

Frequently Asked Questions about the Addiction Counselor Education Program

When should I begin the application process?

The Addiction Counselor Education (ACE) program begins in September. It is wise to begin the application process in the early winter to allow enough time for an interview, and to request that any transcripts be sent from previous educational institutions. The program accepts the first 25-30 applicants who meet all the criteria for acceptance and pay the first semester's tuition. You may begin the application process at any time during the year. However, you may want to submit your application early in winter rather than risk being excluded because the class fills up quickly.

When is it too late to apply for September?

It is too late to apply for September classes once the class is full. Please call the office at (413) 572-8033 to confirm that there is still space in the class if you are interested in a last minute application.

May I make an appointment NOW and send in my application tomorrow?

No. We find that it works better if you send the application first.

The program states that it meets "nights and weekends". Is there a choice?

No. In the Westfield Program, the first three fall semester courses always meet on Saturdays from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm, and the two spring semester classes always meet on Wednesday evenings from 5:00 pm to 9:15 pm.

The practicum has to be arranged to suit your schedule and the needs of the agency where you find placement. It may be nights, days, weekends or weekdays, whatever you arrange with the practicum site. The practicum consists of 300 hours, in addition to the Wednesday night classes. To prepare you for the practicum, there is a required workshop (called the Pre-practicum) that meets just before the start of the practicum. You will know about it ahead of time so that you are able to make arrangements to take time off from work, if necessary.

What is the cost of the program?

The total cost, including registration, tuition, books, and fees is \$3900. Each semester's payment is due approximately four weeks before the first class of the semester.

How long does it take to complete the program?

The program is designed to be completed in two semesters (September to May). Some people choose to extend it to a third semester so that they can concentrate on the practicum when they are not in class.

How do I get financial aid?

Unfortunately, traditional financial aid does not apply to this program because it is a non-credit program. Some of our students receive support from the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (disabled individuals), or the Department of Employment and Training (unemployed individuals). Otherwise, students should view the financing information on the link “Financing Your ACE Program” for tips on where to seek financial assistance.

I have been awarded financial aid for the day school (or DGCE). Can I use it for ACE?

No, because unlike the day school or DGCE, the ACE program is not a degree program. It is also not a full time program and most financial aid requires that the student attend school full time.

Do students get help finding a Practicum placement?

Yes, during the first semester you will talk about it in class. Our instructors are familiar with local agencies so they can offer guidance. You will need to think about what population you would like to work with—factors such as youth or adults, men or women, dual diagnosis or alcohol. The Community Education Office will provide you with letters of introduction and the Director will be working with all students to offer assistance.

What about job placement after you finish the program?

Some students have been offered positions with the agency where they completed a practicum, but this is not typical and is not to be expected. Almost every person who wants a job will find one in this growing field. Agencies often contact our program director when they have an open position, and she will contact graduates who are looking for positions. It is a good idea to keep in touch with the ACE program director or the Community Education Office when looking for employment opportunities, either before or after completing the ACE Program.

I've already taken a course in Addictions at another college. Can I receive credit for it so I don't have to take it over again?

You may speak to the director about your individual case, but generally we find that the curriculum is not close enough to ours to qualify for credit.

Will I be certified upon completion of the Addiction Counselor Education Program?

You will have obtained a Certificate upon completing the ACE program. You will not be Certified or Licensed. However, upon completion of the ACE program, you will be eligible to apply to the Massachusetts Board of Substance Abuse Counselor Certification to take the State Exam. Once you have passed the exam you will then be required to have a minimum amount of work experience before being fully credentialed. You will be considered “registered” with the MBSACC (Certification Board). The same is true for licensing in the Commonwealth. These issues are discussed during the program and assistance is offered to students with this process.

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