

Kansas State University

Ed.S. in School Counseling

Program Approval

I. General Information

A. Institution Kansas State University

B. Program Identification

Degree Level: Education Specialist Degree
Program Title: School Counseling
Degree to be Offered: Ed.S. in School Counseling
Responsible Department or Unit: Special Ed, Counseling, and Student Affairs
CIP Code: 13.1101
Modality: On-Campus and Online
Proposed Implementation Date: August 2022

Total Number of Semester Credit Hours for the Degree: 60

II. Clinical Sites

Does this program require the use of Clinical Sites? No

Two semesters of supervised internship for a total 600 hours (300 elementary and 300 secondary) in school settings are required.

III. Justification

Kansas State University's entry-level School Counseling program (currently a subplan of the M.S. in Counseling and Student Development degree) has been accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) since Sept. 1, 1999. It is currently a 48-credit hour program. CACREP recently established a requirement that all entry-level counselor preparation programs require a minimum of 60 credit hours. Rather than transitioning to a 60-hour M.S. degree, K-State requests to transition to a 60-hour Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) degree in School Counseling. This would be a high-asset and low-cost investment. The courses that will constitute the required 60 credit hours are already approved courses being offered as core courses in either the existing M.S. program or the existing Counselor Education and Supervision subplan within the Ph.D. in Counseling and Student Development degree program. The proposal is supported by (1) strong workforce demand; (2) no CACREP Ed.S. program in region; (3) high program interest; (4) eligibility for LPC; and (5) increased salary potential.

Workforce Demand: The Occupational Outlook Handbook (2021) predicts an eight percent employment growth rate for counselors from 2019-2029, which is a faster rate than the average for all other occupations. This increase in employment is anticipated to result in increased student enrollment at all education levels.

Competitive Advantage: There is currently no CACREP-accredited Ed.S. degree in School Counseling offered by a university in Kansas or in the Midwest region (CACREP, 2021). Although multiple institutions across the country offer a Specialist in School Counseling degree, KSU would house the only CACREP Ed.S. in School Counseling program in the region. Offering the only CACREP program would create a unique marketing and recruitment opportunity (ASCA, 2021; CACREP, 2021).

High Program Interest: Enrollment in the M.S. in School Counseling program has grown significantly in the past three years due to high need and interest. A two-month digital marketing campaign, in collaboration with the Olathe campus and SMART Reach Digital, validated the high program interest. For instance, there have been approximately 300 program inquiries (web, email, and phone) from January, 2018 to June, 2021. The M.S. in School Counseling enrollment increased from 41 students in 2019, to 56 students in 2020, and to 70 in 2021. Current and future students are enthusiastic about the transition to the Ed.S. degree.

Eligibility for LPC: The 60-hour degree will also allow completers to be eligible to be a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), a license issued by the Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board. The ability to provide mental health counseling by earning the LPC is a great recruitment tool. In the past two years more than 70% of our current students and alumni have inquired and/or enrolled in the additional 12 hours necessary to be eligible for the LPC. An individual is not eligible for the LPC with a degree that consists of only 48 credit hours. Sixty credit hours are required for the LPC.

Potential Salary Increase: The new degree could provide a tremendous salary boost to school counselors. The Ed.S. would provide the potential for a counselor to begin at the same level on the salary schedule as school psychologists who also have an Ed.S. required 60-credit hour degree program. The potential of an enhanced beginning salary would serve as a strong program incentive and recruitment tool.

IV. Program Demand

Current employed counselors, current students, and future applicants are seeking opportunities to enhance their knowledge base and skill development in advanced theory and counseling interventions designed to meet the needs of today’s students and families. Alumni and current students have been requesting the additional 12 credit hours beyond the 48 credit M.S. degree for several years in order to be eligible for their LPC. The research from other educational fields that have transitioned to 60 credit hours and the preliminary data being reported from counseling programs having completed the 60-hour transition have been positive with regard to increase in enrollment numbers. The research from school psychologists, mental health counselors, and school counselors indicates increasing to 60 hours and with an Education Specialist Degree will cause an increase in program applicants. Research from (Merlin et al., 2017) reported transitioning to 60 hours led to positive results and students preferred the comprehensive training they received in 60 credit hours. School counselors value the additional knowledge and skill development in the extra hours (CACREP, 2017; Merlin, et al., 2017).

A. Survey of Student Interest

The current counseling programs receive approximately 100 program inquiries per year. The inquiries include those interested in beginning the program and those interested in completing the 12 hours necessary for the LPC. Student surveys indicate the Ed.S. would have appeal to current students seeking to continue their educational pursuits and also to new applicants excited to earn a unique advanced degree.

Current students in the program were surveyed and asked if they would be interested in completing the additional coursework to meet the 60-hour requirement. Overwhelmingly, they responded in the affirmative:

Number of surveys administered:	60
Number of completed surveys returned:	40
Percentage of students interested in Ed.S. program: ...	90

B. Market Analysis

Kansas is experiencing a shortage of school and mental health counselors. The option of an Ed.S. program offers great potential to increase enrollment and positively impact this shortage. The Kansas State Department of

Education (KSDE) collects school annual vacancy data from every school district in Kansas. The data consistently reflect a significant shortage of P-12 licensed school counselors. According to the Kansas ARP ESSER State Plan (2021), “Kansas is experiencing a supply-demand problem relevant to available licensed school counselors...” (48). The ratio of counselor to student in Kansas is currently reported to be 1:450 with many elementary schools not having ONE licensed school counselor. Based on research the American School Counselor Association recommends a ratio of one counselor to 250 students. Research shared by the American School Counselor Association (2019) and reported in the KSDE ARP ESSER State Plan (2021) the counselor shortage in Kansas is compounded in schools of high density, underserved populations, and rural or more isolated areas. The high ratio, lack of elementary counselors, and disproportionate number of high school counselors available to students in rural areas, of color, and low SES populations emphasize the need for additional licensed school counselors. The federal and state governments recognize the need for additional counselors and have authorized multiple sources of federal funds to support the salaries of school counselors.

The Occupational Outlook Handbook prediction of an eight percent employment growth rate for counselors presents a challenge for counselor education programs faced with addressing the counselor shortage. Multiple factors are the reason for the severe shortage of licensed school counselors including the salary schedules in schools and the retiring of current school counselors. The Ed.S. addresses the salary issue and the supply and demand concerns. Additionally, KSDE acknowledging the shortage and need has included a *Grow Your Own School Counselor Model* in the ARP ESSER State Plan submitted in June (KSDE, 2021). This funding model aligns for recruiting and implementing the Ed.S. degree. The expertise of a licensed school counselor in the domains of academic, social-emotional, and career development have been shown to be critical to student success.

Since the pandemic the proportion of mental health–related emergency department (ED) visits among adolescents aged 12–17 years increased 31% (Yard et al., 2021). Emergency department visits were 50.6% higher by adolescents considering death by suicide and 50.6% higher for girls aged 12–17 during the same period in 2019 (Yard et al., 2021). The Kansas rate of death by suicide and of students reporting considering or attempting suicide is alarmingly high and continues to increase. The Kansas Communities That Care Survey (2021) administered to 71,000, Kansas 6th-12th graders reported 29.6% of students considered suicide, an increase from 28.7% during 2020 (KDADS, 2021). More than eight percent reported having serious thoughts of ending their life within the past month and 9.4% within the past year. Twenty-two-thousand students reported feeling symptoms of clinical depression (KDADS, 2021). It is concerning that two out of every five adolescents in Kansas report experiencing sustained feelings of hopelessness and sadness (KDADS, 2021). These students need a P-12 licensed school counselor. The Ed.S. degree will increase enrollment and help to address the counselor shortage.

V. Projected Enrollment for the Initial Three Years of the Program

Year	Headcount Per Year		Sem Credit Hrs. Per Year	
	Full- Time	Part- Time	Full- Time	Part- Time
Implementation	70		2100	
Year 2	80		2400	
Year 3	90		2700	

VI. Employment

Kansas has a need for 1,200 additional counselors to meet the ASCA recommended ratio of 1:250. Dr. Randy Watson, KS Commissioner of Education, has strongly advocated to school administrators to “hire more counselors.” However, to meet the 1:250 goal, Dr. Watson has reminded counselor educators that we must graduate more license-ready counselors. Kansas counselor education programs have been challenged to prepare

more counselors to meet the critical shortage of school and mental health counselors in Kansas. During 2019, 20 students (ten fall and ten spring) graduated with a M.S. in School Counseling and 16 (eight fall and eight spring) in 2020. To the best of our knowledge, 100% of the M.S. in School Counseling graduates are currently or were previously employed in school counseling or counseling-related positions.

Kansas is not the only state experiencing a severe counselor shortage. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2021), there were 333,500 school counseling positions in U.S. schools in May 2019. The outlook is expected to have a growth rate of eight percent between 2018 and 2028, a much faster rate than average for all other occupations (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). The Bureau reported the median salary for school counselors in 2020 was \$58,120. Zip Recruiter (2021) reported the Kansas M.S. school counselor mean 2020 salary as \$50,699. Zip reported the mean salary for a school psychologist with an Ed.S. as \$73,607. Consequently, if school districts are consistent with the salary structure for school counselors with the same 60-hour credit Ed.S. degree program as school psychologists, the result would be a significant pay increase for counselors.

School districts vary in their negotiated agreements and salary schedules. Select salary schedules include a separate column for an Ed.S., several separate by credit hours, and others offer a separate contract and/or bonus for those with extended days or difficult to fill positions.

A school counselor license is issued by the KSDE. To be eligible for a school counselor license, a graduate degree in school counseling is required with a minimum of a 3.25 cumulative GPA. A teaching certificate is not required to be licensed as a school counselor. A passing score on the Praxis for School Counselors, recommendation from an institution of higher education, and no legal issues indicated with fingerprinting or background check are also required prior to issuance of a license. Once a candidate has met the requirements, he/she is eligible to be licensed P-12 by KSDE.

KSU student placement rates for school counseling completers have been at nearly 100% for the past several years. Students who have completed half of the program are eligible for a provisional license. For the past several years, approximately half of the students in the program have either been hired or offered a position as school counselors at the half-way point in the program. The program reputation of being high-caliber with a rigorous curriculum, highly skilled and knowledgeable students, taught by talented and connected professors who are highly invested in their dedicated students serves as a solid foundation for recruitment efforts.

VII. Admission and Curriculum

A. Admission Criteria

- Graduate School Application
- Official Transcript from bachelor's degree institution
- Three recommendations from previous faculty, employers, or supervisors
- Official Transcript from each institution completed any post-baccalaureate coursework or degrees
- Statement of Objectives: 1-2 page statement of career and professional goals and relevant professional experience

B. Curriculum

Year 1: Fall

SCH = Semester Credit Hours

Course #	Course Name	SCH 9
EDCEP 823	Counseling Theory	3

EDCEP 852	Career Development for School Counselors	3
EDCEP 871	Leadership, Advocacy, and Consultation for Counselors	3

Year 1: Spring

Course #	Course Name	SCH 12
EDCEP 857	Counseling Program Management	3
EDCEP 856	Counseling Children	3
EDCEP 877	Counseling Practicum	3
EDCEP 815	Using Tests	3

Year 1: Summer

Course #	Course Name	SCH 9
EDCEP 810	Mental Health in Schools	3
EDCEP 822	Counseling Adolescents	3
EDCEP 824	Development Across the Lifespan for School Counselors	3

Year 2: Fall

Course #	Course Name	SCH 12
EDCEP 967	Appraisal and Psychopathology	3
EDCEP 858	Group Processes	3
EDCEP 887	Counseling Internship	3
EDCEP 860	Trauma and Crisis Counseling	3

Year 2: Spring

Course #	Course Name	SCH 9
EDCEP 887	Counseling Internship	3
EDCEP 985	Advanced Counseling Theory	3
EDCEP 955	Legal and Ethical Issues in Counseling	3

Year 2: Summer

Course #	Course Name	SCH 9
EDCEP 816	Research Methods	3
EDCEP 951	Multicultural Counseling	3
EDCEP 886	Seminar in Critical Issues in Counseling	3

Total Number of Semester Credit Hours..... 60

VIII. Core Faculty

Note: * Next to Faculty Name Denotes Director of the Program, if applicable
 FTE: 1.0 FTE = Full-Time Equivalency Devoted to Program

Faculty Name	Rank	Highest Degree	Tenure Track Y/N	Academic Area of Specialization	FTE to Proposed Program Yr. 1	FTE to Proposed Program Yr. 2	FTE to Proposed Program Yr. 3
Dr. Jessica Lane	Asst. Professor	Ph.D.	Y	Counselor Education	1	1	1

Dr. Judy Hughey	Assoc. Professor	Ed.D.	Y	Counselor Education	1	0	0
Dr. Ken Hughey	Professor	Ph.D.	Y	Counselor Education	.5	0	0
Dr. Doris Carroll	Assoc. Professor	Ph.D.	Y	Counselor Education	.5	1	1
Dr. Dan Wilcox	Asst. Teaching Professor	Ph.D.	N	Counselor Education	.5	0	0
Dr. Alex Becnel	Asst. Professor	Ph.D.	Y	Counselor Education	1	1	1
Dr. Samantha Holloway	Teaching Asst. Professor	Ph.D.	N	Counselor Education	.6	1	1
New Faculty	Asst. Professor	Ph.D.	Y	Counselor Education	0	1	1

Number of graduate assistants assigned to this program1

IX. Expenditure and Funding Sources (List amounts in dollars. Provide explanations as necessary.)

A. EXPENDITURES	First FY	Second FY	Third FY
Personnel – Reassigned or Existing Positions			
Faculty	\$377,622	\$330,422	\$330,422
Administrators (other than instruction time)	\$12,800	\$6,400	\$6,400
Graduate Assistants	\$12,625	\$12,625	\$12,625
Support Staff for Administration (e.g., secretarial)	\$3,698	\$1,849	\$1,849
Fringe Benefits (total for all groups)	\$127,696	\$109,953	\$ 109,953
Other Personnel Costs			
Total Existing Personnel Costs – Reassigned or Existing	\$ 534,441	\$461,249	\$461,249
Personnel – New Positions			
Faculty	0	0	0
Administrators (other than instruction time)	0	0	0
Graduate Assistants	0	0	0
Support Staff for Administration (e.g., secretarial)	0	0	0
Fringe Benefits (total for all groups)	0	0	0
Other Personnel Costs	0	0	0
Total Existing Personnel Costs – New Positions	0	0	0
Start-up Costs - One-Time Expenses			

Library/learning resources	0	0	0
Equipment/Technology	0	0	0
Physical Facilities: Construction or Renovation	0	0	0
Other	\$20,000	0	0
Total Start-up Costs	\$20,000	0	0
Operating Costs – Recurring Expenses			
Supplies/Expenses	0	0	0
Library/learning resources	0	0	0
Equipment/Technology	0	0	0
Travel	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
Total Operating Costs	0	0	0
GRAND TOTAL COSTS	\$554,441	\$461,249	\$461,249

B. FUNDING SOURCES <i>(projected as appropriate)</i>	Current	First FY (New)	Second FY (New)	Third FY (New)
Tuition / State Funds		\$900,690	\$1,029,360	\$1,158,030
Student Fees		0	0	0
Other Sources		0	0	0
GRAND TOTAL FUNDING		\$900,690	\$1,029,360	\$1,158,030
C. Projected Surplus/Deficit (+/-) <i>(Grand Total Funding minus Grand Total Costs)</i>		\$346,249	\$568,111	\$696,781

X. Expenditures and Funding Sources Explanations

A. Expenditures

Personnel – Reassigned or Existing Positions

Dr. Judy Hughey, Dr. Ken Hughey, and Dr. Dan Wilcox are currently or will soon begin phased retirement. Dr. Alex Becnel began a tenure track Assistant Professor position in August, 2021. Dr. Samantha Holloway began a non-tenure track position as a Teaching Assistant Professor in August, 2021. A search is planned for an additional tenure track faculty in counselor education to begin in the fall of 2022. These new faculty allow the counseling programs to meet the CACREP requirement of five core faculty (FTE) for a Ph.D. program. Kansas State has the only CACREP accredited Ph.D. program in the state and will have the only CACREP accredited Ed.S. program in the region.

Personnel – New Positions

No new personnel will be needed as a result of the transition to the Ed.S. program. Select Ph.D. courses will be transitioned to the planned Ed.S. program.

Start-up Costs – One-Time Expenses

Promotional/Marketing Costs: \$20,000

A digital marketing campaign will be designed to promote the unique Ed.S. program. Education and school counseling conferences and child development populations will be targeted.

No Operating Costs – Recurring Expenses

B. Revenue: Funding Sources

Tuition funds are based upon the SCH data reported in section V and the graduate resident tuition rate of \$428.90 / SCH: Year one: 2100 x 428.90 = \$900,690; Year two: 2400 x \$428.90 = \$1,029,360; Year three: 2700 x \$428.90 = \$1,158,030.

D. Projected Surplus/Deficit

The program will be self-supported by tuition generated by the program and college general use funding.

XI. References

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Kansas Department of Education. Kansas ARP ESSER State Plan. (2021). Kansas Department of Education. Topeka, KS. Author

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Yard E, Radhakrishnan L, Ballesteros MF, et al. Emergency Department Visits for Suspected Suicide Attempts Among Persons Aged 12–25 Years Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, January 2019–May 2021. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2021;70:888–894. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7024e1>

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