

TRANSFORMING LIVES:
A Guide to Auburn's
M.Ed. in Clinical
Rehabilitation Counseling



AUBURN
UNIVERSITY

The background features a red brick clock tower with a weather vane on top, set against a sky with soft clouds. In the foreground, there are lush green trees. A large, stylized white triangle graphic is positioned on the right side of the image, pointing upwards. The text 'TABLE OF Contents' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

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Introduction



Clinical rehabilitation counseling plays a crucial role in transforming lives and improving the overall well-being of individuals. With an estimated **2.4 billion people worldwide** living with health conditions that could benefit from rehabilitation, the need for skilled and compassionate professionals in this field is clear.

But, if you're interested in providing services and support for those with disabilities in your future career, where do you begin?

This guide will provide an overview of the rehabilitation counseling field and how you can provide essential services for individuals in your community. We will also explore Auburn University's ethos concerning clinical rehabilitation counseling and give you insight into our **M.Ed. in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling program**. We hope this resource helps you feel confident in your path to obtaining your credentials.

CHAPTER 1

Understanding the Rehabilitation Counseling Field

Understanding the importance and impact of rehabilitation counseling is crucial in grasping how this field transforms lives and fosters inclusivity in our communities and beyond. Let's explore what the field entails and the jobs you can pursue with an M.Ed. in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling and more.





WHAT IS REHABILITATION COUNSELING AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Rehabilitation counseling meets people when they are most vulnerable and helps them receive essential services and resources to achieve their full potential. It empowers individuals with disabilities to live fulfilling, independent lives. Counselors work alongside those with disabilities and individuals recovering from various life circumstances to help them improve their lives and become more confident.

This essential work helps individuals with disabilities to find fulfillment in their lives and work, helping them better fit into the working world. The focus of rehabilitation counseling is vital to creating more inclusive communities. Rehabilitation counseling's philosophies and real-world impact facilitate a more inviting and understanding community, helping those with disabilities feel included and understood.

WHAT DOES A REHABILITATION COUNSELOR DO?

Rehabilitation counselors work closely with their clients to help them overcome or manage the personal, social, or psychological effects of their disabilities on their employment or independent living. By providing emotional support and guidance and facilitating access to resources and services on their behalf, rehabilitation counselors can positively impact their clients' lives. Their work is crucial in helping clients become more confident and capable of obtaining employment and improving their independence.

How to Become a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor

To become a certified rehabilitation counselor, you must study the field and take the required steps to earn your national certification. This often involves pursuing a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a closely related field.

However, many employers require or prefer that the counselors they hire have a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or an equivalent field. Some states may also require additional training and certifications to obtain full licensure. In general, there are four steps to becoming a certified rehabilitation counselor:

- ▶ Earn a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a related field.
- ▶ Complete a required number of supervised work hours.
- ▶ Pass the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor exam administered by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC).
- ▶ Complete any state-specific licensing requirements based on your practice area.

The need for rehabilitation specialists is expected to increase due to the changes in the health and characteristics of the population. People are living longer than before and can develop more chronic conditions and disabilities than previous generations. Investing in the credentials to become a clinical rehabilitation counselor now is beneficial.

While becoming a clinical rehabilitation counselor is typical for those entering this field, other diverse careers and opportunities are available for individuals with these specialized skills. The training received through clinical rehabilitation programs allows professionals to make a marked difference in the lives of individuals with disabilities.



CERTIFIED REHABILITATION COUNSELOR JOBS YOU CAN PURSUE WITH A MASTER'S DEGREE

There are several diverse career opportunities to consider upon completion of a Master's in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling.

Clinical Rehabilitation Counselor

Individuals with a Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling can provide therapeutic services to clients with disabilities to enhance their overall well-being and foster independence. Professionals in this field can assess their clients' needs, develop effective treatment plans, and offer support to help them navigate disability-related challenges.

Clinical rehabilitation counselors help clients develop their skills and use their strengths to adjust to their limitations. They also help connect their clients with resources that allow them to socialize, live and work more independently.

Case Manager

Case managers help individuals with disabilities access the services and resources they need to thrive, from career help to housing assistance. These professionals work with clients, families, healthcare providers, and community organizations to coordinate care, advocate for client needs, and ensure holistic support services. Their advocacy and encouragement help individuals with disabilities identify and achieve their goals.

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

→ What is vocational rehabilitation?

Vocational rehabilitation counselors help individuals with disabilities prepare for, secure, and maintain employment. They help clients determine their skills and interests and assess their limitations to tailor job training and placement. They also provide career counseling services and help clients plan their next steps. Their skills help clients get back to work or get their first jobs, and their knowledge of ADA laws helps their clients know their rights and protections.

→ What disabilities qualify for vocational rehabilitation?

Vocational rehabilitation services cater to a wide range of disabilities, including physical, intellectual, cognitive, developmental, sensory, and mental health conditions. Clients with spinal cord injuries, visual impairments, autism spectrum disorders, traumatic brain injuries, and psychiatric disabilities can all benefit from vocational rehabilitation services.

Coordinator of Disability Services

Disability services coordinators work in educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, or government agencies to ensure individuals with disabilities can access necessary accommodations and services. They help implement inclusive programs and foster a supportive environment for those living with disabilities. Disability services coordinators work with local systems to ensure their clients have the framework they need to live meaningful and fulfilling lives of their choice.



Behavioral Health Specialist

Behavioral health specialists address the behavioral and emotional needs of individuals with disabilities, often as part of interdisciplinary teams in the field. These professionals assess clients' mental health and challenges, develop treatment plans, and provide therapeutic interventions to improve mental well-being and quality of life for each client. They help provide clinical assessments and evaluations of persons presenting with behavioral concerns or illnesses and help to educate and engage families and care teams about inpatient and outpatient processes and resources.

Community Outreach Coordinator

Community outreach coordinators develop and implement programs that promote the inclusion and well-being of people with disabilities. They collaborate with local organizations, stakeholders, and policymakers to raise awareness and create an inclusive and accessible community environment. Their work is vital to ensuring those with disabilities feel like part of the community and find circles in which they thrive.

Advocate for Disabilities Rights

Disabilities rights advocates work to promote policies, practices, and initiatives that protect the rights and improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities. They engage in legislative advocacy, community organizing, and public awareness campaigns to advance disability rights, social justice, and equal access opportunities.

Vocational Evaluator

Vocational evaluators are trained to help people identify their skills, interests, and abilities to help determine the best jobs for them. Using interviews, tests, conversations, and an individual's employment history, vocational evaluators help their clients find fulfilling careers.

Forensic Rehabilitation

Forensic rehabilitation is a branch of rehabilitation counseling that serves people who have experienced injuries or illness and are living with disabilities. Counselors in this field work to help clients gain necessary compensation or accommodations, allowing them to work toward their professional goals, if appropriate. Their work can appear in social security cases, or in courtrooms, as they give detailed assessments and/or evaluations of their client's condition and how it affects the individual's capacity to work and function in their environment.

THE IMPACT OF Auburn's M.Ed. in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling



Auburn University is committed to meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities. Our **M.Ed. in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling program** prepares you to be a rehabilitation counselor or pursue other careers in the field. With the foundational training provided by Auburn University's program, those with a degree in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling are eligible for certification and can seek licensure in many states to become a licensed professional counselor. This program is perfect for individuals aspiring to work with youth and adults with disabilities, as it prepares graduates to apply their skills to various needs and age ranges.

Students can pursue our program on-campus or online, providing flexibility with life demands to achieve academic success. This program develops individuals into counseling professionals with the skills and knowledge necessary to be highly competent counselors in rehabilitation counseling.



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The Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling program prepared me for my career in the most efficient way. I knew for a long time that I felt my calling was to serve individuals with disabilities, but it wasn't until I found the Counseling program that I truly knew what I was meant to do. Currently, I serve individuals with the most significant disabilities within the state of Alabama. As a Case Manager/Rehabilitation Counselor, I use skills obtained in this program daily. With my clients, I focus first on being an active listener and building rapport. I think back to those first few weeks in the Haley Center when rapport was our main focus, and with good reason. Without this program, I wouldn't be near as successful and content in my career. I owe it all to Auburn for giving me the best six years of education that a woman can get.

- MARY KATHRYN BARBER, M.ED., CRC

CURRICULUM AND COURSEWORK

Our non-thesis option M.Ed. is 60 semester hours. It includes a 3-hour practicum course with 100 hours of counseling practice and a 9-hour clinical practice or internship with 600 hours of practical work.

Courses include Counseling Theories, Counseling Diverse Populations, Foundations of Substance Use Counseling, Emerging Adulthood and Transition in Rehabilitation, and more.

CACREP-Accredited Program

The M.Ed. in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling falls within Auburn's Counselor Education (CED) Programs. All CED programs are CACREP-accredited. The accrediting body (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs) is responsible for ensuring the quality of graduate-level counseling programs. Auburn's CED program has been comprehensively evaluated on program content, practicum experiences, faculty qualifications, student support services, and program governance.

This accreditation ensures quality education, gives graduates enhanced professional recognition and credibility, and supports their pursuit of counseling licensure. In short, attending a CACREP-accredited program prepares students with the skills they need in their careers.

CRC Examination

Auburn students prepare for the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor examination as part of their program. We require students to complete the exam administered by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification and require them to complete a Comprehensive Portfolio in Tevera, demonstrating competency with accreditation standards.

NAVIGATING THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Auburn's M.Ed. in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling priority application deadline is February 28*. All application materials must be submitted through our online portal. Students can save their applications along the way and return later to finish, submit, or check their status.

REQUIRED APPLICATION MATERIALS INCLUDE:

- Transcripts
- 3 Reference Forms
- **Statement of Intent**
- Cultural Statement
- Resume or CV
- Writing Sample
- **TOEFL Report** for **international students**

* All applications will be reviewed beyond the deadlines and acceptance considered as openings are available.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Auburn's CACREP-accredited **M.Ed. in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling** is **ranked #19 by U.S. News and World Report**. Choosing Auburn for your M.Ed. is also cost-effective, as our online distance fee is less than typical tuition fees, giving students who choose to complete their courses online extra flexibility in their finances as they study. There are also **many ways to pay for grad school**, like federal grant dollars and private scholarships. Students can apply to be considered for tuition waivers, assistantships, scholarships, grants, fellowships, and loans.

While a master's degree comes with both an investment of time and money, the return on investment you receive is high. Graduates with a master's degree typically earn more than those with a bachelor's degree.

Students with a clinical rehabilitation counseling degree can qualify for licensure as a licensed professional counselor, allowing them to both practice clinical rehabilitation counseling and work as a licensed counselor, providing a broader scope of care to their clients.

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My clinical experiences throughout the Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling program were pivotal in shaping my current career. Through hands-on practice in multiple settings, I developed the skills necessary to benefit my current consumers. These experiences helped me build confidence, sharpen my decision-making, and understand the diverse needs of consumers. This, combined with my coursework, has been invaluable to my development as a professional in the Rehabilitation Counseling field.

- LESLIE FOX, M.ED., CRC

THRIVING IN THE PROGRAM

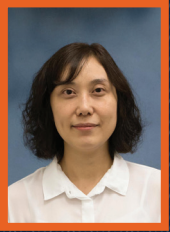
Making the most of your education is essential, especially when investing so much in your graduate school education. One of the best ways to do this is to connect with your cohort and spend time with those who understand your program. It can also be helpful to seek out and utilize university support systems, such as counseling centers and career planning resources.

Graduate school is an investment of your money but also requires a serious time investment. It's essential to be flexible with your time as you plan and adjust to graduate school. Finding ways to balance your academics, internships, and personal life during the program is crucial to avoiding burnout.

Auburn University's M.Ed. in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling faculty are dedicated to our students. Their support is invaluable throughout the program and afterward as you develop your professional network.



CLINICAL REHABILITATION COUNSELING FACULTY



Dr. Jinhee Park, CRC, is an Associate Professor and the Program Coordinator for the Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling Masters program. Her interests include disability biases, multicultural consideration in the rehabilitation counseling field, and vocational rehabilitation and career development for transition-age youth and emerging adults with disabilities.



Dr. Denise Bozek, CRC, is a Visiting Professor and is the acting Clinical Coordinator for the Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling Masters Program. Her interests include advocacy and collaboration for disability justice, disability rights, and navigating college for students with disabilities.



Dr. Nicholas Deriz, CRC, began his service at Auburn in 2012. He is the program coordinator for the B.S. in Rehabilitation and Disability Studies. His research interests lie in corrections, career development for diverse populations, and transition from school for students with disabilities.



Dr. Jill Meyer, CRC, LCPC, is the Director of Counselor Education and a Professor in the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling at Auburn University. Her specialty area is rehabilitation counseling. Her research focuses on the processes of coping, adaptation, and identity as these constructs relate to the psychosocial experiences of individuals with chronic illness and disability. She is also interested in emerging adulthood, psychological well-being, and disability identity.

CHAPTER 3

Your Master of Education From Auburn University Awaits

At Auburn, we believe everyone can and should do their part to advance equitable and inclusive care and support for those who need rehabilitation counseling. With this in mind, the **Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling** in the **College of Education** offers values-driven programs that will prepare you to transform lives.

U.S. News and World Report **ranks the College of Education #10**. Our programs are dedicated to excellent online and in-person educational experiences, and online students benefit from our 10:1 faculty-student ratio, allowing them to feel connected to their classmates through distance learning.

For in-person learners, a new **College of Education building** is opening in the Summer of 2025, granting new opportunities for students who choose to complete their education on campus.

WHEN YOU'RE READY TO START YOUR PATH TO AN
M.ED. IN CLINICAL REHABILITATION COUNSELING, TAKE THE NEXT STEPS:

Explore Our Program

Start Your Application

Request More Information

ARE YOU CURIOUS ABOUT AUBURN'S OTHER PROGRAM OFFERINGS?
EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS.

