Thank you for your expressed interest in the graduate Master’s program in Counselling Psychology. This document was created to help applicants for applying to either the comprehensive course-based or thesis-based program. This document is based on the most common student inquiries received over the past 3 years. Various questions may emerge depending on what stage you are in your planning process. We encourage you to read and review this document carefully. We recognize that common questions emerge based on the stage that a person may be with the application process. The three stages that this document explores are a) Exploration of interest in Counselling Psychology, b) Planning and Decision-making regarding Application, and c) Working on an Application.

Stage 1. Exploration of interest in Counselling Psychology:

1. What is Counselling Psychology and why are Counselling Psychology programs housed within the Faculty of Education?

   Counselling Psychology training programs in Canada are located in departments within Faculties of Education rather than being connected with clinical psychology, experimental psychology, or undergraduate psychology programs in faculties of arts, health, social sciences, or sciences. Faculties of Education are perceived as a better fit for Counselling Psychology as it relates to life span development and lifelong learning in school and community based settings. It also provides a holistic orientation that focusses on client strengths, diversity and context, and utilizes a client-centred approach.

2. What type of work or volunteer experience is required to be eligible to apply for the program?

   Applying to either of the comprehensive course-based route or the thesis-based route requires that you have some work or volunteer experience where you have experienced strengthening your helping skills. Examples of this type of experience include: practicum experience through taking EDUA 5490 Field Placement in Counselling, volunteering through distress lines/centres,
shelters, street-level services for vulnerable people, mentoring programs, tutoring, teaching, facilitating youth or adult group programming, or being a team leader.

There is no set-baseline for having enough experience. As a minimum, you should have at least one or two different volunteer or work roles that helped you build your interpersonal and helping skills.

3. Can I become a certified counsellor after the completion of my M.Ed Counselling Psychology degree?

Graduates may be eligible for certification as a Canadian Certified Counsellor under the guidelines of the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA). CCPA certification attests to the level of professional counselling competence and is considered the minimum professional standard in Canada. Upon graduation, students use the title “Professional Counsellor” or “Professional Therapist” as their designation.

Students are responsible for ensuring that they meet the requirements for certification as established by CCPA and work closely with their academic advisor to take courses and have practicum experiences that align with CCPA. As our program is not accredited with CCPA, it becomes the student’s responsibility to ensure that all requirements for certification are met prior to graduating from the program.

4. Do applicants require a teaching background?

No, applicants do not require a teaching background to apply for the Counselling Psychology program. We welcome and accept both applicants with an educational background as well as from a wide variety of educational backgrounds (social work, nursing, sciences, family studies, humanities/faculty of arts, fine arts, psychology, and business). Applicants are encouraged to review information pertaining to the graduate application process available at [http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/education/future/counselling-psychology.html](http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/education/future/counselling-psychology.html)

5. Can I apply to the Counselling Psychology Master’s program if I am an International Student?

Yes, we welcome applications from international students. Students still need to meet all the program requirements (volunteer/work experience as well as completion of pre-requisite courses) as other applicants do. Submission of course outlines completed that you think are aligned with our pre-requisites need to be vetted out prior to application. You also have to meet the Faculty of Graduate Studies English Language Proficiency Requirements, listed at [http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/graduate_studies/admissions/139.html](http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/graduate_studies/admissions/139.html).
6. Would I be eligible to work as a school counsellor in Manitoba with a Master’s degree in Counselling Psychology?

You would be eligible to work as a school counsellor with a Master’s degree in Counselling Psychology if you also held a Bachelor of Education degree. Working in schools as a counsellor in Manitoba is restricted to students who have a Bachelor of Education degree (provincial rule).

7. Would I be eligible to work in community-based settings with a Master’s degree in Counselling Psychology?

Yes, an array of students (with diverse undergraduate degrees) who have graduated with a Master’s degree in Counselling Psychology have gained employment in community-based settings (working with adults, children, youth, and/or families). Please note that for these students, becoming certified with the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA), was needed to be gainfully employed in community-based settings. In some instances, graduates from our program have also entered private practice.

Stage 2. Planning and Decision-Making regarding Application:

8. What is the difference between the comprehensive course-based and thesis-based Counselling Psychology Master’s program?

The comprehensive course-based as well as the thesis-based program include courses in counselling theories, ethics, research, various electives in counselling, and practicum. The thesis-based program involves 18 credits of course work and conducting a supervised research study that would involve direct data collection. The comprehensive course-based program involves 30 credits of course work and culminates with completing two comprehensive papers with an oral exam that explores case conceptualization based on practical engagement through practicum experiences as well as aspects related to personal and professional development of becoming a counsellor.

9. What is a thesis and how long will it take to complete?

A thesis is an independent research project of significant involvement requiring a supervisory committee. To complete a thesis-based program, a minimum of 18 credits of course work is required and includes writing a thesis proposal, an oral proposal defense, the final thesis incorporating results, and final thesis oral defense. On average, it typically takes full time students 2-3 years to complete and for part-time students about 2.5-4.5 years to complete. This process would commence during completing course work, over the duration of the practicum year, and possibly after completion of the practicum year.
10. If I complete a thesis-based route will I be eligible to pursue a doctorate in Counselling Psychology?

Students wishing to pursue a doctoral degree in Counselling Psychology need to be aware that the option does not currently exist in Manitoba. A doctoral degree in Counselling Psychology requires having access to internship sites (to support a one-year full-time internship for a student) which is not possible at this time. As such, students will need to apply outside of Manitoba to pursue further studies. Additionally, eligibility for most academic programs that offer doctoral studies in Counselling Psychology require more than 18 credits worth of courses to be completed at the Master’s level. In the event of pursuing the thesis-based route, please ensure that you look into academic requirements at other institutions to ensure that during your Master’s degree you take sufficient number of courses to be eligible to apply for other PhD programs.

11. I currently live in Winnipeg and I am looking into the prospect of volunteering to gain more experience in counselling. What would you suggest would be a good starting point?

If you reside in Winnipeg, you may consider volunteering through the organization "Klinic" (spelled with a K).

12. What are the pre-requisite courses for your program and when are they offered within the academic year?

Presently, the three pre-requisite courses are EDUA 5480 Counselling Skills (offered every Fall, Winter, May-June, and July session), EDUA 5500 Theories and Issues in Counselling (offered every Fall and May-June session), and EDUA 5540 Groups in Guidance (usually offered every Winter and in July session)

13. If I wish to take the pre-requisite courses in order to apply for the Counselling Psychology program and I am not currently in the Faculty of Education, how do I do so?

You can still apply to take the pre-requisite coursework via General Studies (Extended Education) or as a PBDE student (where applicable).

If you are interested in exploring these options and you require additional information, please contact: GradPrograms.Education@umanitoba.ca

14. I think that I have taken the required pre-requisite courses for the program through a different institution or faculty at the University of Manitoba. How do I know they will meet your requirements?

You can email your course syllabus/outline (it must be in keeping with the course you actually took) to the counselling area group coordinator to request for course equivalency. The course syllabus/outlines will be shared with other members of the counselling area group for input. Once a decision is made, an email will be sent back to the applicant. When submitting your final
application please ensure that you enclose the email provided documenting the assessment result as part of your application material.

15. I don’t live in Manitoba; how do I get the required pre-requisite courses?

There are equivalent courses at other universities and colleges. Please explore institutions that are close to where you live and request for a course outline and/or find out how to register for the course. Once you have a course outline, you can submit it to the area group coordinator of the counselling program and have it vetted out for equivalency.

16. I am currently enrolled in a different graduate program in counselling, can I transfer directly to the University of Manitoba graduate program in counselling psychology program and get credit for my studies?

If your current graduate program is based at a university other than the University of Manitoba, direct transfer is not possible and an official application for admission into our program is necessary. If you receive an offer of admission, a transfer request can be made of courses from your previous program and is subject to approval from graduate studies.

Stage 3. Working on the Application:

17. Do all pre-requisite courses have to be completed at time of application to be considered for the program?

No, not all pre-requisite courses need to be completed prior to application. However, you will need to outline in your cover letter of application (letter of intent) whether you are currently registered and when you intend on completing the remaining course(s) prior to the start of a potential start date to the graduate program. In the event that acceptance is granted to an applicant who has not officially completed the pre-requisite courses, they would be offered provisional admission. The student would then need to successfully complete the course(s) prior to officially starting their graduate program.

18. What makes for a strong application?

The Counselling Psychology faculty members independently rate applications based on: (1) academic ability (e.g., GPA); (2) depth and breadth of the cover letter (also called letter of letter of intent); (3) amount and quality of related work or volunteer experience; (4) for thesis students the amount and quality of research experience; (5) quality of letters of recommendation; and (6) overall “fit” with the program (match with your interests and career goals).

To strengthen an application, it is suggested that for comprehensive course-based applicants as well as thesis-based applicants, to gain as much related work or volunteer experience as
possible before applying. Additionally, recognize that your statement of intent is the only direct sample of writing we have to consider in the adjudication process and recommend that you spend time working on it. Additionally, for thesis-based students please include at least one referee that comments explicitly on research potential and abilities. For comprehensive-based applicants, having two professional referees that can attest to your counselling skills and relationship-building skills is most beneficial.

19. What should I include in my cover letter (letter of intent)?

Your cover letter should address: (a) why you are interested in counselling psychology, (b) why you think this program would be a good fit for you, (c) key learnings taken away from your volunteer/work experiences as a counsellor and (d) how this program would contribute to your professional development and goals (short and long term career objectives). If you are pursuing a thesis-based route you would also need to include (e) your research topic of interest, significance to the field, what previous research skills you will draw from to inform your work, and who you are interested in being supervised by on your thesis work.

The maximum pages for your letter of intent is 3 pages, single spaced, 12-point font.

20. How are Master’s applications evaluated, and can they be re-assessed if it is not accepted?

The competitiveness of an application can vary each year, depending on the applicant pool. Some years are more competitive than others and it is important to understand that while applications may have met all of the eligibility requirements, it may still be assessed as less competitive in relation to other applications. Therefore, knowing how close an application was to being accepted, or its rank, will not predict how competitive that same application might be if it is submitted again in the following year. If you receive a Notification of Refusal and you want to be re-considered, you must re-apply for admission to a future year.

21. I have applied to graduate program in counselling and would like to use the wait time for notification to take courses that could possibly serve as electives and transferred into my graduate program. Would it be possible to gain course advice prior to acceptance into a graduate program in Counselling Psychology?

The Faculty in Counselling Psychology are not in the position to provide this type of guidance to any prospective applicant prior to official acceptance. Please also note that if you decide (on your own accord) to take additional courses and find out that you attain a spot in our program, it is still at the discretion of the advisor that you are appointed to decide whether they transfer these courses into a graduate level program plan and whether they are suitable electives. Faculty advisors assigned to the student will discuss aspects related to course selection only after a student is officially accepted into the graduate program in counselling psychology.