Rehabilitation Counseling Program
Master of Science Degree
Department of Counseling, School & Educational Psychology
University at Buffalo
2008-09

Philosophy and Objectives

The nationally accredited Rehabilitation Counseling Program offers four semesters of coursework and clinical training experiences leading to a Master of Science degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. The Rehabilitation Counseling Program at the University at Buffalo is designed to give the student a solid base of counseling skills and rehabilitation techniques, with practice in applying these skills and techniques in different settings and with various client populations. This program is one of several graduate degree programs offered within the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology. The opportunity to concentrate in the area of Rehabilitation is also offered through the doctoral program in Counselor Education.

Rehabilitation counseling is a growing profession whose practitioners are part of a team of specialists working in a unified effort to help people with disabilities move towards making the best possible adjustment and to live life as self-sufficiently as possible. Disability is broadly defined to include conditions of a physical, psychological, emotional, intellectual, or social nature.

Special components of the field of Rehabilitation Counseling often include but are not limited to:

1. a holistic view of the client and services required,
2. assessment of a client in both emotional and functional terms, strengths as well as difficulties,
3. awareness of psychological and medical aspects of disabilities,
4. services going beyond the scope of counseling to teaching (e.g. social skills) and advocacy,
5. working within a team context with professionals from a variety of disciplines.

The rehabilitation counselor may be found in a diversity of settings. Examples of vocational-oriented sites include state divisions of vocational rehabilitation, vocational evaluation programs, vocational counseling centers, community rehabilitation programs and Native American Rehabilitation Programs. The rehabilitation counselor may also work in: mental health agencies, medical centers, nursing homes, multi-purposed community centers, youth and family service agencies, penal and correctional institutions, alcohol and drug abuse programs, and private practice.

Employment Outlook

Graduates of the program are eligible to become Certified Rehabilitation Counselors. The employment prospects of graduate trained rehabilitation counselors have continued to be relatively strong despite cutbacks in the Federal support for social services. Contributing factors to this favorable outlook include: the extension of service to a greater number of persons with disabilities, an increased public
awareness of the value of the rehabilitation approach to human problems, and expanding employment opportunities in the private sector. Periodic follow-ups of the graduates of the Rehabilitation Counseling Education Program reveal that over 95% of the graduates are employed in rehabilitation related positions. The 2004/05 edition of the Occupational Outlook Handbook reports that there are 110,000 rehabilitation counselors employed nationally and that the field is expected to grow faster than average (for all occupations) through the year 2010.

**Accreditation and Certification**

The program is fully accredited by the Council on Rehabilitation Counselor Education (CORE) through the year 2011. Students enrolled in the CORE accredited program are required to take the Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRC) Examination in their last semester prior to graduation. Graduates are often eligible for license as counselors in those states that license counseling.

**Curriculum**

The program leading to the Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling is one of several programs in the Department of Counseling, School & Educational Psychology. The curriculum involves the equivalent of four semesters of full-time, or the equivalent of part-time study, and must be completed within five years of the date of matriculation or admission. Forty-two credits must be completed after admission to the program (i.e., no more than six credits may be taken on a non-matriculated basis), with a total of 48 semester hours or more. All courses are available for distance learning, part-time study and to meet the needs of second career professional, are available after 4 pm.

Within the department certain courses cover foundations, knowledge, and skills that are common to all programs. These courses constitute a professional counseling core, including the study of history of counseling, counseling theory, ethical and professional issues, vocational psychology, group counseling, tests and measurement, and research methods. Rehabilitation students are also required to take courses specific to the field of rehabilitation, introducing them to the basic principles, history, institutions, and resources within the field of rehabilitation and to the medical and psychosocial problems faced by persons who have disabilities.

Individual student programs are planned jointly by students and their faculty advisors. Electives are available within the department as well as in other departments of the University. Students’ academic needs, and career plans, as well as University and community resources are considered when programs are developed.

A critical aspect of the program in Rehabilitation Counseling is the emphasis on applied clinical experience. Students have clinical training experiences in three of their four semesters of study. Their first experience, Field Work, occurs during the first semester. Site visits are made to representative rehabilitation facilities in conjunction with the class. Students are given intensive training in basic counseling skills so that they will be ready to work with clients. Placement in a rehabilitation agency in the community occurs during the second half of the first semester for one day of work per week, totaling 50 contact hours by the end of the course.

During the second semester students stay at the Field Work agency for a Practicum which typically involves at least 150 hours of agency contact time. Students begin counseling with a small caseload under the close supervision of Clinical site and University supervisors. Individual counseling sessions are audio or videotaped to allow for analysis and critique of the students’ clinical skills. During this time students are simultaneously involved in a clinically focused practicum class.

Students complete an internship experience during the second year of study, typically during the Spring (final) semester. Internships involve a one semester, 600 hour (typically 40 hours per week for 15 weeks). Students continue to receive campus supervision in the classroom, as well as on-site supervision.

A final requirement, in addition to coursework and clinical experiences, for the degree of Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling is the completion of a Capstone Experience. Students have
three options: 1. completion of a Masters Research Project, 2. completion of a Masters Thesis, or 3. passing the Comprehensive Examination.

The **Research Project** is designed to give you experience in independent scholarly inquiry and communication through written research under the direction of an advisor. The project is typically begun during the fall semester of the second year, and submitted in duplicate in final form no later than one month prior to graduation. Students should register for CSEP 700 (Individual Guidance Project) once, for two or three credits, during the semester in which they begin their project.

The **Masters Thesis** is more involved than the masters research project and requires that the student design a research study, collect data, analyze results, and present his or her findings to a Thesis committee consisting of the advisor and two other faculty in the department. This piece of original research must be closely monitored by the student’s advisor, who will serve as the chair of the Thesis Committee.

The **Comprehensive Exam** is the third option for the capstone experience. The exam is in multiple-choice format and covers the following content related to required courses: (1) Counseling Theory, (2) Career Development and Vocational Placement, (3) Tests and Measurements, (4) Rehabilitation Foundations and Professional Issues, (5) Medical and Psychosocial Aspects of Chronic Illness and Disability. The Comprehensive Exam should be taken the last semester before graduation - typically the 9th or 10th week of Spring Semester.

Students may take courses in the program on a non-matriculant basis if they are interested in applying for the program. Courses suitable for consideration by non-matriculated students would include CSEP 503, CSEP 532, CSEP 649, CSEP 661 and CSEP 680. Taking a course as a non-matriculated student requires the permission of the instructor, and of the Department Chair. Being accepted to take courses non-matriculated does not assure acceptance into the program. Only 6 credits taken prior to admission (generally two courses) may be applied to your program.

**Typical Program**

Students’ programs will be developed in conjunction with their advisors. Although individual needs and interests may produce some variation, a typical program taken by students would be similar to the following:

**FALL FIRST YEAR**
- CSEP 532 Introduction to Statistical Research 3 credits
- CSEP 596 Field Work (counseling techniques) 3 credits
- CSEP 649 Rehabilitation Foundations 3 credits
- CSEP 653 Foundations of Counseling Theory 3 credits

**SPRING FIRST YEAR**
- CSEP 503 Tests and Measurements in Counseling 3 credits
- CSEP 597 Counseling Practicum (150 contact hrs) 4 credits
- CSEP 658 Introduction to Groups 4 credits
- CSEP 661 Medical & Psychosocial Aspects of Disability & Illness 3 credits

**SUMMER**
- Elective

**FALL SECOND YEAR**
- Elective 3 credits
- CSEP 700 Masters Project 3 credits
- CSEP 683 Vocational Placement 3 credits
- CSEP 680 Career Development 3 credits

**SPRING SECOND YEAR**
- CSEP 600 Internship (600 contact hours) 12 credits
Listed above are the required courses. Students must choose elective courses (usually taken in summer and/or near the end of the program) to total at least the 48 credits required to graduate. Electives within the department include courses on family counseling, grief counseling and group counseling. Students are also encouraged to take electives outside the department, but such courses should be approved by the students’ advisors. Most students complete the program with 50 credits or more.

Credits for courses taken outside of UB (i.e., other universities) must be approved following review of the course materials (e.g., syllabus, catalog descriptions, etc.) by the Program Director and the instructor who is teaching the course at UB.

**Application Procedure**

Students are generally admitted at the beginning of each fall term. All application materials for fall admission should be received by March 1.

The application for the program can be found online at [http://www.gse.buffalo.edu/programs/csep/](http://www.gse.buffalo.edu/programs/csep/). All sections of the application must be completed before submission electronically. The application cannot be revised after it has been submitted. In addition to the online application, applicants must submit the following also by the application deadline:

1. A $50 non-refundable application fee, either by check or electronically along with the online application. The check must be in US currency and made out to the University at Buffalo.
2. Graduate Record Exam scores, including verbal and quantitative sections.
3. At least three letters of reference regarding the applicant’s previous academic work and any rehabilitation or counseling related experience.
4. Official copies of transcripts from all post secondary institutions attended.
5. A statement demonstrating why the applicant wants to become a rehabilitation counselor.

Please note that applications will be reviewed only when all of the above have been submitted.

Ordinarily those applicants who meet the minimum requirements are individually interviewed by the faculty. For out of town applicants for whom travel to Buffalo is not feasible, other interview arrangements may be made. From the group of interviewed applicants, the students for the following fall term are selected. Students are selected for the program on the basis of their ability, experience, and commitment to rehabilitation, with a preference for a related undergraduate degree. Each year, the optimal number of students is determined to maximize the quality of the courses, supervision and advisement. The average class size is 10-12, so competition may be keen at times.

Please forward application materials to the address below. For questions regarding the application process applicants must contact:

Office of Graduate Admissions and Student Services
Graduate School of Education
366 Baldy Hall
Buffalo, NY 14260
716-645-2110
Fax: 716-645-7937

**Financial Aid**

Sources of support and student loans are administered through the Student Response Center at the University. Their phone number is 716-645-2450, Web page: [http://www.src.buffalo.edu/financialaid/index.shtml](http://www.src.buffalo.edu/financialaid/index.shtml)
Affirmative Action

The program is committed to seeking and supporting the efforts of qualified individuals with disabilities and minority candidates who want to enter the field of rehabilitation counseling. No person, in whatever relationship with the University at Buffalo-SUNY shall be subject to discrimination on the basis of age, creed, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or military veteran status.

For further information on the field of rehabilitation counseling, the program at SUNY/Buffalo, or the admissions procedure, please call the department, (716) 645-2484, and speak to someone on the rehabilitation faculty. Potential applicants are encouraged to make an appointment for an interview with a rehabilitation program faculty member, to discuss any questions they may have.

Faculty and Staff

David F. Burganowski, Ph.D.,
Program Director
Associate Research Professor

Timothy Janikowski, Ph.D., C.R.C.
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