

HIGHER EDUCATION COUNSELING AND STUDENT AFFAIRS (MS)

Offered at: San Luis Obispo Campus

<https://soe.calpoly.edu/hecsa/home>

The Master of Science in Higher Education Counseling and Student Affairs (HECSA) program prepares students for careers working as academic counselors and student affairs professionals in a variety of higher education and related settings. Rooted in counseling and social justice, the program aligns with student affairs competency standards created by the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). Completion of the degree also meets the educational requirements for those seeking positions as counselors in the California community college system.

The HECSA program welcomes applicants from diverse educational and professional backgrounds with no specific undergraduate major requirement. Students attending full-time complete the 48-unit program in two years. Hallmarks of the program include a cohort-based model, class meeting times designed to support working professionals, personalized faculty mentorship, and robust field experience opportunities. Graduates benefit from a strong alumni network employed in colleges, universities, and nonprofit organizations throughout California and the United States.

Requirements for Admission

Students apply via Cal State Apply (<https://www.calstate.edu/apply/>) and must submit a transcript, 3 letters of recommendation, a resume or curriculum vitae, and a personal interest essay.

International Students must meet all the standard eligibility criteria and demonstrate proficiency in English (English Proficiency Exam Requirements (<https://www.calpoly.edu/admissions/international-student/selection-criteria/english-exam-requirements/>))

Prerequisites: None.

Minimum GPA: Cumulative higher education grade point average (GPA) of 2.5.

Application due date: Please see Graduate Student Dates and Deadlines (<https://www.calpoly.edu/admissions/graduate-student/dates-and-deadlines/>) for application deadlines. Students begin the program in the fall semester.

Advancement to Candidacy

Completion of at least 6 units of graduate coursework with a cumulative and higher ed GPA of 3.0 or higher and an approved culminating experience proposal.

Culminating Experience

Portfolio Project (HCSA 5598)

Program Learning Objectives

1. Critically evaluate and communicate foundational and emerging literature and theories.
2. Apply problem-solving and cultural humility skills to complex higher education and relevant socio-cultural issues.
3. Effectively integrate and apply appropriate theories, methods, and principles to relevant social inequities.
4. Effectively promote social justice through relevant cross-disciplinary, campus, and community partnerships.
5. Continuously develop professional skills (i.e., multicultural, communication, facilitation) through ongoing learning and reflection.
6. Use leadership skills and knowledge of ethical and legal standards of practice to advocate for relevant change on campus and/or in the community.

Code	Title	Units
REQUIRED COURSES		
HCSA 5501	Introduction to Higher Education Counseling and Student Affairs	3
HCSA 5510	Counseling and Advising in Higher Education	3
HCSA 5511	Legal and Ethical Issues in Higher Education Counseling and Student Affairs	3
HCSA 5520	Multicultural Issues in Higher Education and Student Affairs	3
HCSA 5521	Introduction to Research and Assessment in Higher Education Counseling and Student Affairs	3
HCSA 5530	Leadership and Consultation in Higher Education Counseling and Student Affairs	3

HCSA 5531	Student Development Theory in Higher Education Counseling and Student Affairs	3
HCSA 5540	Higher Education Administration	3
HCSA 5541	Group Facilitation	3
HCSA 5550	Career Counseling	3
HCSA 5560	Field Experience in Higher Education Counseling and Student Affairs ¹	6
HCSA 5580	Advanced Multicultural Issues in Higher Education Counseling and Student Affairs	3
HCSA 5581	Advanced Research and Assessment in Higher Education Counseling and Student Affairs	3
HCSA 5598	Project	3
Approved Electives		
Select from the following:		3
HCSA 5551	Adult Learning, Communication and Conflict Resolution	
HCSA 5591	Community College Counseling	
Total Units		48