

## Frequently Asked Questions Postgraduate Study in Counselling and Guidance

*(These questions and answers were designed to be posted on the website, but are printed here, as an Appendix to the Information Pack, itself also available on the Web.)*

### The Programmes

*Where do I get information on the various Massey postgraduate programmes?*

Go to <http://study.massey.ac.nz/> - click on View list of all programmes. Here you will find the regulations for each postgraduate programme in the College of Education and a brief description.

*What postgraduate programmes do you offer?*

We provide three programmes in total. Two of these are theory learning only and are done through distance learning study. They are suitable for people in 'helping' work, who are not presently able to undertake or interested in qualifying professionally as counsellors.

The professional counselling programme involves a mix of distance learning and block course papers. These provide full professional training and include the Professional Development papers.

Go to the website <http://study.massey.ac.nz/> - and click on View list of all programmes, to begin looking at the requirements for the various programmes.

*What does 'guidance' mean?*

The word originates in education contexts, to refer to the pastoral care of all those in an organisation or system. It can loosely be described as involving support, assistance and education about the 'self'. It includes counselling as one of its specialist areas. All those involved in 'people helping work' are inevitably involved in 'guidance'.

*Should I plan to do a Masters or a PG Diploma?*

You may leave this decision until you are underway with your study. All students enrol initially in the Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Counselling and Guidance) (120 credits).

## Entry

*What do I need to have done to get into the postgraduate guidance programmes?*

Any degree is acceptable, plus a professional qualification or experience of 'people helping' work – paid or unpaid. All candidates must complete the Admission to Postgraduate Study (APS) section of the enrolment form – if you do not have a professional qualification, a brief letter or CV outlining your 'helping' activities (such as telephone support, advocacy, mentoring, teacher aide work, church pastoral activities etc) will suffice.

*What do I need to have done to get into the Master of Counselling?*

You need to have attended the selection workshop and been offered entry to 253.761 Professional Development I. Students must also have completed or be completing the Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Counselling and Guidance) or an approved equivalent with a minimum B grade average.

*What is the special APS provision?*

In exceptional circumstances candidates may be granted admission to postgraduate study based on work experience / professional qualifications. If you have a professional diploma (eg in nursing, teaching, counselling, social work), but not a degree and you want to study at the postgraduate level, you may be able to gain entry based on your diploma and your work experience. It is usual however for these APS special provision applicants to be required to undertake some 300-level papers first.

*I have a diploma from a polytechnic or private training provider, why can't I go straight into postgraduate study?*

Because postgraduate programmes require degree entry. You may however be able to enter using the APS provision (see the APS question above). Usually this involves a little extra study first.

*I have a degree from overseas. Can I enrol?*

You will need to have your qualification assessed by NZQA (New Zealand Qualifications Authority). You will also need to apply for APS.

*Can I study from overseas?*

If you are a New Zealand citizen or resident you can easily undertake the distance learning theory papers in the PGDipEducation(Counselling and Guidance) and MEducation (Guidance Studies) from anywhere in the world.

If you want to do the professional development papers you would need to be able to attend the block courses in Palmerston North.

If you are an international student we are not at present able to take you under normal circumstances.

*I've been granted APS entry to another Massey postgraduate programme, why do I have to apply again?*

Each APS granted applies to a particular programme and endorsement of study. If you change your area of study (eg from nursing studies or special education to counselling and guidance), you need to apply for another APS entry.

*What programme is it best to enrol in first to study counselling and guidance?*

You should enrol first in the PGDipEd (Couns&Guid). This enables you to get theoretical learning that is required for entry to the Professional Development papers.

*Why can't I enrol directly in the counselling programme (MCouns)?*

Because you first need to have been selected into 253.761 Professional Development I. The selection process begins in August and is finalised in November of the previous year. You must also have completed the PGDipEd or equivalent with satisfactory grades.

## Choosing Papers

### *What papers should I do first?*

It is best to start with the core papers. Most people begin with 253.750 Counselling Theory. Further relevant papers to begin with would be 253.755 Culture and Counselling, 253.753 Guidance in Education, 253.754 Family and Couples Counselling and 253.759 Career Development and Theory. These papers tend to be offered in alternate years.

### *What is available at Albany?*

There are no papers presently offered at Albany, because we do not have the personnel. There are no plans at present to offer the Professional Development papers there. Albany based students can take distance and block mode papers through Palmerston North.

### *What does distance mean?*

Our theory learning papers are all available via 'distance learning'. This means studying by correspondence – also called distance education. Increasingly the web is also being used with this type of study and therefore it is advised to have regular access to a computer with internet access, preferably broadband.

### *How do I find out the content, the set texts, the type of assignments, the contact course dates ... for a paper I'm interested in?*

Click on the underlined or highlighted titles of papers in the requirements for each qualification. Alternatively go to <http://study.massey.ac.nz/>, click on paper search. The Postgraduate Qualifications in Education booklet can also be requested as hard copy by calling 0800 MASSEY (0800 327739)

### *How do I get the textbooks I need for a particular paper?*

Bennetts Campus Bookshop, Commercial Complex, Massey University, Palmerston North has a complete list of papers and required books. Their phone is 06 354 6020, fax is 06 354 6716 and the website, <https://www.bennetts.co.nz/index.htm>

Books may also be obtained from 'Vol 1', 154 Fitzherbert Avenue, Palmerston North (fax 0800TEXTBOOK, website [www.textbook.co.nz](http://www.textbook.co.nz)).

### *What are the contact course requirements for theory papers?*

Contact courses are brief courses on campus (occasionally elsewhere) that enable you to do some concentrated learning, meet with your lecturers and some fellow students, and use the Library. They are really useful for boosting confidence and motivation. 253.750 Counselling Theory has a 'strongly recommended' contact course in April, as part of the schedule of Graduate School of Education contact courses. Some other papers have compulsory courses. Look in the Postgraduate Qualifications in Education handbook for details and the timetable (available under

<http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/admission/enrolment/books/coe/education.cfm>)

### *Can I cross-credit papers from another qualification?*

You can only transfer papers, not cross-credit them. This can only happen if (a) these are at Masters level, (b) the other qualification is incomplete (ie a postgraduate paper can only be credited once) and (c) they are deemed centrally relevant to your counselling or guidance qualification. Complete and send off the relevant form in the Enrolment Pack, with the required fee. See also the notes about timeframes for qualifications (below), when considering transferring papers.

## **Professional Development Papers 253.751 Professional Development I, 253.752 Professional Development II**

*How do I apply for selection into Professional Development?*

The application pack may be downloaded from the net. See

<http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/departments/graduate-school-education/publications.cfm> for the most recent example. Also, throughout the year we keep a list

of those wishing to have application packs mailed to them, which go out in early August.

Applications are to be returned in early September. We then select those we wish to call to a one-day selection workshop, held in early November. After this we offer approximately 15 places in the following year's paper. See the Counselling and Guidance Programmes Information Pack for further information.

*What is the chance of my being selected into Professional Development?*

Approximately 60 packs each year are accessed. Of these a little under half are completed and returned. Between 15 and 20 applicants are called to the selection workshop. We aim to offer approximately 15 places per year. The biggest difficulty for prospective students is finding a suitable placement.

*What is a suitable placement for the Professional Development papers?*

Broadly you will need access to eight to ten hours of counselling per week, in a setting where you are accountable to someone and belong in the organisation. Your own private practice is not accepted. Some trainees are already employed as counsellors, some are able to negotiate a special arrangement with their workplace, some find placements as volunteers, outside of their paid work.

*Can you help me find a placement?*

No, you do this yourself. You will find the guidelines for a suitable placement, and the appropriate contract form, in the Counselling and Guidance Programmes Information Pack. We cannot stress enough how important it is to begin organising this early in the year preceding that in which you hope to start Professional Development. Finding a placement is often more difficult in one of the main centres in New Zealand, where students from different courses are all seeking placements. When starting to look, think about your previous experience and contacts and use these as starting points.

*How much does it cost to do Professional Development?*

In addition to the paper enrolment costs, which are greater than for the theory papers, you need to budget for block course attendance, and possibly other costs. See the Counselling and Guidance Programmes Information Pack for a sample budget.

*What are the criteria for entry into the Professional Development papers?*

We look for readiness in relation to personal and interpersonal awareness, attitudes, openness to change, ability to participate in co-operative group learning, to operate in a professional capacity, and to undertake distance learning at this level of study. Successful candidates will also have relevant 'people helping' experience and an interest in the area, demonstrated through attendance at relevant courses, personal development experiences and training.

We also look for the following specific criteria during the selection workshop interview:

Research consistently shows that the effectiveness of counselling depends on the quality of the counselling relationship and the therapeutic alliance it produces (Cooper, 2008). The selection criteria we apply both in applicant's written presentations and at interview are in keeping with the Learning Outcomes for the Practicum elements of the programme and are as follows:

- Evidence of bicultural awareness and the interpersonal skills to work competently with others in a variety of settings, with cultural sensitivity and self confidence.

- Evidence of previous counselling experience and the ability to reflect on that experience critically and with maturity in the context of contemporary literature and theoretical understandings<sup>1</sup>. (If there is no previous experience of counselling or related work, the relevance of vocational goals is explored).
- Evidence of openness to self examination and reflection, along with the ability to articulate personal values and cultural context.

Cooper, M. (2008). *Essential research findings in counselling and psychotherapy: The facts are friendly*. London: Sage.

#### *How do I enhance my chances of being selected for 253.761 Professional Development I?*

From 2012 successful applicants have already completed, or are about to complete the PGDipEd(Couns&Guid) and will have been able to organise a firm placement by the time they attend the selection workshop in early November. Applicants may have enhanced their theory learning through counselling supervision, where this has been professionally relevant, and/or undertaken experiential learning.

#### *What are the Professional Development block course requirements?*

The block courses for the two Professional Development papers involve periods of two weeks in Palmerston North over January/February and June/July. Over the two years this involves eight weeks on the Palmerston North, Hokowhitu site. The block courses occur before Semester One and between Semester One and Two.

#### *How do I choose a supervisor?*

When you begin the Professional Development papers, we spend some time discussing supervision so that you understand what to look for. We also provide advice about supervisors in your area. Broadly you need someone who is a member of a relevant professional association preferably NZAC and who is experienced in counselling. They do not need to work with the same sort of clients or type of organisation as you. It can be helpful to your learning if they also trained as counsellors at Massey, but this is not a necessity.

#### *What approach do you use to train counsellors?*

We use a pluralistic model. Within this we teach a range of theoretical approaches, enabling students to develop theory/practice links using different perspectives. Former trainees have gone on to specialise further in Narrative, Solution Focussed Brief Therapy, CBT etc.

#### *Is Massey training appropriate for all types of counselling setting?*

Yes. The programmes were set up originally for training school counsellors and vocational guidance counsellors. Since the late 80s however we have been training counsellors from community, health, social work and church settings, as well as education.

#### *What is Massey's reputation in guidance and counselling?*

Massey has been training graduate and postgraduate students in counselling and guidance since 1974. More than 400 professional counsellors have been through the programme. Staff have always played an active part in professional matters, with three staff having been Presidents of the New Zealand Association of Counsellors, during their time as trainers.

#### *Who are the staff teaching in the programme?*

The three core staff at present are Steve Lang, Jeannie Wright and Brent Gardiner. Their interests, backgrounds and research areas are listed in the School of Arts, Development and Health Education pages of the College of Education website

[http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/departments/school-arts-development-health-education/adhe\\_home.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/departments/school-arts-development-health-education/adhe_home.cfm).

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<sup>1</sup> If your qualifying counselling paper is more than five years old, in order to optimise your learning in the professional development papers we may advise you to complete some additional readings and an annotated bibliography.

## Timeframes for Study

### *How long should I allow for each paper?*

As a guideline only, the University suggests that a 30 credit paper over a double semester period should involve about 12.5 hours of study per week. A 30 credit paper in a single semester therefore amounts to 25 hours per week, while a 15 credit paper in a single semester is 12.5 hours of study. If you are an experienced student you may be able to manage with a shorter time. If you are newly returning to study, or have not studied in the social sciences area before, it may take longer, especially in the beginning. Time is not likely to be spread evenly over the weeks. Most students probably put in more hours when assignments are due and less at other times.

### *I want to study part-time. How will this work?*

Most of our postgraduate students study part-time, alongside of work, family commitments etc. Work out how many hours per week you can afford to spend on study and enrol in the number of papers accordingly. If you work full-time, have other commitments and are newly returning to study (especially if this area of study is new to you), begin by enrolling in one paper only.

### *I want to study full-time. Is this possible?*

While most of our students study part-time, it is possible to study full-time (120 credits). This should amount to about 50 hours of study per week.

If you intend to study full-time while undertaking the Professional Development papers, remember that on top of the study itself, you will also need to complete the practicum hours. This makes for a **very** full load, but can be done.

### *What are the time limits for the various programmes?*

Four years for MCouns (120 credits) and MEd (Guidance Studies) (120 credits), and four years for the PGDipEd (Counselling and Guidance) (120 credits).

Six years for the MEd(Guidance Studies) (240 credits).

### *Why are there time limits?*

A postgraduate qualification needs to be made up of knowledge that is current at the time of the qualification being awarded to the student and should form an integrated and coherent whole.

### *How is the time for a programme calculated?*

The time starts at the point where you enrol for the first paper that you will credit to that programme.

### *Is it possible to extend the time allowed?*

When embarking on a course of study, take into account in your planning that you will need to abide by the established time frame. If you later are unable to study in a given year, due to circumstances you could not have foreseen when you started the programme, you can apply to have your studies suspended for that year. In special circumstances this can be requested retrospectively.

Similarly if you are getting towards the end of the allowed time, and again, due to unforeseen and exceptional circumstances, need more time, you can apply for an extension. To apply for a suspension or extension please email the Administrator at the Graduate School of Education, [gse@massey.ac.nz](mailto:gse@massey.ac.nz).

## About the Profession

*Which Massey qualifications lead to NZAC membership?*

The Masters in Counselling leads to provisional membership of NZAC though you may need to complete further supervised hours of practice for full membership. You may be able to use the PGDipEd(Couns&Guid) to fulfil the theory learning requirements, if you can meet other requirements from other sources. Occasionally candidates for NZAC are asked to complete a particular paper or papers (undergraduate or postgraduate) to fill gaps in other previous training (eg from overseas). Requirements change so check the NZAC website.

*How do I get information on the New Zealand Association of Counsellors?*

Go to <http://www.nzac.org.nz> or write to the Executive Officer, NZAC, PO Box 165, Hamilton.

*What is the significance of being an NZAC member?*

This is a professionally responsible thing to do, and provides you with a clear professional identity. You are committed to a code of ethics and to on-going professional development and supervision. The Association can investigate complaints about your work. Professional membership is often required by agencies employing counsellors or providing funding for counselling, such as ACC and the Family Court.

*What are the differences between counselling, social work, psychology and psychotherapy?*

You are best to visit the various professional association websites (NZAC, ANZASW, NZPS, NZAP) to explore this question. The Careers Service, Rapuara database <http://www.careers.co.nz> provides an introduction to each profession and some useful statistics. Also ask representatives of each profession in your own area to describe what they do.

*What are my chances of employment as a counsellor?*

See the Careers Service database <http://www.careers.co.nz>. Most professional counsellors are over 30 years old and have already been involved in 'people helping' work (paid or unpaid), before entering counselling.

Schools tend to want to employ counsellors with a previous background in teaching. If they cannot find someone suitable they may employ a trained counsellor without a teaching background.

*Why are the Massey programmes not listed under the training programmes approved by NZAC for Membership?*

NZAC has had a voluntary scheme whereby training programmes can seek listing as 'approved courses'. This has now been discontinued. Three of the four New Zealand universities that offer counselling training chose not to seek approval. The reasons related to matters of academic freedom, disagreement with aspects of the assessment and the belief that the programmes' longstanding reputation and connection to the field were more fundamental indications of quality. Massey has a long and close association with NZAC and Massey qualified counsellors typically gain Membership without difficulty.

*Are counsellors registered in New Zealand?*

No, at present this is not the case. However many employers will only appoint NZAC members to counselling positions and funders usually require this. NZAC presently has an application for registration pending under the HPCA Act.