

Certification-Only School Counseling Admissions Process
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The Certification-Only (Cert-Only) Program for School Counseling is a program designed for those individuals seeking certification in either secondary or elementary counseling without completing a full graduate degree in school counseling.

1. What if I currently have an undergraduate degree and not a master's degree? You cannot pursue the Cert-Only program and, instead, should contact the Graduate Admissions Office to initiate the admissions process to your counseling program of interest within the Department of Counseling and College Student Personnel.
2. What if I have a related or unrelated master's degree and am interested in the Cert-Only Programs in Elementary or Secondary School Counseling? For any master's degree, the process below is the same (it will just mean needing to take more courses the more your degree is unrelated to school counseling – to the point that pursuing a master's degree in school counseling rather than certification might be the better alternative).
3. What if I am emergency certified as a school counselor and want to gain permanent certification through the Cert-Only Program? Yes, you can gain permanent certification through this program. However, you will still fall under the normal procedures for being accepted to the Cert-Only Program and for gaining access to classes (no special preference is given over other Cert-Only students).
4. What if I am inquiring about the Cert-Only Program during the summer? It is too late to ensure that classes taken in the fall can become part of a Cert-Only Program. Interviews for admitting candidates to the Cert-Only Program occur during the fall and spring semesters for the subsequent semester.
5. What if classes begin within the next several days to a week from the point of my inquiry and I have not yet been accepted to the Cert-Only program? It is too late to start the admissions process for the approaching semester.
6. What if I wish to determine the feasibility of entering the Cert-Only Program? On the Internet, go to the Department of Counseling and College Student Personnel's Website at Shippensburg University at "www.ship.edu/~counsel". On that home page, go to "Forms." Under forms, you will find the current "Plan of Work" form for each graduate program within the department. Choose either the Elementary School Counseling or the Secondary School Counseling plan of work. Once you have chosen the plan of work for the program you are interested in,
 - a) Compare the courses from your graduate transcripts with the courses on the plan of work. Where your transcript courses reasonably match those on the plan of work, you would probably not need to take those courses (you most likely will need to check catalog descriptions). The courses left over are likely the courses you would still need to take in the Cert-Only Program to become certified. We

- will clarify this with you AFTER you have been admitted. Candidates with no clinical experience will need to complete a practicum and two fields. Most candidates need either a practicum and one field, or, two fields. We may determine for occasional candidates that one field suffices upon seeing that they have exceptional skills during their initial field experience. For coursework as a whole, candidates from programs similar to Shippensburg's programs typically need fewer courses and candidates from programs that differ significantly sometimes need many of the courses that are part of the graduate degree.
- b) After getting a sense of how many courses you will need, decide if you are still interested in pursuing the Cert-Only Program. We realize that you will not know for certain what courses are needed, but this is to give you a reasonable idea of the number of courses that are likely necessary for you to become certified. If you are still interested, continue with the process below.
7. Contact the department secretary at 717-477-1668 to request an interview with the school counseling team leader. The team leader will then arrange an interview with you and one other school counseling team faculty member. From that interview the school counseling faculty members will determine your eligibility for the Cert-Only program. Also, you can determine if the Cert-Only program meets your needs. You will need to bring copies of your graduate transcripts with you to the interview. If you are not admitted, you will be told immediately following the interview. If you are admitted to the Cert-Only Program, the following is important:
 - a) After the interview, the school team leader will complete an official plan of work for your cert-only program.
 - b) Before completion of your first course, you are required to take the PRAXIS Pre-Professional Skills Tests (Reading, Writing, and Math). These exams must be passed before continuing with further courses.
 - c) For registering for courses, you should contact the department secretary (477-1668). Each course instructor in the department is to hold 1 or 2 class seats for Cert-Only students. These seats are assigned on a first come, first serve basis.
 - d) To enroll in Practicum or Field, you must register the prior semester during the Practicum and Field Meetings (usually held within the first 2-3 weeks of the fall or spring semesters). These meetings are advertised through the counseling department's newsletter and through the campus email system.
 8. As you go through the program, the school counseling team leader is your advisor. If you have any questions, please ask. Best wishes to you in becoming School Counselor certified.