3		
Cognate Course	3		
	<hr/>		
	6		

* HSCO 500 is a required first-entry course for all students in this degree.

