

University of Hawaii at Manoa



Department of Counselor Education

EXPLORING THE COUNSELING & GUIDANCE PROGRAM

as an unclassified student

Revised November 2006

“Exploring” the CE program at UH

The department understands that prospective applicants sometimes want to know first-hand something about the program before actually investing time and efforts (as well as money) into the application process. In the Counseling & Guidance program at UH, there is a way to do this by first becoming an “unclassified” student. Here is what it means.

“Unclassified” students

There is considerable misunderstanding of what the category “unclassified” means. The purpose appears to be two-fold: firstly, it is to serve people who only want to take a particular course which is otherwise not available. The official statement in a UH-Manoa Catalog is as follows:

Persons who wish to take UHM campus courses but do not wish to enroll in degree programs may apply for admission as unclassified students through the Admissions and Records Office. ... Post-baccalaureate applicants must submit official verification of a baccalaureate or an advanced degree earned at a regionally accredited U.S. college or university or at a foreign university recognized by UHM. Classified applicants receive admission priority; thus, unclassified applicants may be denied admission because of enrollment restrictions.

The second purpose is to let individuals learn about a particular program, “to test the water”, so to speak, in a new discipline, before making a commitment through formal application for admission. The question to be asked is how many courses a person needs before deciding whether the discipline is the right one to enter. A corollary question asks how many courses does a program considers appropriate for the purpose of learning what the discipline is about. The Counselor Education department allows unclassified students to accumulate no more than four (4) courses (12 credits). This conforms to the limit acceptable to the Graduate Division for a later request for the courses to be applicable to the program **if and when** the student is admitted as regular, i.e., “classified” graduate student.

A prospective applicant who wants to learn what counseling is about should

1. declare which specialization he/she is interested in;
2. seek appointment with the Department Chair to see whether there will be an opportunity to register, and when, and in which course(s); the Chair will consult with the course instructor(s), and if a preliminary consent is given, then
3. apply through the Admissions and Records Office for admission as “unclassified” by May 1 (Fall semester) or October 1 (Spring semester) deadlines.

The application is known as the *System Application Form*, and information about it can be obtained at <http://www.catalog.hawaii.edu/grad-ed/classification.htm>. To download the form, or apply online, go to <http://its06.its.hawaii.edu:9325/index.jsp> [the 06 in the URL refers to the latest edition of the form; please, try higher-value digits if applicable]. You will need to create a **free** account to begin working on the application. The form consists of 8 pages of instructions, 1 page of application itself, and 1 page of Residency Qualification. Just above the “Applicant’s Certification” (signature) at the bottom of page 9, the applicants should fill in their choices: UH-Manoa as the campus, and Unclassified as the major field. **The application must be accompanied by a document which will verify the fact that the applicant does have a bachelor’s degree.**

4. when notified of admission as an unclassified student, inform the department chair, provide your UH ID (it will be on the admission letter), and wait for e-mail giving you instructions on how and when to proceed in the registration process; and

5. obtain the required *hawaii.edu* account (access <http://myuhportal.hawaii.edu>, and click on “Get a UH Username”); the @hawaii.edu e-mail address is your passport to registration, and will also be used **exclusively** by the department to communicate with you.

One of the four (4) courses available to approved unclassified students depends on the specialization in which the student has indicated interest.

School Counseling	Rehabilitation Counseling	Community Counseling	When offered
EDCG 600 Counseling in the Schools	EDCG 601 Principles & Practice of Rehabilitation Counseling	EDCG 602 Introduction to Community Counseling	Fall
EDCG 606 Counseling: Theory and Practice			Fall
EDCG 605 Human Growth and Development			Spring
EDCG 604 Career Development and Vocational Counseling			Summer

The order of the above listings is based on the course scheduling, but also closely reflects the desirable order in which the courses should be taken. Of course, taking just one course may be sufficient for the unclassified student to be able to tell whether Counseling and Guidance is the right field for him/her. There is no advantage in taking more courses than needed while in the “unclassified” status. Due to the department’s once-a-year only entry time, the prospective student wanting to enroll in all four courses will delay considerably the submission of admission application. Ideally, the time to apply for admission as a regular “classified” graduate student is when the person is sure that his/her decision is the correct one. Practically, delaying one’s decision is not recommended. There are advantages of being a part of a cohort; there is also financial consideration to keep in mind (tuition fees are likely to keep increasing on an annual basis). Download the *Program Information for Prospective Applicants* from our website <http://www.hawaii.edu/departments/dce> .

Mis-use of the “unclassified” category

Please, do not ask for permission to take other than the courses listed above. Those are the only ones which will serve the purpose of discovering the appropriateness (or the lack of it) of Counseling and Guidance as the student’s suitable professional goal.

Counseling & Guidance program, like many other degree programs, expects the courses to be taken in a specified sequence (or at a specific time in the program); taking courses out of sequence tends to make instruction difficult when all students in the course do not have the same background. Furthermore, courses often have stated prerequisites, such as other course(s), or departmental or instructor’s consent. “Consent” is often based on other factors, such as limits on size (whether caused by physical dimensions of the classroom, or required by the program’s accrediting agency). It may also be based on prior academic performance of students, or on the “classified” status of the students. Using “consent” that way is a normal prerogative of the program faculty.

When the Counselor Education program lets an unclassified student in a course, it is with the understanding that the student will see this as an opportunity to explore what the program is all about, but not as his/her right because of the “unclassified” status. Under no circumstance should the approval for enrolling in one semester lead unclassified students to an assumption that another approval in the following semester will be given as a matter of their “right”. The program allows unclassified students register in a course **if and when** it is feasible and/or desirable. If the word *registration* were added to *admission* in the UH-Manoa Catalog statement cited above, the thought is expressed well:

	<i>Classified applicants receive admission <u>and registration</u> priority; thus, unclassified applicants may be denied admission or registration because of enrollment restrictions.</i>	
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A word of caution for international students

The above explanation applies also to students from foreign countries, with two additional conditions. The first is students' command of the English language. International students (even those with undergraduate degrees from US institutions) must demonstrate a good command of the English language, both spoken and in writing. The reason is obvious: communicating with clients and with other professionals must be in language that is clear and readily understandable. Students will not be effective counselors if they have difficulty understanding their clients' descriptions of the problems, or if their professional diagnoses and problem solutions are not clearly understood by clients or other professionals.

Second condition is not so obvious, but it is nonetheless important: foreign students must be able to describe that their degree in counseling and guidance from an American university will be useful to them when seeking counseling positions upon return to their home countries. This is true in the case of any of the three specializations, but in particular for potential school counselors. The students must be sure – and be able to document it to the satisfaction of the program faculty – that the experiences in the practicum and internship placement in Hawaii public schools will be recognized as valid “back home.” The CE faculty members want to be confident that expense of time, money and effort by and on all future counselors is a good investment in the students' professional future.