

**The Counseling Program**  
**The Family Institute at Northwestern**  
**University Open House 2022- Questions**  
**Answered**

**The Master of Arts in Counseling program has a Standard and Two-plus Curriculum.**

The **Standard Curriculum** is a two-year intensive program for students entering the Counseling field with academic and experiential background in psychology or human services and prior clinical experiences. Standard students complete a Practicum and Internship.

The **Two-Plus Curriculum** is designed for qualified students entering the Counseling field following a career in another discipline and/or with minimal academic and experiential background in psychology or human services. Two-Plus students participate in a summer intensive that prepares them to enter the field and engage successfully in the rigorous clinical training experiences that the program offers.

**1. Is the Two-Plus program more expensive?**

- The Two-Plus program requires three introductory courses in addition to the Standard program. The three courses require additional tuition.

**2. Regarding the program specific application, am I expected to print it out, fill it, and then scan the application, submit it to the supplement document section?**

- The application can be completed fully online and submitted as one document

**3. Considering the supplement document section including 3 blanks, I suppose 2 of them would be a photo of me, and the specific application form. What about the other blank?**

- a. Below is a list of all documents that should be submitted to sections 1, 2, and 3 of the online application
- b. Complete Master of Arts in Counseling Program Specific Application [2022-2023 Application Available Here](#)
- c. Recent a 3 x 5 photo (semiprofessional or professional attire)
- d. Please write a statement of purpose (750 - 1,000 words) that includes each of the following prompts:
- e. Address what makes you suited to the field of professional counseling
- f. Describe your capacity and readiness to complete your degree while balancing multiple, competing responsibilities
- g. What are your values and experiences around diversity, inclusion, and equality?

**4. For the official transcript, which Northwestern address should I send my official transcript to? (e.g., Northwestern counseling?)**

- a. Applicants only need to submit unofficial transcripts with their applications. After an applicant is admitted into the program an official transcript will be required.

**5. Is there a study abroad option able to be worked into the program?**

- a. Unfortunately, there is no study abroad options in our program.

**6. Are letters of recommendation sent directly by the letter writer or does the applicant receive and then upload those via the online application?**

- a. Applicants will add their recommenders (2) names and email addresses to the online application.  
b. Recommenders will receive an email to upload letters to CollegeNet.

**7. Regarding recommendation letters can change the people who we listed. If so, how?**

- a. Here are instructions for editing your Recommenders  
b. If you need to edit a recommendation request you've submitted, you can do so from your user activity page. While you can only edit your recommender's name and email address from this page, once your recommender accesses the form they will be able to edit any remaining contact information.  
c. The school will then receive all the up-to-date recommender information within the completed recommendation form. You can log into your activity page to edit your recommender's email address or name at the link below:  
<https://www.applyweb.com/cgi-bin/ustat>  
d. Any online recommendation requests you successfully submitted will appear in the Online Letters of Recommendation section of your activity page:

[Work on Form](#) [View Details](#)

### Online Letters of Recommendation

Just Testing One	Has not started yet	Waive Status: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<div>Action ▾ <a href="#">Edit/Change This Recommender</a> <a href="#">Send Reminder and Link</a></div>
Just Testing Two	Has not started yet	Waive Status: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Just Testing Three	Has not started yet	Waive Status: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Editing Recommender: Just Testing One" with a close button (X) in the top right corner. The form contains four input fields: "First Name" with the value "Just", "Last Name" with the value "Testing One", "Email" with the value "test@example.com", and "Email (confirm)" with the value "test@example.com". Below these fields is a light blue informational box with the text: "Editing this information will cancel your previous request and send a new request to the email address entered here." At the bottom right of the form are two buttons: "Cancel" and "Save".

- Clicking Edit/Change This Recommender will open up the following:
- If you're editing the email address you entered, a new email will automatically be sent when you click Save. The recommender information you edit will only update on your activity page, and any changes made here will not be reflected in your application form. This is normal system behavior, and Admissions is aware recommenders can be changed this way. As long as the correct recommender details appear in your Activity page, you've successfully changed your recommender.
- Do note that once your recommender has started (or submitted) their letter of recommendation, you won't have the option to edit your recommender anymore. The Action button will either be grayed out and inactive (for a submitted recommendation) or only give you the option to send a reminder (for an in-progress recommendation). In these cases, the recommendation form will need to be reset in order for you to edit your recommender. If your recommender is unable to reset their recommendation from within their Letters of Recommendation account, please have them contact us directly at [lor\\_help@collegenet.com](mailto:lor_help@collegenet.com) to request the necessary reset. They will need to do so using the email address associated with the recommendation form.

**8. When do Early Admission applicants receive notification of their admission decision?**

- Early admission applicants will be notified on January 20, 2023

**9. Do all students find internship placements? Are supervised internships/practicums paid or unpaid?**

- All students will work with the faculty in Clinical Training to find an internship placement.
- All internships and practicums are unpaid.

**10. How does Northwestern help match students with internships? Is there opportunity to intern at the Family Institute?**

- Students work directly with faculty in Clinical Training to identify internships placements that match their professional goals and clinical interests. All students complete a practicum at The Family Institute. Typically, students complete an internship in the community, however there are a few opportunities to remain at The Family Institute for specialized training in the internship year.

**11. What is the average cohort size? And the average class size?**

- The average cohort and class size is 32.

**12. How many students are accepted to the program each year?**

- 32/36 students are accepted into the program every Fall.

**13. Is the tuition \$60,000 for everyone, or can we apply for in-state tuition?**

- [Tuition](#) is the same for everyone (Please click on link for information regarding tuition)

**14. Do your MA students qualify for student health insurance or other benefits?**

- Yes, there is [student health insurance](#). (Please click on link for information regarding health insurance)

**15. How many early decisions students are accepted, and how many regular decision students are accepted?**

- The program accepts half the cohort for early decision and the remainder of the cohort during regular admission.

**16. Can you please provide some additional information about the group interview? Are all applicants interviewed or is there an initial screening process?**

- There is an initial screening of all applicants. After the initial screening faculty select those students who will be invited to the group interview

**17. Counseling students participate as well?**

- COUN students are eligible to participate in Project Strengthen.

**18. Are there additional funding sources (i.e., scholarships) offered by Northwestern other than the Harris Scholarship? Any specifically for international students?**

- Currently the Harris Scholarship is the only one available. (A generous donation from the Harris Family Foundation and Irving Harris Foundation is aimed at increasing opportunities for traditionally underrepresented students in the educational programs at The Family Institute at Northwestern University.)
- At this time, we do not have any scholarships available for international students.
- If we are interested in getting involved in research through the program, would it be best to contact appropriate faculty before we are admitted or once we are already enrolled?
- Once you are enrolled in the program you will have the opportunity to attend a research orientation that explains the process. After the orientation you will complete an application and interview for a research position.

**19. What is campus life/culture like as a graduate student? Is there a divide between graduate students and undergraduates?**

- Campus life for graduate students depends. You have the freedom to live off campus but are also able to participate in activities on campus if you choose. However, most graduate students adapt to campus life differently than when they were in undergrad.

**20. What is the average age/age-range of students in the program?**

- The average age is around 24/25 and the ages range between 22 - 60

**21. How many students participate in the two plus/career change program vs the regular track?**

- The number of students differ from year to year. However, the two-plus program usually has 10-12 students, and the standard program has at least 20 students.

**22. What are some of the graduate outcomes and where have some of the alumni gone to work/study after completing the Masters?**

- Graduates from our program work in a variety of settings based on their personal and professional goals. New counselors must continue supervised work experience in order to obtain independent licensure. Work settings include, community mental health agencies, group private practice, fellowships, government agencies, hospitals, colleges and universities, and other businesses and corporations.

**23. What can students with undergraduate degrees unrelated to psychology do to make their applications more appealing? What are important things for them to know?**

- Applicants to the two-plus curriculum should include their rationale to pursue a new career path, including significant events and experiences that influenced that decision.

Every applicant should discuss how a career in counseling fits into their personal and professional life goals. Any information that underscores an applicant's commitment and determination to complete a rigorous course of study is helpful in an application.

**24. Is it possible to view elective courses (or any available courses) before enrolling / applying?**

- Please find below a list of all the elective courses offered in the Counseling program. Please email a direct request to [dhicks@family-institute.org](mailto:dhicks@family-institute.org) to review coursesyllabi.
  - Evaluation and Treatment of Trauma -2 (child/Adolescent emphasis)
  - Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
  - Counseling children and adolescents
  - Play Therapy Methods
  - Introduction to Psychopharmacology
  - Human Sexuality

**25. How is the Mental Health Counseling program at Northwestern uniquely different from the ones at other universities?**

- What makes the Counseling program unique is that students see clients the 2 years that they are enrolled in the program.

**26. I am an international student. If I had been studying in the US for three years, do I still need to submit TOEFL scores? Can it be exempted?**

**TOEFL or IELTS**

TOEFL or IELTS test scores are required of most international applicants. Please visit your program's website to determine their specific requirements. See the [Academic Programs page](#) for a list of all programs and their websites. Students admitted to PhD or MFA programs will be required to fulfill [The Graduate School's English proficiency requirement](#) to become eligible for funding as a teaching or graduate assistants. Please see the [Graduate and Teaching Assistantships page](#) for details.

**TOEFL**

- Official scores must be taken no more than two years before the intended quarter of entry and must come directly from the Educational Testing Service (ETS). For example, to be considered valid for Fall 2023 admission, TOEFL scores must be no older than September 2021.
- The TGS's school code for TOEFL is 1565.
- Test takers may be asked by ETS to choose the "department" to which they want their scores sent. While you should choose the department most closely aligned to the program to which you are applying, we do not use this information to distribute scores. ALL scores sent to school code 1565 are made available to our programs, regardless of the "departments" selected on the ETS form.
- TGS accepts the "MyBest scores." A new reporting structure released by ETS in August 2019. These scores may be entered in the TOEFL section on the "Test Scores" page of the application form.

**COVID-19 Update**

TGS will accept the submission of TOEFL test scores through their [at home testing service](#) to meet this requirement. This option is only available while testing centers are closed due to the impact of

COVID-19. If you are unable to complete a TOEFL or IELTS exam, please inform the program to which you have applied. TGS's Office of Admission and Recruitment will work directly with programs/departments to offer guidance to individual applicants.

TGS will not accept DuoLingo or TOEFL Essentials.

## IELTS

- Official scores must be taken no more than two years before the intended quarter. For example, to be considered valid for Fall 2023 admission, IELTS scores must be no older than September 2021.
- You will also be asked to scan and upload a copy of your score report (if you have it available) while submitting your online application. This uploaded version is not considered "official" and will only be used for preliminary review purposes, until your official scores have been received from IELTS.
- The Graduate School accepts the electronic version of the test. Test takers should select our organization (Northwestern University - The Graduate School) when booking the test to ensure we receive the official score results.

See the [TOEFL website](#) or the [IELTS website](#) for more information.

### **27. What percentage of accepted students recently graduated college?**

- About 40% of the students recently graduated from college.

### **28. What percentage of graduates from this program go on to receive a PhD?**

- It depends on the year, but around 15-18% go on to receive a PhD right after graduation.

### **29. What does success look like in this program? What qualities make for a strong application and clinician?**

- Whether you are an applicant, student in the program or practicing clinician, success will be determined on many different factors. Obviously, a strong undergraduate performance in a field you were passionate about, able to demonstrate good to excellent writing skills, an openness to self-reflection and awareness, an ability to listen to and work with others and a level of maturity required to meet the demands of our rigorous clinical and academic expectations. As a student, on top of being able to maintain a 3.00 GPA, you should be open to receiving feedback and analyzing your experiences, opinions, and personal traits so you can become a self-reflective counselor.

### **30. What do your licensure and employment rates for your students look like post-graduation**

- At last survey of our graduates, all graduates, 100% who want to be licensed clinicians become licensed practicing clinicians. Over the years, we have had a few who decided to take time off to start a family, go on to obtain a Ph.D., or decide that they might want to transfer their knowledge from the program into the corporate or medical field and choose to not become licensed. The program prepares you for licensure within the first two – three years post-graduation, most of our students accept positions just prior to graduation.

**31. What opportunities are there for fieldwork during the program? Is it a self-selected process?**

- During your first year in the program, during your practicum you will be placed in the Bette D. Harris Clinic at The Family Institute at Northwestern, here you will begin seeing your first clinical cases. During your second year, your Internship Year, you will work with the Clinical Training Director to place in an external clinical setting for the remainder of your time in the program.

**32. To clarify, the on-line program has multiple cohort opportunities to apply to and the in- person program is only admitting in one fall cohort?**

- Correct, the on-campus program selects one cohort of 30 students each year to begin in the Fall Quarter.

**33. Do you offer opportunities to get certificates in specific fields? Such as LGBTQ+ affirming therapy?**

- Currently, the program does not have an opportunity for individuals to receive a certification in a specific area.

**34. Among the wide number of approaches to counseling and psychology, why does the program focus on psychodynamic training?**

- The program has historically been grounded in contemporary psychodynamic treatment and the traditions of psychodynamic thinking. We believe that this training provides our students and graduates with tools for in-depth thinking and analysis of complex interpersonal and psychological phenomena. Our focus is to build solid self-reflective and self-awareness skills in our students and to contribution to their success to becoming

**35. Can you speak to the differences between the online program vs. in-person, especially in terms of practicum for online students?**

- The greatest difference between the two campuses is that the online program courses are held remotely, and a student does not need to leave their home city/state to attend the program, everything else is comparable. While the on-ground students are placed in the Bette D. Harris Clinic of The Family Institute at Northwestern (our home clinic) and are supervised by onsite supervisors – the online program will place students in a clinical site that is within a 75- mile radius of their home and will be supervised by a staff member of the at named clinical site.

**36. What does your typical competitive applicant look like?**

- The typical applicant has a degree in the field of Social Science, for example, Psychology or Sociology.
- Strong paraprofessional experiences related to mental and emotional health, psychological maturity, a capacity for deep self-awareness and the ability to work well with others.
- Readiness for graduate studies is also an important criteria.

**37. Diversity a value in the decision-making process?**

- Having a diverse class is a priority. Apart from racial and ethnic diversity, we look at many other areas of diversity to ensure multiple voices and backgrounds are represented.



**38. Where can we access information on the Graduate Emerging Scholars Program (I can only find info on the undergraduate one)?**

- Admitted students in the program will receive an email each quarter with information regarding Graduate Emerging Scholar opportunities.

