

Ferkauf Mental Health Counseling Program (MA) FAQs

Q. What jobs are available for graduates of the Mental Health Counseling program (MA)?

In 2005, New York State's scope of practice laws changed allowing for MA-level psychology students with required coursework and experience to become licensed in four areas. One of these areas is mental health counseling. Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology has long had an MA program registered with the New York State Education Department. When the law changed, we revamped our existing MA program to meet the new requirements as a license-qualifying program in the State.

Once a graduate of our program becomes licensed, he or she is entitled to provide assessment and treatment of individuals, couples, families and groups. Mental health counselors practice in a variety of settings, including independent practice, community agencies, managed behavioral health care organizations, integrated delivery systems, hospitals, employee assistance programs and substance abuse treatment centers. They are highly skilled professionals who provide a full range of services including assessment and diagnosis, psychotherapy, treatment planning and utilization review, brief and solution-focused therapy, alcoholism and substance abuse treatment, psycho-educational and prevention programs, and crisis management.

Q. When is the application deadline?

Applications, including all related documents, must be received by February 15.

Q. I applied to one of the doctoral programs at Ferkauf but was given an acceptance to the MA program. Why?

In some cases, applicants to Ferkauf who do not receive acceptances to one of our doctoral programs are given an alternative acceptance to our Mental Health Counseling program (MA) for their consideration.

Q. If I accept the Mental Health Counseling program (MA), can I then reapply to one of your doctoral programs?

All students in our MA program can apply to our doctoral programs upon completion of the MA degree. These students are also given a guarantee of an interview with the admissions committee.

Q. If I come to the MA program and then get into one of the doctoral programs do all of the credits transfer?

Yes, all graduate credits taken at Ferkauf will transfer to a doctoral program here. However, it is critical to note that this does not guarantee that you would subsequently then finish the doctoral program earlier or quicker than others entering the doctoral program. The sequencing of the courses for each of the doctoral programs is very lock-step, so you can only take certain classes after you have completed previous coursework. Thus, the program would still require five years for completion.

Q. Are scholarships available to MA students?

No, not in the first year of the program. At the end of the first year, students can apply for very limited scholarship funds for their second year (e.g. \$2,000 per year).

Q. What is the association that represents counseling graduates?

Mental health counseling is a distinct profession with national standards for education, training and clinical practice. [New York Mental Health Counselors Association](#) is the state organization that represents the interests of the clinical counselors of New York.

Q. Where do mental health counselors receive training?

More than 40 graduate programs throughout New York educate mental health counselors. Mental health counselors have practiced in New York State as mental health professionals for more than 35 years.

Q. What does the coursework for this program involve?

Graduate education and clinical training prepare mental health counselors to provide a full range of services for individuals, couples, families, adolescents, children and groups.

Q. What are the core areas of training?

The core areas of mental health counseling programs approved by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs include:

- Diagnosis and psychopathology
- Psychotherapy
- Testing and assessment
- Group counseling
- Human growth and development
- Counseling theory
- Supervised practicum and internships

Q. What are the requirements for New York State?

New York State requires that mental health counselors have a master's or higher in professional counseling or its substantial equivalent. Counselors will need at least a 60-credit hour master's degree. Three thousand hours of post-master's-supervised experience is also required before a counselor can sit for the licensure exam. These are the national standards for the profession.

Q. What is the difference between mental health counseling and social work?

Licensure requirements for mental health counselors are equivalent to or exceed those for clinical social workers and marriage and family therapists.

Q. Will I be able to bill for services once I am licensed?

More than 90% of the nation's managed care organizations either employ or contract with licensed mental health counselors.

Q. What are the experiential requirements of the licensure law?

Counselors also need at least 3,000 hours of post-master's-supervised experience in order to be licensed

Q. What will the law allow counselors to do?

Under the law, counselors are able to test, assess and treat clients. Clients could be individuals, couples, families and groups. This is one of the most comprehensive licensure laws in the country.

Q. What exam is the state using to test counselors for this license?

Since the license is for counselors who work in clinical settings, the exam will be the [National Clinical Mental Health Counselor Examination](#) (NCMHCE).

Q. What will the educational requirements be in order to be licensed?

The educational requirements in our licensure law are:

- Human growth and development
- Social and cultural foundations of counseling
- Counseling theory and practice and psychopathology
- Group dynamics
- Lifestyle and career development
- Assessment and appraisal of individuals, couples, and families and groups
- Research and program evaluation
- Professional orientation and ethics
- Foundations of mental health counseling and consultation
- Clinical instruction and a minimum of one-year supervised internship or practicum in mental health counseling

Q. Whom can I contact for more information about my application?

Contact the Ferkauf Office of Admissions at 718.430.3820 or augusta@yu.edu with any questions regarding your application.