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| **GRADUATE STUDENT PROGRAM HANDBOOK**Acadia University’s Master of Education Counselling Program**Degree Options:**Course RouteThesis RouteResearch Project Route**Streams:**School StreamAgency Stream**Study Terms:**Full-Time – 18 monthsPart-Time – 36 months |  |

The *Council* *on* *Accreditation* *of* *Counsellor* *Education* *Programs* (CACEP)
accredits the Master of Education Counselling Program at Acadia University.
All courses offered in the Counselling Program are designed to meet the core competency requirements established by CACEP. For a complete description of CACEP program standards and competencies, go to <http://www.ccpa-accp.ca/accreditation/>

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# Introduction

This Program Handbook provides a brief overview of the current context of professional counselling in Canada and an awareness of the focus and structure of the Master of Education Counselling Program at Acadia University.

# Program Background

The Master of Education Counselling Program is the only graduate counselling program in Nova Scotia. During the rationalization of education in the 1990s in Nova Scotia, Acadia University was mandated to provide counsellor education within the province. The M.Ed. Counselling Program is a part of both the School of Education and Graduate Studies at Acadia University. The Counselling Program strives for academic excellence and the rigorous development of essential interpersonal and intrapersonal skills needed to become a competent counsellor. The faculty in the program values wellness, integrity, and community and is dedicated to supporting the growth and development of graduates who are ethically responsible counsellors.

# Mission Statement

The mission statement of the M.Ed. Counselling Program at Acadia University was collaboratively created by the counselling faculty. It states:

*The Counselling Program at Acadia University is dedicated to the preparation of leaders of the counselling profession through the pursuit of disciplined inquiry, the understanding of and respect for human diversity, and the development, use, and evaluation of effective counselling practices. Counselling is a helping profession devoted to the prevention, remediation, and amelioration of emotional, cognitive, behavioural, and interpersonal difficulties and the enhancement of human potential and quality of life. These aims are sought by integrating theory and practice, and with the awareness and skills to work with diverse populations from individual, social, and organizational perspectives.* *Acadia University’s Master of Education Counselling Program provides an accredited and quality-based foundational program preparing professionals for a variety of work settings.*

The Counselling Program supports the mission of Acadia University, which is to provide “an unparalleled learning experience through a liberal education model based on personalized attention, expanding the boundaries of knowledge, experiential learning, community engagement, environmental stewardship and global citizenship, and engaged research and innovation delivered by a passionate, dedicated, and nurturing community within a beautiful and historic campus environment.”

The faculty associated with the Counselling Program provides a rigorous academic experience within a supportive environment, which contributes to the personal, educational, and professional development of students from diverse backgrounds who will graduate:

* As mature counsellors with reasonable awareness of themselves and their impact on others,
* As practitioners who are knowledgeable about the counselling profession and skilled to effectively and ethically practice in school and community/agency settings, and
* With a commitment to the scholarly and professional counselling community and the people to whom they provide service and with whom they consult.

# Orientation of the Program

The goal of the M.Ed. Counselling Program is to educate students about the orientation and priorities of counsellor education, namely the personal, the academic, and the professional.

## The Personal (Who We Are)

Counselling involves the identity of the counsellor, the identity of the client, and the process between them. Acadia University’s Counselling Program recognizes the value of self-knowledge and self-awareness. The identity, authenticity, and integrity of the person of the counsellor are important dimensions in the practice of counselling and, therefore, must receive emphasis in a counsellor education program. On a regular basis, students are encouraged to address important philosophical questions about who they are and what motivates their lives. Personal reflection can be done through journaling, shared discussion groups, class check-ins, and professional counselling or accompaniment.

## The Academic (What We Need to Know and Why)

Counsellors also need academic knowledge about the theoretical foundations of counselling and how these theories view the nature of people and their psychological dynamics. They must also be familiar with the contemporary issues and challenges facing counselling practitioners and understand how professional practice is informed by research. An important part of academic knowledge is understanding human development and the personal and career issues facing people at various life stages.

## The Professional (How We Practice)

The professional dimension encompasses the practical aspects of counselling, including counselling skills and interventions and their application in a supervised setting. The professional dimension also includes the knowledge of legal and ethical issues related to counselling and involvement in various professional associations. A professional counsellor values continual professional development to maintain high standards of practice.

# Program Objectives

The objectives of Acadia University’s Counselling Program correspond to its mission statement:

* To integrate the three dimensions of counselling so that students will develop an attitude toward learning that involves an appreciation for the personal, academic, and professional dimensions of counselling,
* Understand and respond appropriately to the counselling needs of others, and
* Appreciate the need for and commitment to ongoing professional development.

## Personal

We commit to the following:

* Maintaining a relatively small, high-quality program that will function to support a community of learners in a cohort environment with collegial relationships between faculty and students,
* Promoting the development of our graduate students intellectually, emotionally, and professionally,
* Maintaining a supportive environment that promotes self-examination and openness to the perspectives of others, with the expectation that each student will actively engage in the process of personal and professional growth, and
* Appreciating and celebrating the diversity of our students and the rich history of experiences they bring to our program.

## Academic

We commit to the following:

* Educating students to be highly skilled and competent counsellors who will work effectively with diverse populations,
* Ensuring high quality and up-to-date curricular experiences and competencies in all twelve core areas of the CACEP standards: Counselling as a Profession; Ethical and Legal Issues in Counselling; Theories and Process in Counselling, Collaboration, and Consultation; Group Counselling; Human Development and Learning; Diversity and Social Justice; Responding to the TRC’s Calls to Action; Career and Lifespan Development; Assessment Processes; Research Methods; Program Development and Evaluation; and Reflective Practice,
* Supporting the teaching of an array of theoretical approaches so that students begin to develop their personal models of counselling and consultation,
* Encouraging inquisitiveness and curiosity in students so they will explore and evaluate the complexity of the discipline of counselling, remain open to evolving perspectives, and attempt to understand and appreciate the perspectives of others,
* Promoting an understanding and practice of ethical and legal issues in counselling, and
* Promoting the value of continuing to seek opportunities for personal and professional growth.

## Professional

We commit to the following:

* Graduating professional counsellors who believe in the value of all persons and who are committed to advocating for others when injustices prevail,
* Teaching the importance of advocacy and social responsibility,
* Critical thinking and examining counselling and mental wellness through a multicultural and culturally responsive lens
* Encouraging counselling students to become actively involved in professional organizations such as the national counselling association - Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA), CCPA Chapters – CCPA Nova Scotia Chapter and the School Counsellors Chapter, Nova Scotia School Counsellors Association (NSSCA), and the provincial regulatory body - Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists (NSCCT), and
* Faculty acting as models of leadership in local, provincial/territorial, national, and international professional associations, as well as in school and community/agency organizations.

# Professional Conduct

Graduate counselling students are required to balance two roles simultaneously. The first is that of a learner in a rigorous graduate degree program. The second is that of a pre-service counsellor or counsellor-in-training. Students can find it difficult to balance and integrate both roles during the program. This section, therefore, provides an overview of the professional expectations in the program and the code of conduct, which is meant to clarify and support students in successfully understanding and navigating these roles.

First and foremost, as students, you can expect to be treated with respect and dignity as responsible and experienced adult learners. Your faculty will be transparent about the expectations for classwork and learning tasks. Assignments and coursework are expected to be completed within the given timeframe and according to the academic standards required by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. At the same time, because this is a professional program, students are expected to engage with the course material, instructors, staff, and colleagues in a manner consistent with the expectations of a professional counsellor in the field.

This means that in addition to being a student, you are expected to fulfill the same responsibilities as a professional counsellor, including, but not limited to, the following:

* Attending all classes and seminars. Attendance is a requirement of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and the School of Education and is essential for effective learning in the M.Ed. Counselling Program. Usually, missing more than six hours of any class or seminar will result in withdrawal of the student, unless there are extenuating circumstances that are granted an accommodation from the Program. The matter will be directed to the Program Coordinator and, when appropriate, the Director of the School of Education for determination. If you miss a class or seminar due to illness or a family emergency, your instructor should be notified as soon as possible. Also, you should contact the instructor before the next class or seminar to discuss any assignment work to be completed in place of the missed class time. It is your responsibility to learn from your cohort members what information was covered during your absence and to come fully prepared for the next class or lab.
* Taking responsibility for your time management and seeking assistance from such places as counselling services if you are falling behind. Graduate school can be very intensive as you balance your personal and professional commitments, requiring sustained attention to scheduling and time management. Only written requests for extensions well in advance of deadlines will be considered for accommodation.
* Fulfilling personal commitments as practicum students during both practicums.
* Avoiding gossip, breaches of confidentiality or trust, addressing interpersonal issues with the individual concerned and not with a third party, and encouraging colleagues to follow this principle if you are the third party.
* Practicing cultural humility and curiosity when interacting with colleagues in the cohort with different beliefs, opinions, and identities.
* Seeking consultation from a faculty supervisor if there is a lack of clarity regarding decisions concerning any of the above.

Please be assured that the faculty assumes that individuals adhere to these principles in their own lives prior to entering the counselling program and that this is simply a reminder of some of the values we hold as professional counsellors.

Students may be required to withdraw from their program when ethical, medical, or other reasons interfere with satisfactory professional practice.

It is unethical for students to engage in **any unsupervised private** **practice** during their enrollment in the program. Inquiries about this standard may be directed to the Program Coordinator.

Students can expect that all counselling faculty will engage with them in a manner consistent with the above professional conduct guidelines. If students have concerns about faculty behaviour, expectations, evaluation, or any other matter, they are encouraged to first speak to the faculty member if they feel able to do so. Students can ask for support from the Program Coordinator or other full-time faculty to assist them in initiating a conversation with the faculty of concern so that issues can be resolved professionally and in a timely manner. Otherwise, any student can bring faculty-related concerns directly to the Director of the School of Education.

## M.Ed. Counselling Code of Conduct is as follows:

The M.Ed. Counselling Program faculty are committed to creating an enriching and collaborative environment that is equitable, brave, inclusive, and respectful so all members of the professional learning community, including pre-service counsellors, counsellor supervisors, counsellor educators, and community members, can work together with a shared commitment to the growth of pre-service counselling practitioners. This commitment applies to all student interactions with any member of the M.Ed. Counselling Program, including fellow learners, community partners, and clients. This Code of Conduct extends outside of the classroom and practicum sites to any activities that may impact the learning environment in the Counselling Program. The School of Education’s faculty, staff, and the greater Acadia University community do not tolerate harassment, bullying, and discrimination. Violations of this Code of Conduct or the Canadian Counselling & Psychotherapy Association’s Professional Code of Conduct may result in individuals being asked to leave a class, a practicum placement, or the program, depending on the severity and impact of the incident(s). When student violations are deemed serious, the student’s actions will be recommended for review by the School of Education’s Professional Concerns Committee. Students should understand that serious violations may result in removal from the program.

# Ethical Standards for Counselling Graduate Students

The expectations for ethical conduct, as expressed in the CCPA Code of Ethics, are based on the following fundamental principles:

* Beneficence - being proactive in promoting the best interests of clients.
* Fidelity - honouring commitments to clients and maintaining integrity in counselling relationships.
* Nonmaleficence - refraining from actions that risk harm and not willfully harming clients.
* Autonomy - respecting the rights of clients to agency and self-determination.
* Justice - respecting the dignity of all persons and honouring their rights to just treatment.
* Societal Interest - upholding responsibility to act in the best interest of society.

Students are expected to adhere to the CCPA Code of Ethics, not only with clients but also with instructors, colleagues, and staff. Additionally, students are encouraged to become student members of the CCPA. Please refer to the CCPA website for the *Code of Ethics* and *Standards of Practice*.

# Confidentiality and Progression in the Program

The issue of confidentiality in the program can be complex as a result of students’ multiple roles. It is important to understand that matters relating to students’ successful completion of the counselling program are of the utmost importance to our faculty. Our desire is to ensure that students receive support from faculty in their education and training. Part of our ability to support students requires discussing student progress or concerns that may impact successful progression in the program with other faculty and supervisors. If, as a student, you raise an issue with your supervisor or instructor, and they feel this is significant enough to impact your progress in any way, they may choose to discuss this matter, on a need-to-know basis, with counselling faculty and/or the Program Coordinator.

Becoming a counsellor is a professional and personal journey which requires vulnerability and critical self-exploration. As a result, students in this program may learn personal information about their colleagues that is shared in the classroom, during small group assignments, lab activities, and mock sessions. Students are expected to maintain the confidentiality of their cohort colleagues to the same standard as they would maintain the confidentiality of a client.

Our program relies on the expertise of many part-time faculty who bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to our courses and student learning. Given that part-time faculty are not as involved in the daily running of the program, we have systems in place for faculty to evaluate student progress each term and provide feedback to the full-time faculty to ensure students receive the support they need for success. At the conclusion of each term, all faculty will complete a brief evaluation of the students they taught, identifying if they are progressing as expected, exceeding expectations, or not meeting expectations. If students receive a ranking indicating they are not meeting expectations, a full-time faculty member or the Program Coordinator will often check in with the student to offer support and explore barriers that may be interfering with the student’s success.

# Practice Sessions/Mock Clients

Several courses in the M.Ed. Counselling Program will require students to try on the roles of counsellor, client, and observer. In the beginning stages of the program, this will mostly be with cohort members as new skills, interventions, and processes are tried on for the first time. These opportunities to practice aspects of the counselling process are essential and mandatory; however, self-disclosure and the content of self-disclosure are voluntary and self-directed. Students reserve full autonomy to decide what, if any, personal information they disclose and what content they bring forward in class and practice sessions. It is helpful for students in advance of the program and courses requiring practice sessions to give some thought to areas of their life that would be appropriate for this type of experiential learning and those that would not be appropriate. The program does not stipulate what areas can and cannot be addressed in practice sessions. Instead, students are deemed experts in their own lives and capable of making this determination themselves.

There will also be courses requiring practice sessions that involve non-cohort members. During these courses, participants from outside the program are asked to support student learning through practice sessions. At these times, informed consent processes must be followed, as outlined by the course instructors. During practice sessions, excluding practicum, mock clients **must** be the age of majority, which in Nova Scotia is 19 years of age. No minor, which is anyone under the age of 19, can be a participant in mock counselling sessions. This does not include practicum, where sessions are not practice sessions with mock clients; they are real sessions with real clients. Specific protocols for working with minors in practicum are covered in the Practicum Handbook.

# Focus and Structure of Acadia University’s M.Ed. Counselling Program

The M.Ed. Counselling Program at Acadia University is foundational in nature and offers two counselling streams: School Counselling and Agency Counselling. The program introduces students to the counselling profession, exploring the beliefs, attitudes, values, knowledge, and skills that underlie the competencies required of effective counsellors across settings, populations, and referral issues. The didactic and experiential components of each of the streams are designed to prepare students to undertake professional counselling positions in a variety of settings, including university and college counselling centres, school systems (for those with teaching certificates), career and transition services, human resource departments, employee assistance programs, independent practice, community mental health, hospitals, rehabilitation centres, health services, hospices and palliative care, women’s centres, addiction services, pastoral care, correctional services, and other agencies and organisations that assist people in addressing their goals intrapersonally, interpersonally, educationally, and vocationally. Additionally, depending on professional interests, students may focus their coursework assignments, theses and research projects, and practicums on programs and services for one or more populations across the lifespan, such as children, youth, young adults, adults in middle life, and older adults.

The Counselling Program at Acadia University leads to a Master of Education degree. The M.Ed. Counselling degree requires **48 credit hours** (**51** for those completing a **thesis**). Students must complete all core courses and the required courses for either the School Counselling or Agency Counselling stream. With prior approval from the Director of the School of Education, students may select program-related courses from other graduate programs within the School of Education, other Acadia University departments/schools, or other universities, as long as the content of these courses is counselling in focus. Typically, core counselling courses offered at other institutions that are not CACEP-accredited will not be approved for transfer due to the specific accreditation requirements of course outcomes.

The M.Ed. Counselling Program is offered in two cohort formats: full-time and part-time. Both cohorts commence the first week of July. The **full-time** cohort is designed to be completed in **18 months** if students pursue the coursework-only route. A longer timeline will apply if students engage in a research project or thesis. Typically, full-time cohort students engage in **Practicum I** from **March through June** in year one and **Practicum II** from **September to December** in year two. **Part-time** students engage in **Practicum I** from **September through December** in year twoand **Practicum II** from **January to April** in year three**.**

During Practicum I, students are in placement for 6 hours a week, typically for one day or two half days, and receive high levels of supervision. Successful completion of Practicum I is required before students are permitted to move into Practicum II. During Practicum II, students are in practicum five days a week, eight hours a day, and provide full-time counselling services unless a part-time placement has been requested. All practicum hours must be conducted at the practicum site, unless accommodations have been made for some indirect hours to occur off-site in exceptional circumstances. **No direct client contact hours can be completed off-site.** Practicum details are further discussed in Acadia University’s M.Ed. Counselling Practicum Handbook.

In addition to selecting the School Counselling or Agency Counselling stream, students in the M.Ed. Counselling Program have three options with respect to the structure of their program. All three program routes are eligible for registration with the provincial counselling regulatory body (NSCCT) and certification with the national counselling association (CCPA). Those considering subsequent doctoral-level study will need to ascertain whether a research project or thesis will be required for admission. These three options are:

* **Course-Only Route** requires 42 credit hours of required core and stream-specific courses, and 6 credit hours of additional courses, resulting in **48 credit hours**.
* **Research Project Route** requires 42 credit hours of required core and stream-specific coursework, 3 credit hours of EDUC 5713 (Project in Education), and 3 credit hours of additional coursework, resulting in **48 credit hours**.
* **Thesis Route** requires 42 credit hours of required core and stream-specific courses, 3 credit hours of EDUC 5113 (Qualitative Research in Education), and 6 credit hours of EDUC 5966 (Graduate Thesis), resulting in **51 credit hours**.

# Program Requirements and Course Descriptions

## Core Course Requirements for All Students (36h)

EDUC 50D3 ETHICS IN COUNSELLING PRACTICE

This course provides a critical analysis of professional, ethical, legal, and diversity issues related to practice, teaching, supervision, and research in counselling. Students are encouraged to explore personal beliefs and values, review ethics and legal documents, consider procedures for processing ethical inquiries and complaints, and engage in the application of ethical decision-making processes.

EDUC 50F3 COUNSELLING PRE-PRACTICUM

The 40-hour pre-practicum lab experience moves students toward the practice of integrating their beginning skills and strategies into an intentional counselling process in a simulated environment. While under supervision, students are encouraged to enhance self-awareness, further develop counselling competencies, analyse their emerging counselling theoretical orientation, and be attuned to ethical, legal, and culturally responsive practices. *Prerequisite or concurrent: EDUC 5033 and EDUC 5133*

EDUC 50N3 COUNSELLING PRACTICUM II & GROUP SUPERVISION
Students participate in a minimum 400-hour supervised counselling internship that is completed on a full-time or part-time basis. During the internship, students complete a minimum of 200 hours of direct client service, 40 of which must be group work. The practicum is accompanied by a 36-hour group supervision class to support practicum interns’ professional growth and development during the practicum period. *Prerequisite(s): EDUC 50F3, EDUC 50D3, EDUC 5033, EDUC 5133, EDUC 5623, and EDUC 50P3.*

EDUC 50P3 COUNSELLING PRACTICUM I & GROUP SUPERVISIONStudents participate in a minimum 100-hour initial supervision counselling practicum that necessitates one day per week availability for a 16-week placement necessary to meet initial practicum requirements. During this practicum, students complete a minimum of 50 hours of direct service with clients, 10 hours of which must be group work. The practicum is accompanied by a 36-hour group supervision class to support practicum students’ professional growth and development during the practicum period. *Prerequisite(s): EDUC 50F3, EDUC 50D3, EDUC 5033, EDUC 5133, and EDUC 5623.*

EDUC 50J3 aSSESSMENT IN COUNSELLING

In this course, students become familiar with general and formal assessment practices and their uses to inform intervention. Students obtain experience using selected standardized assessment instruments frequently employed in the exploration of cognitive, academic, emotional, social, and behavioural functioning. Development of a critical perspective toward ethical and diversity considerations, conceptualization, purposes, and methods of assessment is promoted.

EDUC 50E3 COUNSELLING ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

This course examines the application of theories of growth, learning, and identity formation in working with individuals, families, and groups across the lifespan. Students will learn about counselling, change strategies and consultative processes, and the ethical, equity, legal, and diversity considerations relevant to each life stage. The significant transition points encountered in life will be explored with respect to changes, challenges, and disruptions, as well as the role of counselling in supporting clients’ emotional health and wellbeing.

EDUC 5033 COUNSELLING THEORIES

This course is an introduction to the field of counselling. The philosophical foundations and historical bases of the counselling profession are considered from a critical perspective, along with current issues and future trends. A significant portion of the course is devoted to studying the major theories of counselling, both historical and current. *Prerequisite: Admission to the M.Ed. Counselling Program*

EDUC 5133 COUNSELLING SKILLS

This course focuses on evidence-based salient conditions, skills, and processes associated with effective counsellor-client relationships and positive client growth. Through participation in lectures, discussions, and structured exercises, including role-playing and video-recorded simulated counselling sessions, students integrate multiple skills into the beginnings of a therapeutic process. *Prerequisite or concurrent: EDUC 5033*

EDUC 5343 COUNSELLING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE & CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICES

In this course, students explore social justice, equity, and cultural responsiveness theories in counselling. Students will be provided opportunities for self-reflection on their social positioning and biases and how these impact their approach to counselling. A priority of this course is to bring forward first voice of groups marginalized by traditional counselling practices and raise students’ consciousness.

EDUC 5353 CRISIS AND TRAUMA COUNSELLING

This course provides students with research and theory related to crisis and trauma counselling, along with trauma-informed interventions to support individuals impacted by trauma or those experiencing situational or transitional crises. Topics of this course are approached through an ecological perspective, and crisis and trauma are explored through consideration of interactions with environmental, developmental, and cultural factors.

EDUC 5513 RESEARCH DESIGN IN EDUCATION

This course introduces students to multiple paradigms and approaches to research design. Emphasis is placed on participants reading, understanding, critically engaging with research literature, and developing a grounding in ethical best practices for research with human subjects. Moreover, the course focuses on applying the methodologies used to design, analyse and interpret educational research.

EDUC 5543 THEORIES OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

This course examines theories of vocational development and choice, meanings attached to work and leisure, and uses of occupational and educational information. Approaches for assisting individuals in exploration and decision-making related to work in the context of lifespan issues are actively explored. Consideration is given to issues related to equity and diversity as they relate to work-life. *Prerequisites: EDUC 50J3*

EDUC 5623 GROUP COUNSELLING: THEORY AND PRACTICE

This course provides a conceptual and experiential introduction to group counselling theory, models, skills, strategies, and techniques. It affords the opportunity for the acquisition and application of self-awareness, knowledge, and competencies related to group counselling and leadership. Students explore group development, process, and dynamics; therapeutic factors; facilitator and member roles; ethical and legal considerations; and culturally responsive group practices. *Prerequisites: EDUC 5033 and 5133*

**Additional Required Course for the School Counselling Stream (3h)**

EDUC 50C3 SCHOOL COUNSELLING PROGRAMS

This course examines the roles and functions of school counsellors within a Canadian context in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of programs aligned with various models of school counselling. Relevant ethical, legal, and diversity issues are considered when providing counselling, consultation, and coordinating services in the school setting.

*Prerequisites: EDUC 5033 and EDUC 5133*

**Additional Required Course for the Agency Counselling Stream (3h)**

EDUC 50K3 CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELLING

This course provides a foundation for working with clients who are living with a mental illness. Students will become familiar with the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition – Text Revision, and become conversant with evidence-supported and emerging approaches to prevention and intervention. The intent of the course is to establish a critical, conceptual, and procedural framework across the mental health continuum

*Prerequisites: EDUC 5033 and EDUC 5133*

**Additional Course Options for Both Counselling Streams**

EDUC 5553 TOPICS IN COUNSELLING: ADVANCED COUNSELLING SKILLS **(Recommended)**

This course builds upon an existing theoretical and skill foundation via conceptual and experiential exploration of counselling strategies and techniques. Students will be able to articulate a theoretical rationale for the selected strategies and techniques and will hone competency in their implementation. *Prerequisites: EDUC 5033 and 5133*

EDUC 5233 COUNSELLING COUPLES AND FAMILIES

This is an introductory course in counselling families and systemic approaches. In addition to examining the philosophical and historical underpinnings of family therapy, the course explores systemic theories and family therapy research. Students will have opportunities to consider the practical application of those theories to working with parents/guardians and families in school and agency settings. *Prerequisites: EDUC 5033*

EDUC 5553 TOPICS IN COUNSELLING

Each year, different sections of this course are offered to address specialized areas important to counsellors, such as addictions, play therapy, sexual diversity, queer affirming counselling, spirituality, trauma-informed practice, Afrocentric perspectives in counselling, and counselling in Indigenous communities. Each course covers key concepts, frameworks for practice, current research, ethical principles, and the application of diversity-sensitive practices.

EDUC 5563 CAREER COUNSELLING

This course is for students who wish to expand their career counselling competencies. It includes a major practical component and will cover such topics as career education and exploration, planning and decision-making, and incorporation of computer-based programs. Students are introduced to selected interest and other preference assessment tools. Equity and diversity are taken up as central concerns in career counselling.

EDUC 5143 EDUCATIONAL EXPLORATIONS

This course provides an opportunity to explore various educational issues through participation in formats such as institutes, workshops, and mini-courses. Evidence of 3h equivalency (120 hours of approved voluntary professional development activities), program relevance, and appropriate academic standards is to be submitted for prior approval to the Graduate Coordinator. Evaluation is on a pass/fail basis. This course is only available to students enrolled in the M.Ed. Counselling Program.

EDUC 5153 READINGS

This course allows students to investigate an area of reading interest as an independent study with a faculty member. **This course is only accessible to enrolled M.Ed. students who have completed 9 credit hours in their M.Ed. program**. The course content and assessment scheme are negotiated between the student and the participating faculty member, with final approval given by the Graduate Coordinator. The range of studies and course outputs is widely flexible, with the caveat that a seminal reading list forms the foundation of the course. The form below is intended to be a template only, which can be shaped to address the desired outcomes of the course, with the expectation that there will be a rigorous review of the relevant literature and a significant evaluation component that addresses the student’s engagement with the topic.

***Stepwise Process:***

* Read about faculty interests and areas at <https://education.acadiau.ca/faculty-staff.html>
* Approach an Acadia faculty member or adjunct faculty about their availability,
* Download the course proposal form ([**Word.doc**](https://education.acadiau.ca/files/sites/education/resources/DocForms/READINGS%205153%20COURSE%20CONTRACT-2021.doc)),
* In a meeting with the instructor, negotiate the contents, deliverables, and evaluation of the course,
* Submit the signed form to the Graduate Coordinator (graded@acadiau.ca), and
* Await approval to proceed.

EDUC 5053 TOPICS IN EDUCATION

This course is designed to allow students to engage in the study of special topics that are of emerging interest in their core area. **This course is only accessible to enrolled M.Ed. students who have completed 9 credit hours in their M.Ed. program**. The course content and assessment scheme are negotiated between the student and the participating faculty member, with final approval given by the Graduate Coordinator. The range of studies and course outputs is widely flexible. ***This course differs from the Readings course in that there are typically tangible and practical outcomes that go beyond reading the literature***. The form below is intended to be a template only, which can be shaped to address the desired outcomes of the course.

***Stepwise Process:***

* Read about faculty interests and areas at: [https://education.acadiau.ca/faculty-staff.htmlhttps://education.acadiau.ca/faculty-staff.html](https://education.acadiau.ca/faculty-staff.html),
* Approach an Acadia faculty member or adjunct faculty about their availability,
* Download the course proposal form ([Topics contract 2021.doc](https://education.acadiau.ca/files/sites/education/resources/DocForms/Topics%20-5053-%20CONTRACT-2021.doc)),
* In a meeting with the instructor, negotiate the contents, deliverables, and evaluation of the course,
* Submit the signed form to the Graduate Coordinator (graded@acadiau.ca), and
* Await approval to proceed.

**Additional Requirements for Research Project Students (3h)**

EDUC 5713 PROJECT IN EDUCATION

The focus of the project is on practical applications grounded in scholarly work. The project should be a substantial piece of work with a written component of approximately 30 pages at the discretion of the supervisor. Projects might include, but are not limited to, the development of software or artistic presentation, the creation of a professional development program, or the evaluation of a counselling program.

**Additional Requirements for Thesis Students (9h)**

EDUC 5966 GRADUATE THESIS

*Prerequisites: EDUC 5513*

**and**

EDUC 5113 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

This course examines the traditions and paradigms of interpretive research in educational contexts. Practical, ethical, and theoretical issues are shared through class readings, discussion, and practical application. Opportunities are provided for students to learn and practice a variety of interpretive research methods and strategies. Students actively engage in analyzing data from a variety of interpretive perspectives. The intended outcome of the course is to provide students with skills and understandings in a wide range of interpretive research approaches that can be put into practice in classrooms and other research settings.

*Prerequisites: EDUC 5513*

**or**

EDUC 5523 EDUCATIONAL STATISTICS

This course provides a background for the educator who must use statistics in research, evaluation, and planning. The fundamental statistical tools are reviewed, and particular statistical methods applicable to educational problems are introduced in this course. While the student uses computers to calculate and manage the data, an emphasis is placed on the interpretation of statistical results. The following topics are part of this course: linear regression and correlation, multiple regression analysis, analysis of variance, and non-parametric statistics.

# Program Completion

The M.Ed. Counselling Program follows a cohort model. This means that students enter the program as a group of up to twenty learners. Generally, the cohort moves through the program and their coursework together. There are many advantages to a cohort model, including cohesiveness, strengthened relationships that allow for necessary personal and professional growth, and investment in the learning of colleagues. There are times when extenuating circumstances and life events interfere with students’ movement through the program with their cohort and in the sequencing of courses set out for them at the outset. Students should notify the Program Coordinator at their earliest convenience when they identify the need to fall out of sequence for their courses and program. In these instances, the Program Coordinator will work with the student to support a re-sequencing of coursework that maintains course enrollment limits and prerequisites. However, students who fall out of sequence with their coursework should expect to extend their program beyond the originally planned duration. Students have eight years to complete all coursework from the time of entering the program. After eight years, students will be required to re-apply to the program and re-take their courses.

# Financial Support

The M.Ed. Counselling Program does not offer program-specific scholarships or financial assistance. A limited number of School of Education ***research assistantships*** are available for application during the fall and winter terms. This competitive process requires that both a School of Education faculty member and a ***full-time*** graduate student submit a joint application that demonstrates the way in which the work supports faculty research development while serving as a substantive research experience for the student. A committee consisting of the Director of the School of Education, the Graduate Coordinator, and a third faculty representative will review the completed applications and award assistantships in the range of $1500 to $4500 as the funding pool provides. If a student is interested in exploring a research assistantship, they should speak to a full-time faculty member or the Program Coordinator.

# Individual Counselling

Getting through university can pose difficult challenges. Many students experience stress due to the adjustments required by their studies and the multiple roles in their lives. Common issues that students identify are feeling worried, anxious, or depressed, having relationship problems, or experiencing underachievement in their studies. Counselling is available for supportive or problem-solving assistance for personal, social, academic, and career concerns. Counsellors help explore these issues and assist students in working toward achieving the goals they have set for themselves in a private and relaxed atmosphere. Most students can benefit from seeing a counsellor at some point in their university experience. For those M.Ed. Counselling students who hope to complete a practicum at the Counselling Centre, they cannot access counselling from the Centre to avoid overlapping relationships of client and colleague. In these situations, students are encouraged to seek out counselling support from alternative community resources.

Appointments for individual counselling sessions may be made in person, by phone (585-1246), or by email at counselling@acadiau.ca. Confidentiality is maintained. With the exception of a small fee for interest and personality testing or registration for special workshops, the services of the Acadia Counselling Centre are free to students enrolled at Acadia University.

# National and Provincial Counselling Organizational Framework

The Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) is the national association for professional counsellors. It has approximately 6,200 members nationwide. Through the arm’s length *Council on Accreditation of Counselling Education Programs (CACEP*), graduate counselling programs that meet stringent educational programming criteria may seek national accreditation status. Additionally, members of the CCPA may seek the Canadian Certified Counsellor (CCC) designation, which readily identifies them across the country as well-qualified professional counsellors. Students graduating from Acadia University’s M.Ed. Counselling Program are fast-tracked for certification with CCPA due to the program’s CACEP-accredited status. Student membership in CCPA is encouraged, and this membership affords numerous professional development opportunities, including conferences, workshops, and webinars. In addition, student members have access to CCPA Regional and Interest Group Chapters, graduate student representative programs, graduate student awards, CCPA publications, including *Cognica* and the *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, listserv bulletins, CCPA forum, and the CCPA blog “Counselling Connect.”

Formerly the Nova Scotia Association of Counselling Therapists (NSACT), the Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists (NSCCT) saw its genesis in Bill 201, The Counselling Therapists Act. The Act passed its third reading on November 24, 2008, and was proclaimed on October 11, 2011, officially establishing the NSCCT as a regulatory body overseeing the practice of professional counsellors in Nova Scotia. Following a period of post-graduate supervised practice, counsellors will be able to transition from the designation of Registered Counselling Therapist-Candidate (RCT-C) to Registered Counselling Therapist (RCT), affirming that they have demonstrated preparedness to practice independently.

CCPA and the former NSACT traditionally enjoyed a collaborative and mutually supportive relationship. Consequently, with the inauguration of the provincial regulatory body (NSCCT), the CCPA launched a provincial chapter (CCPA-NS) to complement NSCCT’s endeavours. While NSCCT focuses on regulatory oversight of ethical and competent counsellor practices, CCPA-NS devotes its energies to professional advocacy, intra- and interdisciplinary networking, and the continued professional development of counsellors.

Acadia University’s M.Ed. Counselling students and graduates are strongly encouraged to consider professional association membership at the national and provincial levels. A summary of national and provincial professional associations follows:

## National

Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) [www.ccpa-accp.ca](http://www.ccpa-accp.ca)

* National role in advocacy, networking, professional development, and ethics oversight
* Accredits counselling programs through CACEP
* Offers Canadian Certified Counsellor (CCC) designation to qualified counsellors
* Offers Canadian Certified Supervisor (CCS) designation to qualified clinical supervisors (and an online graduate-level course in Clinical Supervision)
* Includes a number of provincial/territorial and special interest chapters, such as the CCPA Private Practitioners Chapter (<https://www.ccpa-accp.ca/chapters/>)
* Offers an annual national conference, research conference, leadership conference, etc.

## Provincial

Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists (NSCCT) [https://nscct.ca](https://nscct.ca/)

* Serves as the regulatory body, including ethics oversight and public protection
* Offers Registered Counselling Therapist-Candidate (RCT-C) and Registered Counselling Therapist (RCT) designations
* CCPA records all Continuing Education Credits (CECs) and Professional Development transcripts for all RCTs and RCT-Cs. This is free to Certified CCPA members.

# Red Spruce Mental Health Centre

Red Spruce Mental Health Centre (RSMHC) is a community serving counselling centre that is operated through Acadia’s M.Ed. Counselling Program. Graduate counselling students at different stages in their development, usually during Practicum I and Practicum II, provide cost-free counselling services to support community clients with their mental health needs and wellness goals. The aim of the Centre is to provide accessible, affordable, and responsive services to individuals, groups, couples, and families, while simultaneously promoting the development of leaders in the counselling profession and committing to culturally responsive and socially just practices.

RSMHC was established in 2023 and founded on many of the principles and beliefs of the Community Counselling, Education, and Research Centre Model (CCERC Model). This Model originated at NC State University and was developed by Grimmett et al. (2018). This model is currently in practice within internal counselling centres at NC State University, NC Central University, and with partnering community-based organizations throughout Raleigh. The model is built on the foundations of multicultural and social justice counsellor education, consisting of 17 layered components that work together to emphasize the values of the counselling profession. These components are organized around three foundations: identity, community, and structure.

***Identity***defines the values of the CCERC model. These are embodying a world-class standard, Love Ethic (hooks, 2000), wellness focus, trauma-informed, multicultural, and social justice, and research and scholarship (Grimmett et al., 2018). This model has a ***community***focus that hopes to engage partners across various locations through engagement and outreach. Finally, ***structure***is necessary to ensure collaboration between institutions and community resources to meet the community’s mental health needs. The CCERC model does this through the combination of a public university, a graduate counselling program, counsellor educators, graduate students, university counselling centre, and a sliding fee scale (Grimmett et al., 2018).

The CCERC model aligns with the beliefs, vision, and goals of the Master of Education Counselling program and the Counselling Centre at Acadia University. It embraces the professional counsellor identity, the standards of CACEP, and community-engaged scholarship and service.

Since its inception, RSMHC has also partnered with community organizations to provide accessible counselling services to their clients either at the Centre’s campus location or at community partner locations. Currently, we provide these services to the following partners: Open Arms (Kentville), Edge on Employment (Kentville), Evangeline Club (Berwick), The Red Door Youth Health & Support Centre (Kentville), Valley Community Learning Association (Kentville), and Mi’kmaw Native Friendship Centre (Halifax).

Grimmett, M. A., Lupton-Smith, H., Beckwith, A., Englert, M. K., & Messinger, E. (2018). The community counseling, education, and research (CCERC) model: Addressing community mental health needs through engagement scholarship. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 22*(3), 201-230.

hooks, b. (2000). *All about love: New visions*. HarperCollins.

# Program and Campus Websites & Resources

**School of Education Website**

[**https://education.acadiau.ca/our-programs.html**](https://education.acadiau.ca/our-programs.html)

**M.Ed. Counselling Website**

[**https://med.acadiau.ca/programs/counselling.html**](https://med.acadiau.ca/programs/counselling.html)

**Graduate Studies Website**

[**https://gradstudies.acadiau.ca/home.html**](https://gradstudies.acadiau.ca/home.html)

**Accessible Learning Office**

[**https://www2.acadiau.ca/student-life/accessiblelearning.html**](https://www2.acadiau.ca/student-life/accessiblelearning.html)

**Human Rights and Equity Office**

[**https://www2.acadiau.ca/student-life/equity-judicial/equity.html**](https://www2.acadiau.ca/student-life/equity-judicial/equity.html)

**Student Health Centre**

[**https://www2.acadiau.ca/student-life/health-wellness/clinic.html**](https://www2.acadiau.ca/student-life/health-wellness/clinic.html)

**Student Counselling Services**

[**https://www2.acadiau.ca/student-life/health-wellness/mental-health.html**](https://www2.acadiau.ca/student-life/health-wellness/mental-health.html)

**Indigenous Student Resource Centre**

[**https://www2.acadiau.ca/student-life/indigenous-students.html**](https://www2.acadiau.ca/student-life/indigenous-students.html)

**Office of Africa Descent Student Opportunity and Success**

[**https://www2.acadiau.ca/student-life/black-student-experience.html**](https://www2.acadiau.ca/student-life/black-student-experience.html)

**Acadia Pride**

[**https://www2.acadiau.ca/student-life/health-wellness/sexuality-relationships/2slgbtqia.html**](https://www2.acadiau.ca/student-life/health-wellness/sexuality-relationships/2slgbtqia.html)

**Spiritual Wellness**

[**https://www2.acadiau.ca/student-life/health-wellness/spiritual-wellness.html**](https://www2.acadiau.ca/student-life/health-wellness/spiritual-wellness.html)

**Wong International Students Centre**

[**https://www2.acadiau.ca/international.html**](https://www2.acadiau.ca/international.html)

**Academic Calendar**

[**https://registrar.acadiau.ca/AcademicCalendars.html**](https://registrar.acadiau.ca/AcademicCalendars.html)