

AY 2025-26 Application Cycle (Fall 2026 Start Date)

Instructions for the MS in Counseling Program Application

Applicable for All Four Concentrations:

- (a) Career Counseling; (b) Marriage, Couple, & Family Counseling;
(c) Rehabilitation Counseling; and (d) School Counseling**

Thank you for your interest in our MS in Counseling Program. In applying to our program, you are applying to ONE of the four concentrations.

Detailed instructions for the application can be found below. If there are any minor discrepancies between this document and the Cal State Apply application system, please refer to THIS document for final confirmed application details. **Please read the document fully and carefully.**

(A) Overall Admission Process

- Students are admitted to our program for the Fall semester each year – **there are no Spring or Summer semester admission applications.**
- The application is available through the admissions portal via [Cal State Apply](#) and opens on October 1, 2025 (6am PST).
- **Deadlines – All Concentrations:**
 - There is both a priority and a general/final deadline for the MS in Counseling Program.
 - These deadlines mean that the application itself and ALL application materials (including completed supervisor/faculty recommendation forms) must be completed and submitted by these dates to be considered for each respective deadline. *(See note later in this document for guidance on recommendation forms & submitting final applications.)*
 - **No late or incomplete applications will be reviewed for admission.**
 - *Priority Deadline:* January 5, 2026 by 9pm PST.
 - *General & Final Deadline:* **January 15, 2026 at 9pm PST.**
- No early or rolling decisions are available – application reviews begin after respective deadlines.
- The admissions screening process is a holistic review, assessing content in the following areas: knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions.
- The admission process includes two components:
 - 1) *Primary Screening: Submission and Review of the Application Through Cal State Apply*
 - The initial screening reviews the submitted materials for completed applications.
 - Applicants will then be notified via email by early February on whether or not they will be moving to the secondary screening process.
 - 2) *Secondary Screening: Interview Day Event*
 - Interview Day includes an interview, group activities, and an in-person writing assessment.
 - This is an in-person, all-day event and there are no alternative dates or virtual options. **Applicants must attend to be considered for admission.**
 - This year's event will be on **February 27, 2026 (all day) – PLEASE RESERVE THIS DATE ON YOUR CALENDAR**

- Communications with Applicants – All automated communications will occur with the email address used in the Cal State Apply system:
 - Please confirm that the Cal State Apply system is using your preferred/recent email (applicants who have applied to previous CSU programs/degrees will have carryover user information from previous applications).
 - **Please add the following email addresses as safe senders for any email used as part of the application process:**
 - 1) coe-counselored@csus.edu
 - 2) coe-grad@csus.edu
 - 3) grad_admissions@csus.edu
 - 4) gradtranscripts@csus.edu
- Application Decisions Timeline & Process
 - Please see our website's [Key Dates section](#) for a summary of the application timeline.
 - Applicants will be notified in early February on whether they will be moving to the secondary screening process (Interview Day Event), or if they will not be progressing forward in the current year's application process.
 - Final Admissions decisions have to be approved by the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS)
 - 1) Applicants recommended for admission by the MS in Counseling Program will be notified on March 15, 2026.
 - 2) OGS will review these recommendations & approve or deny admission for each applicant during the March through May timeframe.
 - 3) Applicants will be notified about all official admissions decisions by OGS via email during this timeframe
 - More details will be presented at the Interview Day event.

(B) Minimum Admission Requirements – Note: Meeting these requirements does not constitute that the applicant will be admitted to the program. As previously noted, applicants are evaluated on a holistic basis, assessing for fit for the program and evaluated against their fellow applicant pool. Admission numbers are limited due to program size for quality and resource purposes, thus program admission is competitive in nature. These requirements constitute minimum requirements for non-conditional acceptance into any CSUS graduate program.

- Admission as a classified graduate student in the MS in Counseling Program requires the following minimum standards set by the Office of Graduate Studies:
 - A baccalaureate degree;
 - Good academic standing at the last college attended;
 - A grade point average of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) in the last 60 semester (90 quarter) units taken (no matter which institution or combination of institutions you attended)
- For questions regarding these and other minimum standards (such as low GPA, type of baccalaureate degree, prerequisite courses, transfer of credits, etc.), please see our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ Document) on the “Ambassadors, FAQ, & Support” page of our website.

(C) Admissions Procedures – Required Documents for Application

All applicants, including Sacramento State graduates, must submit the following:

1) Concentration-Specific Written Statement:

Format:	APA 7 student-paper style formatting (margins, font & font size, line spacing, page numbers, title page format, citation method, etc.). We recommend that the title page list the program and concentration of your application as the "class" (the professor line can be omitted).
Page Count:	2-4 pages (including title page, but excluding reference pages), plus any additional reference page(s)
Sources:	at least five sources cited on the APA reference page
PDF File:	written statements must be uploaded as PDF files

- a) The writing prompts below are intended for the program to assess your writing and research abilities, how you construct and organize your paper (APA), content, and knowledge of the counseling profession. It is not to assess or identify expertise in the field. Responses should be personally written without plagiarizing or the use of AI writing tools (such as ChatGPT).
- b) Writing Prompts – Respond **ONLY** for the concentration for which you are applying:
- **CAREER COUNSELING**
In the MS in Counseling (Career) program, students are expected to support clients ethically and legally across diverse settings. How do individual's intersecting identities (such as race, gender, class, or ability) influence ethical and culturally responsive career counseling? In your response, explain how the counseling profession's wellness-based model—grounded in the ACA Code of Ethics and legal standards—guides your work in areas like wellness, prevention, assessment, and interventions. Describe how using ethical practices and understanding intersectionality supports advocacy, accountability, and social justice in career counseling.
 - **MARRIAGE, COUPLE, & FAMILY COUNSELING (MCFC)**
MS in Counseling (Marriage, Couple, & Family) Professional Counselors are expected to develop a strong understanding of the ethical and legal standards that guide clinical counseling practice, particularly in the context of working with diverse individuals, couples, and families facing complex mental health issues and relational dynamics. Describe (1) why you believe ethical practice is critical for the profession, (2) the relationship between ethical principles (e.g., beneficence, justice, fidelity, veracity, etc.), ethical codes developed by the American Counseling Association, and legal requirements (e.g., state laws, Board of Behavioral Sciences regulations), and (3) how ethical counseling practice is consistent with a multicultural, social justice, and advocacy-oriented approach to counseling.
 - **REHABILITATION COUNSELING**
Professional Counselors in Rehabilitation Counseling are expected to develop a strong understanding of the ethical and legal standards that guide clinical counseling practice, particularly in the context of working with diverse individuals and families facing complex mental health issues, co-occurring disorders, substance use disorders, and disability. Describe (1) why you believe ethical practice is critical for the profession, (2) the relationship between ethical principles (e.g., beneficence, justice, fidelity, veracity,

etc.), ethical codes developed by the American Counseling Association, and legal requirements (e.g., state laws, Board of Behavioral Sciences regulations), and (3) how ethical counseling practice is consistent with a multicultural, social justice, and advocacy-oriented approach to counseling.

- **SCHOOL COUNSELING**

MS in Counseling (School Counseling) students are expected to develop a strong understanding of the ethical and legal standards that guide professional practice in diverse PreK–12 educational settings. This includes supporting students’ academic, career, and social-emotional development while adhering to the ethical guidelines of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and the credentialing requirements set by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC). Describe (1) why you believe ethical and legal practice is essential in school counseling; (2) how the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Ethical Standards and guidelines inform work with students in PreK-12 school settings; (3) how school counselors contribute to student wellness and mental health within the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS); and (4) how ethical school counseling practice supports a multicultural, social justice, and advocacy-oriented approach to student development.

2) Resume/CV - Relevant Work Experience

- Please provide a resume/CV that includes your professional, related professional, and/or volunteer experiences. If applicable, include any honors, awards, research, or other achievements as appropriate. Please upload the file in PDF format.

3) Personal Statement

Format:	APA 7 student-paper style formatting (margins, font & font size, line spacing, page numbers. However, no title page or reference pages are required.
Page Count:	2-3 pages (no title page or reference page)
PDF File:	personal statements must be uploaded as PDF files

- Please share your goals regarding why you want to become a professional Counselor, including your interests, community engagement, and abilities that are informing your application for a graduate program in Counseling. How do you see your strengths and areas of growth in potentially attaining these goals? What factors have led to your consideration of professional counseling, specializing in career/marriage couple and family/rehabilitation/school counseling, as opposed to other helping professions.

4) Recommendation Form Information (2 Required)

- We are requesting that you provide the names and professional contact information for two recommenders. Once their information is submitted, each person will be directly sent a link to the program’s online recommendation form.
- These recommenders should be from an individual who has observed your knowledge, skills, or professional dispositions in a professional capacity and/or supervisory relationship. Please do not include personal references; we are

requesting professional references – for example, someone who has overseen your work such as a Supervisor at your place of employment, or an Instructor/Professor.

- *****NOTE: We highly suggest starting the recommendation form process as soon as the application system opens in October** in order to allow recommenders to have adequate time to complete and submit your recommendation forms BEFORE the due date for the application in January. Requesting and submitting recommendations can be done before applicants submit their final program application; status tracking for the recommendation forms can be viewed on the Cal State Apply application. We advise waiting until all recommendation forms have been completed by recommenders before submitting your final application in case contact information or recommender names need to be changed – changes cannot be made by applicants after they have submitted their application. For more details see the Cal State Apply Instructions.***

5) Unofficial Transcripts

- You must upload (as PDF format) one set of unofficial transcripts from **ALL** colleges and universities attended – this also includes any institutions where additional or non-degree-earning credits were earned (even if they appear as transfer credits on other transcripts).
- If admitted, you will be contacted for official copies of transcripts by the Office of Graduate Studies.
- ***NOTE*** Applicants with foreign documents are required to submit one set of official, evaluated transcripts from all colleges and universities attended outside of the U.S. More information regarding (a) the foreign document process, & (b) from which third-party evaluation agencies we accept documents can be found on the Office of Graduate Studies Future Students website.